



State of Vermont
Agency of Human Services
280 State Drive, Center Building
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000

Global Commitment Register

September 1, 2023

GCR 23-115
PROPOSED

Designated and Specialized Service Agencies (DA/ SSA) Workforce Investment

Policy Summary:

The Vermont Medicaid program proposes to establish a Medicaid health related investment to support the Vermont Care Partners Employee Investment Program, a tuition reimbursement program available to Designated and Specialized Service Agency staff. This fund will improve access for Vermont Medicaid beneficiaries to quality mental health and substance use professionals by strengthening and supporting DA/ SSA staff to pursue studies related to current or future work.

The goal of this funding is to improve overall access to lifesaving mental health services and to ensure staffing levels across Vermont are adequate to provide these services to Medicaid beneficiaries. This funding aims to improve access to community mental health care by incentivizing qualified providers to work at community mental health centers, and by promoting entry into the mental health field through tuition reimbursement. This investment will further improve health equity for the uninsured, underinsured, and Medicaid eligible individuals in Vermont by reducing stigma and improving visibility of important mental health resources.

Effective Date:

October 1, 2023

Authority/Legal Basis:

[Global Commitment to Health Waiver](#)

Population Affected:

All Vermont Medicaid beneficiaries and Vermont Medical Mental Health and SUD providers.

Fiscal Impact:

The estimated gross annualized budget impact is \$6,899,724.

Public Comment Period:

September 1, 2023 – October 1, 2023

Send comments to:

Medicaid Policy Unit

280 State Drive, Center Building
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000

Or submit via e-mail to AHS.MedicaidPolicy@vermont.gov.

To be added to the GCR email list, send an email to AHS.MedicaidPolicy@vermont.gov.

Additional Information:

The new investment template for the DA/ SSA Workforce Investment can be found on the following pages.

ATTACHMENT S
New Investment Application Template

For each new investment, the state must submit the following information to CMS as described in STC 11.6.

Date	08/22/2023
Investment Title	DA/SSA Workforce Investment
Estimated Amount	\$6,899,724
Time Period	10/1/2023 – 6/30/2025
Department	Mental Health
Category	Increase the access of quality health care to uninsured, underinsured, and
Project Objective, Targeted Outcomes, and Impact to Health Equity	
<p>This funding is to address workforce needs at the Designated and Specialized Service Agencies.</p> <p>This program is a strategic investment that expands the supply of high-quality mental health and substance use disorder treatment professionals, providing mental health and substance use disorder services in Designated Agencies (DAs) and Specialized Service Agencies (SSAs).</p> <p>The three main outcome tracking elements encompass: recruitment, retention, and overall program success. Individual Agencies report outcomes and submit their tracking data to Vermont Care Partners (VCP) on a quarterly basis. VCP then submits quarterly reports to the Vermont Department of Mental Health.</p> <p>Tuition assistance payments support staff education at both the bachelor's and master's degree levels and include studies for staff to become: Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners; Master level therapists; and School Based Behavioral Specialists. The most commonly pursued degrees are in psychology, social work, counseling, education, early education, clinical mental health counseling, Applied Behavioral Analysis, and bachelor's degrees in human services.</p> <p>The goal of this funding is to improve overall access to lifesaving mental health services and to ensure staffing levels are adequate to provide these services. This funding aims to improve access to community mental health care by incentivizing qualified providers to work at community mental health centers, and by promoting entry into the mental health field through tuition reimbursement. This investment will further improve health equity for the uninsured, underinsured, and Medicaid eligible individuals in Vermont by reducing stigma and improving visibility of important mental health resources in Vermont.</p>	

<p>Project Description</p> <p>This must include descriptions of specific terms associated with eligibility, benefits and services, and how the state intends to operationalize the program (e.g., population served, provider types, provider qualifications, methodology for incentive payments)</p>
<p>The Department of Mental Health is funding the Vermont Care Partners Employee Investment Program for all Designated and Specialized Service Agency staff. All funds will be utilized as tuition reimbursement and/or loan repayment and would be maintained in a centralized pool. Reports on utilization, expenditures, and outcomes will be made by VCP to the department on a quarterly basis.</p>
<p>Employee Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition assistance for individuals pursuing degrees to become bachelor’s-level direct services staff and master’s-level clinicians and nurses. • Loan repayment for bachelor’s-level direct service staff and master’s-level clinicians and nurses. • Applicants/employees are required to pursue [or have previously pursued] a degree relevant to current or future job responsibilities. These funds will not be awarded for expenses related to conferences, trainings, academic supplies, or other expenses, including fees. Employees become eligible for the program upon meeting their agency’s benefits eligibility requirements, completion of their agency’s introduction/probationary period, and they must remain in good standing throughout the course of the agreement. • Awardees must complete a program-specific service obligation to provide mental health and/or substance use disorder services at their awarding DS/SSA in Vermont • Awardees must successfully complete coursework to qualify for forgiveness.
<p>Employee Application Process</p> <p>Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Each applicant must complete the applicable standard VCP Education Investment Program application and receive their Program or Division Director’s approval to submit the application to the Human Resources Department of their respective agency.</p>
<p>How does the state ensure there is no duplication of federal funding?</p>
<p>The Agency of Human Services operates under a Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) which is approved quarterly by HHS. The CAP ensures there is no duplication of funding because total expenses are allocated to the benefitting federal program.</p>
<p>Source of non-federal share</p>
<p>State General Fund</p>
<p>How does the state ensure that the investment does not include any activities listed in STC 11.6 (Investment Approval Process)?</p>

Attachment S

AHS staff have reviewed project descriptions to ensure that the investment does not include any activities listed in STC #11.5 and will monitor program expenditures to ensure continued compliance with this requirement.

The state assures that in reporting cost, the state and providers must adhere to 45 CFR §75 Uniform Administration Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Health and Human Services (HHS) Awards and 42 CFR §413 Principles of Reasonable Cost Reimbursement. Pursuant to 45 CFR §75.302(a) the state must have proper fiscal control and accounting procedures in place to permit the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have not been used in violation of applicable statutes. Costs must be supported by adequate source documentation.