



COUNTY OF MARIN

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (MHSA)

INNOVATION PLANNING

INNOVATIVE PROJECT EXTENSION PLAN

County Name: **Marin**

Project Title: **Student Wellness Ambassador Program (SWAP): A County-Wide Equity-Focused Approach**

Public Hearing: **March 11, 2025**

Board of Supervisors: **June 10, 2025**

Original Plan

Date of Original Approval: **9/23/2021 MHSOAC approval; 11/2/2021 BOS approval**

Project Start Date: **3/1/2022**

Project End Date: **6/30/2025**

Duration of Approved project: **3.5 years**

Original Approved budget: **\$1,648,000**

Extension Plan

Request for additional funding: **\$870,000**

New total budget: **\$2,518,000**

Request for additional time: **Extend to 6/30/2026, will not exceed 5-year limitation**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Has the primary purpose changed? **No**

What is the added value in learning with the extension?

The first year of the Student Wellness Ambassador Program (SWAP) focused on the creation and launch of the program while the two subsequent years focused on expansion. Evaluation data has shown improved awareness of behavioral health resources and enhanced meaningful connections with others among Student Wellness Ambassador participants. SWAP has been implemented in 8 of Marin's 16 school districts. This expansion will provide additional learning on how the program **builds upon its initial success, incorporates additional school sites and districts to achieve the goal of equitable county-wide student peer support, and implements the sustainability plan.** The extension will increase our understanding of advancing equity, capacity, and sustainability of student peer support in Marin schools and develop a model for other counties to replicate.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Can a county-wide centralized coordination and training structure enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of student peer wellness support across Marin County schools?
- 2) Does centralizing student peer wellness support county-wide increased equity in who accesses peer support?



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- 3) By engaging and supporting youth from traditionally underserved communities as lead wellness ambassadors, can we break down stigma around mental health and improve outcomes for youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth in our county?
- 4) **How can we build upon the initial success, incorporate additional school sites and districts to achieve the goal of equitable county-wide student peer support, and implement the sustainability plan?**

Has the target population changed? No

OVERVIEW OF REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

What is the reason for the additional funds?

In the three years since SWAP began, SWA programs have been implemented at 11 school sites in 8 school districts across Marin. Evaluation of the program found improved awareness of behavioral health resources and increased meaningful connections with other students among participants. Initial learnings revealed SWAP has been received and supported differently across school sites and districts. The extension will aid expansion efforts to incorporate additional school sites and districts and strengthen sustainability efforts to integrate SWAP into existing school structures.

The extension will increase access to peer support services for all students, with a focus on expanding access for Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students. At present, SWAs do not fully represent the diversity of the school communities they support. This additional year will allow for expanding BIPOC representation with the support of local stakeholders and CBOs with cultural and linguistic expert.

This extension will further our knowledge with regard to how the program builds upon its initial success, incorporate additional school sites and districts to achieve the goal of equitable county-wide student peer support, and implements the sustainability plan. The extension will deepen our understanding of advancing the equity, capacity, and sustainability of equitable student peer support in Marin schools and develop a model for other counties to replicate.

How will the county be utilizing the new funding?

- **Expand the number of students participating in SWAP through the inclusion of additional of school sites and districts**
- **Increase access for BIPOC students and ensure student peer support aligns with school and district demographics**
- **Implement a sustainability plan through integration with pre-existing school structures**
(Marin County Office of Education-1.0 FTE SWAP Coordinator)

Additional funding will support the increasing the number of participating school sites and districts to achieve the goal of an equitable county-wide student peer support program. The expansion of SWAP to additional school settings will increase access to peer support programs for all Marin County students.



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This expansion will ensure student peer support aligns with school and district demographics. This will be done through targeted recruitment of BIPOC SWAs, with additional support from local stakeholders and CBOs with specific cultural and linguistic expertise.

Funding will support the implementation of sustainability efforts led by the Marin County Office of Education SWA Coordinator position. The expansion will enable SWA programs to be incorporated into pre-existing school structures (e.g., wellness programming, school clubs, other peer led initiatives). Making the SWA program a school elective course is another potential sustainability strategy that will be pursued.

Has the evaluation budget changed?

An additional \$35,000 is allocated to continue the evaluation project for one more year.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

Public Comment Period: **November 14, 2024 – March 11, 2025**

Public Hearing: **March 11, 2025**

The proposal to extend SWAP for an additional year has been presented at several community planning meetings. Response from the public has been overwhelmingly in support of extending SWAP. One individual noted a request for more evaluation data, specifically from students who received peer support from a Student Wellness Ambassador.

A targeted meeting was held with Marin County students, Marin County school staff, and community-based organizations who all expressed their enthusiastic and unanimous support of extending SWAP for an additional year. Only comments of support were received such as, *“It is so cool to see how this program has grown and developed over the last few years! And I’m super grateful that I’ve gotten to be a part of it”* and *“we’re so thankful to partner with SWAP and be able to work with and hear from youth directly on the kind of support they need in their schools, whether that’s trainings for staff on building LGBTQ+ inclusive schools, student presentations, etc. It allows us to ensure that we’re providing youth-led, culturally responsive support.”*

Public Comments Received

Only comments of support were received during the Public Comment period and at the Public Hearing. One inquiry received from the Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission’s Innovation inbox during the Public Comment period commended SWAP for, *“this initiative to support youth in their wellness journey.”* A letter of support received from Marin 9 to 5 during the Public Comment period is attached to this proposal. Universal support was expressed at the Public Hearing. Individuals noted the importance of SWAP with regard to addressing stigma and its innovative use of student peer support to address the behavioral health needs of Marin County students. The Behavioral Health Board voted unanimously in favor of supporting the expansion of this innovation



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project.

OTHER

- How did the county originally plan on sustaining a successful INN plan in the original proposal? *If shown to be successful and cost-effective we would demonstrate the cost-effectiveness to the Marin County Office of Education to sustain funding. Since mentors are recruited from within the student population, fewer resources are needed over the long-term once the infrastructure has been established. There is an existing resource pool that can be tapped into for recruitment of new peers. In addition, peers can help train new cohorts of peer mentors to ensure sustainability. Funding to maintain SWAP when Innovation funding ends will be less than the annual costs of each Innovation project year.*

If the county is saying the original INN plan is going well, and requesting for an extension, the county will need to explain the additional value added to their successful program by seeking an extension. *The first year of SWAP focused on the creation and launch of the program while the two subsequent years focused on expansion. Initial learnings revealed SWAP has been received and supported differently across school sites and districts. The extension will aid expansion efforts to incorporate additional school sites and districts and sustainability efforts to integrate SWAP into existing school structures. The extension would expand the number of students served, including a focus on expanding the number of BIPOC students served. The extension will deepen our understanding of advancing equity, capacity, and sustainability of student peer support in Marin schools.*

OTHER – BHSA ALIGNMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Does it provide housing interventions for persons who are chronically homeless or experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness? *No.*
- Does it support early intervention programs or approaches in order to prevent mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders from becoming severe and disabling? *The program supports a community based, youth-driven peer approach to reduce stigma, engage in mental health awareness and advocacy campaigns. Student Wellness Ambassadors engage in peer conversations, participate in wellness centered activities and meetings which build skills and efficacy, and offer peer support for students in need.*
- Does it support Full-Service Partnership efforts and services for individuals living with serious mental illness? *No.*
- How will the County continue the project, or components of the project, after its completion without the ability to utilize certain components of MHSA funding for sustainability? *The extension will allow for additional time to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness, for Marin County Office of Education to identify sustainable resources, and for SWAP to be integrated into existing school structures. Fewer resources are needed over the long-term once the infrastructure has been established.*



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BUDGET

BUDGET BY FISCAL YEAR AND SPECIFIC BUDGET CATEGORY*		
EXPENDITURES		
PERSONNEL COSTS (salaries, wages, benefits)		FY 25/26
1	Salaries	\$0
	Benefits	\$0
2	Direct Costs	\$0
3	Indirect Costs	\$0
4	Total Personnel Costs	\$0
OPERATING COSTS		FY 25/26
5	Marin County Office of Education Expenses	\$ 274,500.00
6	Sub-contracts with Community Based Organizations	\$ 255,000.00
7	Sub-contracts with Trainers	\$ 152,058.00
6	Indirect Costs	\$ 102,233.70
7	Total Operating Costs	\$ 783,791.70
NON RECURRING COSTS (equipment, technology)		FY 25/26
8	Non Recurring Costs	\$ -
9	Total Non-recurring costs	\$ -
CONSULTANT COSTS / CONTRACTS (clinical, training, facilitator, evaluation)		FY 25/26
10	Evaluation Costs	\$ 46,703.00
11	Indirect Costs	\$ 7,005.30
12	Total Consultant Costs	\$ 53,708.30
OTHER EXPENDITURES (please explain in budget narrative)		FY 25/26
13	Stipends for SWAs and stakeholder representatives	\$ 28,260.87
14	Indirect Costs	\$ 4,239.13
15	Total Other Expenditures	\$ 32,500.00
EXPANSION PROPOSAL TOTAL		FY 25/26



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Personnel (line 1)	\$ -
Direct Costs (add lines 2, 5, 6, 7, and 10 from above)	\$ 728,261.00
Indirect Costs (add lines 3, 6 and 11 from above)	\$ 113,478.13
Non-recurring costs (line 9)	\$ -
Other Expenditures (line 15)	\$ 28,260.87
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 870,000.00

* For a complete definition of direct and indirect costs, please use DHCS Information Notice 14-033. This notice aligns with the federal definition for direct/indirect costs.

April 28, 2025

Dr. Todd Schirmer, Director
Marin County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services
20 North San Pedro Road, Ste. 2021
San Rafael, CA 94903

MAYRA E. ALVAREZ
Chair

ALFRED ROWLETT
Vice Chair

WILL LIGHTBOURNE
Interim Executive Director

Dear Dr. Schirmer,

Congratulations, the Commission has approved the Student Wellness Ambassador Program Innovation Project Extension for Marin County on April 24, 2025, up to the amount of \$870,000 in Innovation funding over one (1) year.

This project was originally approved on September 23, 2021 up to the amount of \$1,648,000 over 3.5 years. With this extension approval, the total approved budget is now \$2,518,000 in Innovation funding for a duration of 4.5 years.

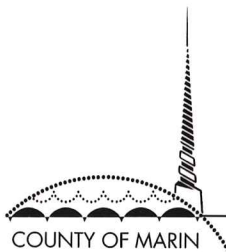
Please notify Commission staff in writing of the official start date of the Innovation project. Pursuant to the Innovation regulations, the start date is when the County begins implementing the project which is based upon the date funds are first spent or when services are delivered, whichever happens first. (Reference Title 9 CCR, Article 9 §3910.010(a)(1)).

On behalf of the Commission, we would like to thank you for all the work you do in your community.

If you have additional questions or need further assistance, feel free to contact the Innovation team at Innovation@bhsoac.ca.gov.

Sincerely,
The Commission Innovation Team

Copy: Vanessa Blum, MHSA Coordinator



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



June 10, 2025



Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Lisa Warhuus, PhD
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SUBJECT: The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) requests approval of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) FY 2025-26 Annual Update reporting on FY 2023-24 outcomes and changes for FY 2025-26 and Amendment to the FY 2024-25 Annual Update.

Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize your Board to approve the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) FY 2025-26 Annual Update reporting on FY 2023-24 outcomes and changes for FY 2025-26 and Amendment to the FY 2024-25 Annual Update.

SUMMARY: Under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), Counties are required to develop three-year expenditure plans for MHSA funding through robust community engagement processes. Each year within a three-year plan, the Department of Health and Human Services prepares an annual update to the three-year plan which accounts for updated revenue and expenditure projections and shifting behavioral health needs within the community-adopted priorities and principles of the approved plan. The annual update also provides your Board and the community with a reporting on the past year's programs and initiatives.

Marin is in the second year of its current three-year plan, which covers FY 2023-24 to FY 2025-26. The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Annual Update before you reports on outcomes from the first year of Marin's three-year Plan, FY 2023-24. This Annual Update also includes proposed changes for FY 2025-26 under the current three-year plan. The Amendment to the MHSA FY 2024-25 Annual Update increases the funding transfer from Community Services and Supports (CSS) to Capital Facilities and Technology Needs (CFTN). The increased funding transfer will support ongoing Health Information Technology System needs and will provide match funding for a Bond Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) match.

Key changes in the FY 2025-26 Annual Update include:

- Funding for CalAIM system development to support additional contractors to prepare for behavioral health transformation and the requirements for Medi-Cal billing as well as to increase the number of certified peer

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providers employed by contracted providers who provide Medi-Cal billable services.

- Funding to support outreach and engagement with individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Funding for a project-based housing program to support construction/acquisitions/rehabilitation of a property as either the HomeKey+ match or similar project.
- Funding for LGBTQ+ culturally responsive services.
- Funding to support behavioral health services in West Marin.
- In preparation for behavioral health transformation, shifting the suicide prevention coordination and oversight performed by Department staff to the Division of Public Health.
- Increased transfer to Workforce Education and Training (WET) to support ongoing training needs associated with Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) mandated evidence-based practices. WET funds are available for 10 years, so the FY 2025-26 transfer allows the funding to be spread throughout the next decade for training needs.
- Increased transfer to Capital Facilities and Technology Needs (CFTN) to support ongoing health information technology system needs and to make funding available for the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) bond match. CFTN funds are available for 10 years, so the 2025-26 transfer allows for the funding to be spread across the next decade to address a portion of the capital facility and technology needs of the Department.

Included in the FY 2025-26 Annual Update key changes is funding for an extension through FY 2025-26 of the Innovation project Student Wellness Ambassadors Program (SWAP): A County-Wide Equity-Focused Approach. Initially approved by your Board in November 2021, evaluation data has shown improved awareness of behavioral health resources and enhanced meaningful connections with others among participants. The extension will provide additional learning on how SWAP builds upon its initial success, incorporates additional school sites and districts to achieve the goal of equitable county-wide student peer support, and implements the sustainability plan. The extension was approved by the Behavioral Health Oversight and Accountability Commission (previously named the *Mental Health Oversight and Accountability Commission*) on April 24, 2025.

This MHSA Annual Update was developed with the participation of stakeholders, in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 5848, 5963 and Title 9 of the California Code of Regulations section 3300, Community Planning Process. All of these efforts were developed through a comprehensive planning process that included the communities and stakeholders most interested in behavioral health issues. Community members with personal lived experience with behavioral health challenges and community members with lived experience as a family member of someone who has experienced behavioral health challenges participated in the planning process through sixteen community planning sessions, an ongoing MHSA Advisory Committee with diverse representation, and ongoing input from the Behavioral Health Board.

The draft MHSA Annual Update was posted for over thirty (30) days for public comment on the Marin County Mental Health Services Act [webpage](#) beginning on April 11, 2025 and ending on May 13, 2025. The public comment period was advertised in the Marin Independent Journal and posted on social media including the Marin County Health and Human Service's Facebook, Instagram, and X accounts, and emailed widely.

On Tuesday May 13, 2025, the Behavioral Health Board hosted a public hearing. All input received has been considered, and adjustments made as appropriate and incorporated into the presented MHSA FY 2025-26 Annual Update. The State requires that the MHSA Annual Update developed as a result of this process be approved by the County Board of Supervisors after which it will be submitted to the Department of Health Care Services and the Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission. The Department will return to your Board in early FY 2025-26 for approval of new and updated contracts with community-based organizations.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT: Outcomes from FY 2023-24 are reported in this MHSA Annual Update. **Over 50,886 community members received mental health support or education** in the last fiscal year through MHSA funded programs—and with this MHSA Plan even more individuals will receive critical behavioral health services in the future. In FY 2023-24 outcomes included over:

- **1,241** community members served through MHSA funded crisis programs including the Mobile Crisis Response Team (1,056 unique individuals) and Casa Rene, a home-like Crisis Residential Unit (185 individuals served).
- **133** formerly homeless individuals with serious mental illness were housed and provided case management, 92 through Shelter+Care, 26 through Homeward Bound Voyager/Carmel, 6 at Victory Village, 5 at the Fireside Apartments, and 4 through the Side By Side Transitional Age Youth apartments.
- **510** individuals received wrap-around Full-Service Partnership support (highest level of community-based care).
- **90** individuals received treatment services through the First Episode Psychosis program or the Stepping Up program.
- **3,671** community members were served in the peer and family support programs, including the Enterprise Resource Center, Empowerment Clubhouse, and National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) Family Groups.
- **35,222** clients, families, and community members were served through early intervention and prevention programs including **3,407** children and youth.

Full-Service Partnership Programs (FSPs) are a crucial element of the MHSA. In FY 2023-24, 510 individuals were served in FSPs. By the close of FY 2023-24, 391 of these individuals had been enrolled for at least one year, providing data for

a comparison year to their baseline year (the year immediately prior to enrollment in the FSP).

- **90% reduction in days experiencing homelessness:** Of those 391 individuals, 142 experienced homelessness in the year prior to enrollment in the FSP, for a collective 33,675 days in their baseline year (averaging 237 days unhoused in that year).

In FY 2023-24 there were 37 FSP clients who experienced one day or more unhoused—a 74% decrease in the number of individuals as compared to the baseline year. In FY 2023-24 these 37 individuals spent a collective 3,287 days unhoused—a 90% decrease **resulting in 30,388 fewer collective days homeless in FY 2023-24 as compared to the baseline year.**

- **81% reduction in nights incarcerated:** Of the 391 individuals in Full-Service Partnership programs for one year or more, 81 spent one night or more incarcerated in the year prior to enrollment in the FSP, for a collective 5,544 days in their baseline year (averaging 14 days incarcerated in that year).

In FY 2023-24 there were 20 FSP clients who experienced one night or more incarcerated—a 74% decrease in the number of individuals as compared to the baseline year. In FY 2023-24 these 20 individuals spent a collective 1,076 nights incarcerated—a 81% decrease **resulting in 4,468 fewer collective nights incarcerated in FY 2023-24 as compared to the baseline year.** An estimated cost savings of around \$1M for FY 2023-24 alone.

- **83% reduction in psychiatric hospitalization days:** Of the 391 individuals in Full-Service Partnership programs for one year or more, 107 were psychiatrically hospitalized in the year prior to enrollment in the FSP, for a collective 4,573 days in their baseline year (averaging 43 days in psychiatric hospitalization in that year).

In FY 2023-24 there were 32 FSP clients who experienced psychiatric hospitalization—a 70% decrease in the number of individuals as compared to the baseline year. In FY 2023-24 there was a collective 784 psychiatric hospitalization days for FSP clients—an 83% decrease **resulting in 3,789 fewer collective days of psychiatric hospitalization in FY 2023-24 as compared to the baseline year.** An estimated cost savings of over \$6M for FY 2023-24 alone.

EQUITY IMPACT: The provision of high-quality behavioral health services for underserved populations is the foundation of this Annual Update. This plan will add funding for transitional age youth (TAY) LGBTQ+ culturally responsive services and for behavioral health services in West Marin. The plan also adds funding to increase the number of certified peer providers who deliver Medi-Cal billable services.

The Amendment supports behavioral health services for underserved populations through additional funding for health information technology system needs and as a BHCIP bond match. The system has allowed for improved data tracking and transparency around service utilization and disparities in system access. The improved ability to track information allows the Department and the community to make informed decisions on how to address disparities. BHCIP advances racial and geographic equity through investment in behavioral health infrastructure. The BHCIP bond match will expand the capacity of behavioral health care facilities for those in need.

FISCAL IMPACT: There will be no increase in General Fund Net County cost as a result of your Board's approval. The Department will work with the Office of the County Executive in FY 2025-26 to make the necessary budget adjustments and to reconcile the annual funding allocation with the funds already budgeted in the MHSa program baseline budgets.

REVIEWED BY:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Office of the County Executive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department of Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Counsel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Warhuus, PhD
Director