

Memorandum



TO: Health Advisory Commission
FROM: Adam Meier, Director, DPHHS
DATE: June 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Summer Pandemic-EBT

Overview: Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) was first authorized in March 2020 by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). P-EBT reimbursed families of school-aged children (aged 5 to 18) who were eligible and lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to school closures. P-EBT was reauthorized for the 2020-2021 school year for children eligible for free or reduced-price meals who were attending school remotely. During the 2020-2021 school year, P-EBT was expanded to include children aged 0 to 5. The American Rescue Plan authorized states to continue P-EBT for the summer of 2021 and for any future school years in which there is a declared Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19.

Allocation Request and Deadlines: There is no specific allocation amount, as federal funding will cover any child determined eligible for P-EBT. DPHHS estimates that up to 75,000 children will be eligible for the summer benefit of \$6.81 for 55 days (\$375 total per child). This would result in total benefits of \$28,125,000. The department requests this allocation be approved by the Health Advisory Commission no later than June 4, 2021 so that Montana can expeditiously submit its Summer 2021 P-EBT benefits administration plan to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for approval. Without USDA approval, Montana will not be authorized to issue these benefits.

Structure: DPHHS will issue the \$375 summer P-EBT to any child aged 0 to 17 who receives SNAP for at least one month from May through August 2021. DPHHS will also use data received from school districts across the state to issue benefits to children not receiving SNAP but still eligible for free or reduced-price meals for the period May through August 2021. All benefits for a household will be issued to a single EBT card.

Eligibility: A child receiving SNAP is eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Any child (aged 0 to 17) that received SNAP during the last month of school (May) or during the summer months (June through August) will be eligible to receive the P-EBT summer benefit. Children who are not receiving SNAP but were eligible during the last month of school (May) or during the summer months for free or reduced-price meals are also eligible to receive the \$375 benefit.

Application and Verification: DPHHS will issue benefits to SNAP children since they meet P-EBT criteria. DPHHS will utilize data from school districts to issue benefits to non-SNAP children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Performance Metric: Each eligible child is issued the summer P-EBT benefit.

Recommendation: Approve a continuation of P-EBT through Summer 2021 by authorizing \$28,125,000. These funds would be used to provide a P-EBT benefit of \$375 to any child eligible for free or reduced-price school meals and to any SNAP child aged 0 to 5.

Memorandum



TO: Health Advisory Commission
FROM: Adam Meier, Director, DPHHS
DATE: June 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Temporary SNAP Benefit Increase

Overview: Montana serves approximately 50,136 families per month in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The December 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act increased SNAP benefits by 15 percent for January through June 2021 for all SNAP households. The American Rescue Plan authorizes an extension of this benefit increase for the period of July through September 2021.

Allocation Request and Deadlines: There is no specific allocation amount. Federal funding will cover the benefit increase, estimated to be \$8,092,089 for the three-month period. This allocation must be approved by the Health Advisory Committee no later than June 18, 2021 in order to include the increase with the issuance of July benefits.

Structure: Montana determines eligibility for SNAP through the 19 Offices of Public Assistance across the state. SNAP benefits can be used at any grocery store or farmer's market that accepts SNAP. Eligible foods for purchase are regulated by the federal government. SNAP households have up to 365 days to use benefits issued to their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

Eligibility: Households with gross monthly income (GMI) cannot exceed 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), and after allowable deductions (rent, utilities, childcare), net monthly income (NMI) cannot exceed 100% of FPL.

Application and Verification: All households already determined eligible for SNAP for the months of July through September 2021 will automatically receive the 15 percent increase in benefits.

Performance Metric: The department will verify that the increase in benefits has been applied accurately in CHIMES prior to SNAP benefits issuance each month. In addition, after each issuance the department will ensure that all SNAP EBT cards have been loaded with the corresponding amounts.

Recommendation: Approve the 15 percent increase in SNAP benefits for all SNAP households for the period of July through September 2021. The estimated cost for this increase in benefits is \$8,092,089.

Memorandum



TO: Health Advisory Commission
FROM: Adam Meier, Director, DPHHS
DATE: June 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Family Violence Prevention and Services Grant

Overview: This funding is intended to increase public awareness and prevention of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence by providing immediate shelter and supportive services for victims of violence. Currently, Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) funding goes directly to the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and domestic violence shelters throughout the state.

Allocation Request and Deadlines: \$376,207.00 is allocated to Montana for this purpose only. Montana is required to submit a budget and plan to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by July 1, 2021.

Structure: CFSD will modify current contracts to allocate funds to local shelter programs to continue current service delivery. Allocations are based on an RFP process that allows programs to submit a budget on the funding level needed. Funding is divided between all successful applicants based on requests and number of clients served.

Eligibility: Shelter services for children and families impacted by family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence.

Application and Verification: There is an existing process that will be utilized for this funding. Funding goes directly to the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and domestic violence shelters throughout the state. Funding is limited to supporting shelter and supportive services for victims of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence.

Performance Metric: Sub-grantees expend all their funds to meet the needs of clients utilizing shelter services. Number of clients served remains consistent and increases, if appropriate.

Recommendation: Approve the allocation of \$376,207.00 to the Family Violence Prevention and Service Grant to address the increased intensity of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence as a result of the pandemic by providing increased resources to shelters and supportive services for victims.

Memorandum



TO: Health Advisory Commission
FROM: Adam Meier, Director, DPHHS
DATE: June 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) ARPA funding

Overview: The American Rescue Plan has issued supplemental funding to the CBCAP grant. The Montana Children’s Trust Fund (CTF) is the state lead for federal community-based child abuse prevention funding and strives to strengthen Montana’s families and keep children safe from abuse and neglect. The CTF board is governor-appointed and includes representation from across the state. The purposes of the CBCAP program are: (1) to support community-based efforts to develop, operate, expand, enhance, and coordinate initiatives, programs, and activities to prevent child abuse and neglect and to support the coordination of resources and activities to better strengthen and support families to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect; and (2) to foster understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of diverse populations in order to effectively prevent and treat child abuse and neglect.

Allocation Request and Deadlines: \$762,432.00 is allocated to Montana for the aforementioned purposes only. Funding can be obligated/liquidated through 9/30/2025.

Structure: The CTF board meets quarterly and sets funding priorities for key projects, which may include issuing RFPs for services/projects and evaluating/scoring proposals. Examples of current and past projects funded through the board include home visiting, parenting classes, support groups, respite care, training, and prevention campaigns targeting risks such as leaving children unattended in hot cars, abusive head trauma, and infant sleep practices. Currently, CTF is conducting a review of existing needs assessments and seeking input from stakeholders related to gaps in child abuse prevention efforts. It is anticipated that the board will authorize a new RFP for this funding.

Eligibility: RFPs and applications are in accord with Montana’s procurement laws. In addition, funding cannot be used to support tertiary prevention services, meaning funding cannot be used to support families who have an open or substantiated child abuse or neglect case.

Services must be provided before abuse or neglect has occurred. If the child is involved with an open or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, services provided to the caregiver or child are considered tertiary prevention, also known as intervention, and do not meet the purposes of CBCAP funding. Services must also be voluntary and not used as a condition for a parent to see or keep their child(ren).

Performance Metric:

- Provide at least seven additional grants focusing on primary and secondary child abuse and neglect, with at least one grant in each CFSD region.
- Increase the number of grants focusing on vulnerable or underserved populations by 20%.
- For communities that have a CTF grant, establish a baseline number for the rate of first-time victims of maltreatment and then establish a targeted improvement goal for following years.

Recommendation: Approve the allocation of \$762,432.00 for the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention funding to be administered by the Children’s Trust Fund.

Memorandum



TO: Health Advisory Commission
FROM: Adam Meier, Director, DPHHS
DATE: June 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program ARPA Funding

Overview: The Healthy Montana Families Program is Montana’s MIECHV-funded program that partners with local public health and nonprofit agencies to provide voluntary, family-centered services, in the home to pregnant women and families – including those considered at-risk – with new infants and children under the age of six. Home visiting services support healthy pregnancy outcomes, parent education, positive child health and development, strengthen parent-child relationships, and provide referrals to community resources based on the family’s need after the age of six. The American Rescue Plan has appropriated additional funding for the existing MIECHV program to address the needs of expectant parents and families with young children during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Last year, 1,326 Montana families received 1-2 home visits per month.

Allocation Request and Deadlines: \$405,070.00 is allocated to Montana for the period of May 1, 2021, through September 30, 2023. The budget and workplan are due to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) on June 2, 2021. In line with HB 632 requirements, DPHHS submitted a deadline extension request to HRSA for June 4, 2021, which was granted.

Structure: Funding, which cannot supplant routine funding, can be used for the following:

- Hazard pay or other staff costs;
- Professional development;
- Emergency supplies for families (diapering supplies, grocery cards, formula, and PPE); and
- Technology support for families.

DPHHS will survey local home visiting contractors to identify the best way to offer hazard pay and funding to support staff retention and reduce turnover. Additionally, professional development will be offered to home visitors and supervisors to embrace a culture of safety science aimed at mitigating burnout, understanding secondary trauma, emergency preparedness and safety, and enhancing the home visiting experience. Contractor surveys will include assessment of technology support needs for virtual home visiting and will include planning for emergency supply needs and distribution. Survey data, in addition to community needs, and caseload will be used to inform the funding and strategy for local contractors.

Eligibility: MIECHV-funded contracts, staff, and families are the intended recipients of this funding.

Performance Metrics:

- By September 30, 2023, increase the number of staff that remain employed for two or more years by 20 percent;
- Number of families receiving emergency supplies from ARPA funds (temporary increase, as appropriate); and
- Number of families receiving support for technology-related needs (temporary increase, as appropriate).

Memorandum



TO: Health Advisory Commission
FROM: Adam Meier, Director, DPHHS
DATE: June 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Substance Abuse Block Grant ARPA Funds

Overview: Montana receives Substance Abuse Block Grant (SABG) funds annually based on 42 U.S.C. Chapter 6A, Subchapter XVII, Part B, Subpart II: Block Grants for Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse, and 45 CFR, Part 96, Subpart L. The funds, along with other state and federal funds, provide substance use disorder (SUD) prevention, treatment, and recovery services to youth and adults at risk for or with a SUD.

Allocation Request and Deadlines: \$5,640,385 is allocated to Montana to be spent between September 1, 2021 and September 30, 2025. Montana has received the Notice of Award for this grant and the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) requires a proposal to be submitted with a detailed budget and project narrative for the funding allocation by July 2, 2021.

Structure: The SABG allocation requires states to expend at least twenty percent of their total allocation for SUD primary prevention services for individuals who do not require treatment for substance abuse. This aligns with the HEART initiative design, as it relies on spending most of the block grant on primary prevention services in communities. States are required to follow the federal Maintenance of Effort requirement to ensure aggregate state general fund expenditures for authorized activities are at a level not less than the average level of such expenditures maintained by the State for the preceding two-year period. Therefore, SABG funding may not replace existing programs.

Eligibility: The SUD prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services continuum includes various evidence-based services and supports for individuals, families, and communities. The SABG prioritizes the provision of SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery support services to identified underserved populations. These underserved and marginalized populations include, but are not limited to, pregnant women and women with dependent children; persons who inject drugs; persons using opioids and/or stimulant drugs associated with drug overdoses; persons at risk for HIV, TB, and Hepatitis; persons experiencing homelessness; persons involved in the justice system; persons involved in the child welfare system; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); LGBTQ individuals; rural populations; and other underserved groups.

Application and Verification: The SABG ARPA funds will be disseminated to established substance use disorder treatment providers and organizations with experience and involvement in SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery support services as awarded through the state procurement process. Community partners such as local advisory counselors, the Behavioral Health Alliance of Montana, and the Behavioral Health Advisory Council will be engaged in the outreach efforts for these programs. Services will be available to individuals who meet the target population requirement.

The primary projects to be funded by SABG ARPA funds include:

- Expanding prevention services to more Montana counties, to extend effective community-based prevention efforts across Montana consistent with the Governor's HEART initiative and HB 632.

- Continuing implementation of the evidence-based PAX Good Behavior Game school-based program to improve youth social emotional skills that are shown to reduce suicide and substance use among youth consistent with the Governor’s HEART initiative and HB 632.
- Continuing implementation of county and Tribal matching grants, with a project to improve access to crisis stabilization for those with a SUD and reduce the number of admissions to the Montana State Hospital consistent with block grant requirements.
- Collaborating with the Department of Corrections to improve recovery support structures for justice-involved individuals statewide.

Performance Metrics:

- Number of counties with Prevention Specialists;
- Number of schools, teachers and paraprofessionals trained and using PAX in grades 1-5 or other school-based intervention for older children; and
- Number of individuals admitted to Crisis Stabilization Facilities and outcomes for those visits.

Comments: The Federal funding agreement prohibits SABG funds from being used to:

- (1) provide inpatient services;
- (2) make cash payments to intended recipients of health services;
- (3) purchase or improve land, purchase construct, or permanently improve (other than minor remodeling) any building or other facility, or purchase major medical equipment;
- (4) satisfy any requirement for the expenditure of non-federal funds as a condition for the receipt of federal funds; and
- (5) provide financial assistance to any entity other than a public or nonprofit private entity.

Recommendation: Approve the \$5,640,385 allocated to Montana through the SABG to provide SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services to youth and adults at risk for or with a SUD.

Memorandum



TO: Health Advisory Commission
FROM: Adam Meier, Director, DPHHS
DATE: June 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Mental Health Block Grant ARPA Funds

Overview: Montana receives the Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) through a statutory appropriation based on 42 U.S.C. Chapter 6A, Subchapter XVII, Part B, Subpart I: Block Grants for Community Mental Health Services for adults with serious mental illness (SMI) and children with serious emotional disturbance (SED). These funds are utilized, along with other federal and state funding, to provide comprehensive community mental health services.

Allocation Request and Deadlines: \$4,372,007 is allocated to Montana to be spent between September 1, 2021 and September 30, 2025. Montana has received the Notice of Award for this grant and the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) requires a proposal to be submitted with a detailed budget and project narrative for the funding allocation by July 2, 2021.

Structure: The MHBG allocation requires states to set aside a minimum of ten percent of their total allocation for first-episode psychosis or early SMI programs and utilize a minimum of five percent of funds for crisis services. States are required to follow the federal Maintenance of Effort requirement to ensure aggregate state general fund expenditures for authorized activities are at a level not less than the average level of such expenditures maintained by the state for the preceding two-year period. Therefore, MHBG funding may not replace existing programs.

Eligibility: Adults with SMI and children with SED are considered priority populations under the MHBG. This includes those living in remote areas and underserved communities as well as youth, older adults, persons of diverse backgrounds, and other marginalized populations.

Application and Verification: The MHBG ARPA funds will be disseminated to established mental health providers and organizations with experience and involvement in Montana mental health services through the state procurement process. Community partners such as local advisory counselors, the Behavioral Health Alliance of Montana, and the Behavioral Health Advisory Council will be engaged in the outreach efforts for these programs. Services will be available to individuals who meet the SED/SMI eligibility requirement.

The primary projects to be funded by the MHBG ARPA funds include:

- Expanding First Episode Psychosis (FEP) programs by implementing a program in Central or Western Montana consistent with the requirements of the block grant.
- Increasing the capacity of the Suicide Prevention Helpline, as well as developing and implementing a 9-8-8 plan to coordinate community crisis services and a public outreach campaign consistent with the federal requirement for this program to launch in July 2022.
- Collaborating with counties to provide mental health and co-occurring outpatient services to individuals in detention centers consistent with the HEART initiative and HB 632.
- Increasing the capacity of communities to leverage recovery support for individuals needing supportive housing assistance consistent with the HEART initiative and HB 632.

Performance Metric:

- Number of youth referred and treated at FEP programs in MT;
- Number of MT calls to the Suicide Prevention Helpline;
- Number of communities that link community crisis resources to 9-8-8 system;
- Number of individuals receiving behavioral health services and the type of services provided in detention center settings; and
- Number of individuals receiving services in recovery support programs and outcome data for sustained recovery or management of behavioral health.

Comments: The Federal funding agreement prohibits MHBG funds from being used to:

- (1) provide inpatient services;
- (2) make cash payments to intended recipients of health services;
- (3) purchase or improve land, purchase, construct, or permanently improve (other than minor remodeling) any building or other facility, or purchase major medical equipment;
- (4) satisfy any requirement for the expenditure of non-federal funds as a condition for the receipt of federal funds;
- (5) provide financial assistance to any entity other than a public or nonprofit private entity.

Recommendation: Approve the \$4,372,007 allocated to Montana through the MHBG to provide comprehensive community mental health services.