

**Vermont Care Partners
Workforce Development Proposal
March 18, 2019**

Goal:

To promote workforce recruitment and retention of well-trained staff to provide high quality services to vulnerable Vermonters served by the designated and specialized service agencies (DA/SSAs) inclusive of mental health, developmental services and substance use disorder services.

Objectives:

1. To recruit and retain quality staff interested in career development
2. To create an affordable educational and career path
3. To improve staff competencies for quality of care
4. To enable staff to achieve credentials

Funding level:

\$3 million

Timeframe:

3 years

Maximum Investment Value to Designated and Specialized Service Agencies:

1. 80% for Loan Repayment based on a 3-year commitment to employment at DA/SSA for masters level clinicians, bachelors level direct service staff and nurses. 160 – 200 staff per year could receive loan repayments of up to \$5,000 for 3 years.
2. 20% for Tuition Assistance based on a 3-year commitment to employment at DA/SSA for masters level clinicians, bachelors level direct service staff and Nurses. 80 – 120 staff per year could receive tuition assistance of up to \$2,500 per year for 3 years.

Human Resource Directors see this as an excellent benefit for staff and believe the demand will exceed the supply of resources. Agencies would like some flexibility in how funds are distributed to staff to address various staffing resources and needs. There are approximately 700 – 750 masters level clinicians in the provider network and many more bachelors level staff involved in direct services among the 5,400 employees of DA/SSAs. Additionally, there are staff who would seek support to earn bachelors degrees to qualify for positions such as case managers.

Distribution of Funds:

All agencies could draw down funds from a centralized pool based on their total revenues as a percentage of total provider network revenues.

Staff Eligibility:

Human Resource Directors have indicated that challenges in recruitment and retention vary by agency due to local labor market dynamics, availability of education and agency programming. While most agencies would like to prioritize masters level staff, a few agencies are having more significant challenges with BA level and nursing staff. Agencies with unions may need to negotiate the distribution

of funds. That said the types of degrees in social work, psychology, health, etc. that could be included to strengthen direct service staff include:

- (Bachelor's) Early Childhood Special Education (BS), Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (BA), Human Development and Family Studies (BS), Psychological Science (BA, BS), Social Work (BS), Sociology (BA), Human Services (BS) Health Sciences (BS), Health and Society (BA)
- (Master's) Master of Social Work (MSW), Counseling (MS), Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders (MA)

Institutions of Higher Learning:

Many staff may choose to use tuition assistance and loan repayment for the University of Vermont or one of the schools in the Vermont State College system. However, for some staff these institutions are hard to access due to either geographic location or difficulty with scheduling. Some staff prefer to use online programs to more easily schedule education into their busy schedules.