



Social Work, Therapy, and Counseling Internship Program

RFP Bidder's Conference

July 24th, 2025



Agenda

Section A: Overview, Goals, Eligible Lead Agencies, Partnerships, Timeline

Attachment A: ELEVATE Behavioral Health Fund Eligible Employers

Section B: Scope of Work

Section C: Allowable Expenditures

Questions

The RFP substance

Key Dates

Section D: Submission Format

Attachment B – Planned Outcomes and Budget Request Table

Section F: Evaluation

Attachment B: Sample Contract

Questions

The RFP process



Section A: Overview



San Diego Pay It Forward Loan Program

Funding to provide zero-interest, forgivable student loans for behavioral health programs.

1

Nurse Practitioner (NP) Expansion Grant Program

Funding to launch and/or expand graduate NP programs to help 135 students to become psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNPs) in public settings

2

Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network Program

Funding for 700 apprentices to become SUD Counselors, case managers, community health workers, and other in-demand roles.

3

Peer Support Training Grant Program

Funding to train, place, and retain 400 new peer support specialists in San Diego County.

4

Social Work, Counseling, and Therapy Internship Program

Funding to support 320 master's students in social work, therapy, and counseling as they complete high-quality internships and move into positions in county-funded BH.



Section A: Overview

- PIC and Trailhead are seeking proposals from County of San Diego (County)-funded behavioral health service providers to create culturally diverse licensed clinician talent pipeline by providing high-quality internships to master's students in relevant education programs that lead to licensure as social workers (LCSWs), marriage and family therapists (LMFTs) and professional clinical counselors (LPCCs).
- **Up to \$6,500,000 total** is potentially available for up to four (4) lead agencies, including one specifically focused and specializing in serving the behavioral needs of children and youth.
- Funding is available to support County-funded behavioral health service providers train and provide clinical supervision to between **320-400 social work, therapy, and/or clinical counseling trainees** between September 2025 and June 30th, 2029

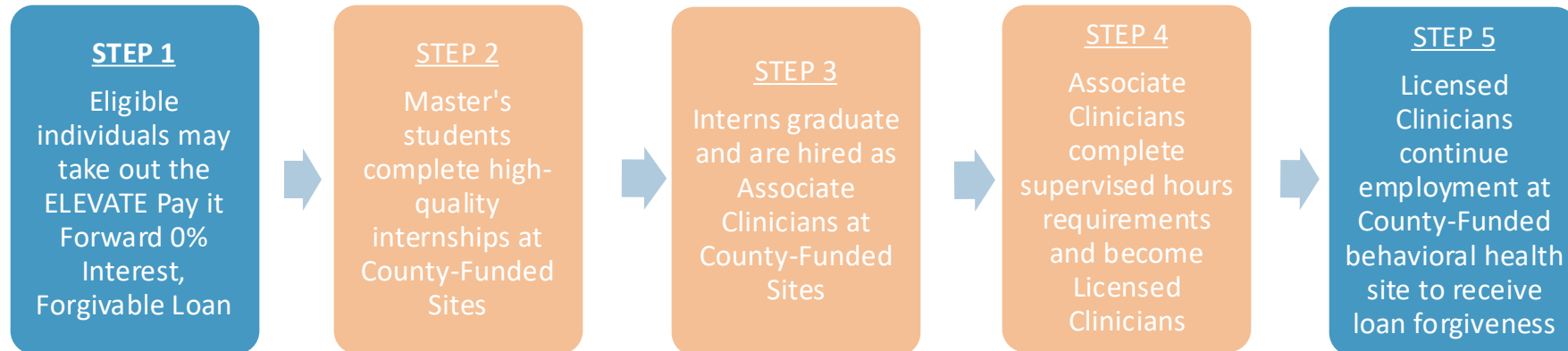


Section A: Goals

The goals of the RFP are to:

1. Expand the County-funded behavioral health system's capacity to provide high-quality training and supervision opportunities for students
2. Support students' conversion and retention into associate clinicians in the County-funded behavioral health system.

The ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund's vision for the licensed clinician pathway is below. Funding for Step 1 and Step 5 (blue boxes) is provided by the ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund Pay it Forward Loan Program ([link](#)). Funding from this RFP is designed to support Step 2, Step 3, and Step 4 (orange boxes).



Section A: Eligible Lead Agencies

PIC and Trailhead intend to contract with four (4) County-funded behavioral health service providers to serve as lead agencies as community behavioral health internship and supervision anchor sites.

A list of County-funded behavior health organizations eligible to serve as lead agency can be found in **Section H: Attachment A**.

One of the lead agencies will be focused on the children and youth (pediatrics) population.

****Note:** We have received inquiries and a few compelling examples suggesting opening up the eligibility for intermediaries to be eligible to serve as a lead agency. This is under consideration and we will post written guidance on the ELEVATE website on or before Monday, July 28th about this matter.

The requirement that interns and associate placements must occur in County-funded or other approved sites will remain unchanged.



Partnerships

- **Lead agencies are strongly encouraged to partner with organizations that serve specialty populations that may not have the internal capacity, university partnerships, or licensed staff required to host interns or provide associate clinician supervision on their own.**
- The goal of these funds are to support high-quality internship and associate placement opportunities **at a range of training sites, programs, settings, and organizations** serving the behavioral health needs of **diverse populations**, with an emphasis on **threshold languages** and **geographical representation** from across the County



Attachment A: ELEVATE BH Fund Eligible Employers

Partners eligible to host interns and associates in each network:

- The Social Work, Therapy, and Counseling Internship Program is designed to support and supervise interns and associates in County-funded behavioral health programs operated by employers included on the *ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund Eligible Employer List in **Section H: Attachment A***
- This list will be updated quarterly to reflect new providers that obtain contracts awarded by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services (BHS).
- Once included on the ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund Eligible Employer List, an employer will remain eligible under this program, even if its contract with BHS is later modified or discontinued during the project period.
- The Social Work, Therapy and Counseling Internship Program providers that are not on the ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund Eligible Employer List will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To be considered, the participant must be placed with an employer that: (1) Provides behavioral health services to residents in San Diego County, (2) is a non-profit community-based organization and/or a FQHC, and/or (3) serves San Diego clients who are enrolled or eligible for Medi-Cal and/or Medicare.*

*All exceptions must be pre-approved by PIC and Trailhead.



Section A: Project Timeline

The project will be implemented in three phases:

- 1. Lead Agency Start-Up Phase: (September-December 2025):** Lead agencies will use this time to set up internship and associate supervision opportunities with a diverse set of programs and settings at the lead agency and partner County-funded BH providers, expand partnerships with universities, hire and onboard new staff, develop additional didactics, develop a standardized, high-quality internship and supervision experience, and implement any other structural changes in preparation for new interns and associates.
- 2. Social Work, Therapy, and Counseling Intern and Associate Enrollment Period: (January 1st 2026 – June 30th 2029):** Three-and-a-half year period in which awarded lead agencies and their partner networks will train, hire, and supervise new interns and associates through high-quality training opportunities, and incentivize (e.g., stipends, hiring and retention bonuses), and support them toward licensure and their future employment in County-funded behavioral health.
- 3. Post-Enrollment Follow-Up Period: (July 1st, 2029 – June 30th, 2032):** Three year period in which the lead agency may be asked to report back on a set of outcomes related to trainees who received support during the enrollment period.



Section B: Scope of Work – Required Activities

1. Licensed Clinician Pathway Partnership Network Establishment
2. Internship Placement and Support
3. Associate Clinician Hiring, Supervision, and Retention
4. Reporting and Continuous Improvement



Section C: Allowable Expenditures

Up to \$6,500,000 total is potentially available across up to four (2) lead agencies for individuals enrolled before June 2029.
Budgets should not exceed **\$1,625,000**

Allowable Expenditures

- Salaries (and fringe)
- Funding for supervision
- Stipends, hiring bonus, and retention incentives
- Exam, licensure, and test preparation fees
- Curriculum and professional development
- Financial offsets
- IT
- Other

Questions



Key Dates

Request for Proposal (RFP) Issued	July 15, 2025
Bidder's Conference	July 24, 2025
Final Day to Submit Questions	July 31, 2025
Questions Posted	August 4, 2025
Proposals Due	August 27, 2025 @ 11:59pm PDT
Finalist Interviews	September 4-5, 2025
Anticipated Award Notification	September 15, 2025
Contract Start	September 30, 2025



Section D: Submission Format

Final submissions must be submitted via email to ELEVATE@Trailheadstrat.com on or before **August 27, 2025, 11:59 PST**. Submissions should include:

1

- | |
|---|
| 1. Transmittal Letter |
| 2. Executive Summary |
| 3. Organization and Experience |
| 4. Team |
| 5. Clinical and Educational Partnerships |
| 6. Approach to Scope of Work |
| 7. Outcomes |
| 9. Disclosures and Exceptions (If Applicable) |

20 page or fewer PDF (Required)

2

- | |
|--|
| 8. Funding Request Template and Budget Narrative (from Excel file) |
| Letters of support or MOUs/Contracts with clinical partners found in the list in <i>Section H: Attachment A – REQUIRED</i> |
| Resumes of Key Staff – OPTIONAL |
| Letters of support/MOUs from educational or other partners - OPTIONAL |

Single zip file



Attachment B: Budget Request Table and Narrative

Social Work, Therapy, and Counseling Internship Grant Program

Attachment B - Budget Request Template

Instructions: For the budget component, please fill out cells C11:F23 and C26:F26. Sums should autopopulate, though we highly recommend double-checking totals.

For the budget narrative, please complete H12:28

Directions:	Program Year				Total	Budget Narrative Instructions
	Year 1 (9/30/2025 –6/30/2026)	Year 2 (7/1/2026 –6/30/2027)	Year 3 (7/1/2027 –6/30/2028)	Year 4 (7/1/2028 –6/30/2029)		
Budget Item						
a. Personnel					\$ -	List all staff positions by title (both current and proposed) of the lead agency to be funded through this grant. Give the annual salary of each position, the percentage of each position's time devoted to the project, the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant, and the total personnel cost for the period of performance.
b. Fringe Benefits					\$ -	Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement, etc.
c. Travel					\$ -	Specify the purpose, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other costs for each type of travel.
d. Equipment						Identify each item of equipment you expect to purchase which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than \$5,000, use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see 2 CFR 200.33 for the definition of Equipment). List the quantity and unit cost per item. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 are supplies, not "equipment".



Section F: Evaluation

Category	Points Possible
Organization and Experience	10
Team	10
Clinical and Education Partnerships*	30
Approach to Scope of Work**	30
Outcomes	10
Budget	10
Response Total	100
Finalist Interviews (if necessary)	25

* Letters of support/MOUs/contracts will be taken into consideration as part of the partnership scoring category.

** Service of students who meet priority populations outlined in the RFP will be considered in scoring of this category.



Attachment C: Sample Contract

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SUBCONTRACTOR AGREEMENT

This Subcontractor Agreement (this "Agreement") is entered into between Policy & Innovation Center, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation d/b/a San Diego Regional Policy and Innovation Center ("PIC"), Trailhead Strategies Inc., a California stock corporation ("Trailhead"), and [INSERT NAME], a [INSERT TYPE OF LEGAL ENTITY AND STATE OF FORMATION] ("[NAME]" or "Subcontractor"), effective as of the date on which it is fully executed by PIC, Trailhead and [NAME] below (the "Effective Date"). PIC, Trailhead and Subcontractor are referred to herein together as the "Parties" and each individually as a "Party." Any capitalized terms not defined in this Agreement shall have the meaning assigned in the County Agreement (as defined below).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, PIC is a Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity dedicated to building resilient and inclusive communities that can adapt, persist, and thrive through changing and challenging circumstances;

WHEREAS, Trailhead is a workforce and economic development consulting company dedicated to building a more inclusive, resilient, and competitive American workforce;

WHEREAS, PIC and the County of San Diego, a political subdivision of the State of California (the "County"), are the parties to that certain County Contract Number 572148, Agreement with San Diego Regional Policy and Innovation Center for Public Behavioral Health Workforce Development and Retention Fund Administrator, effective as of October 11, 2024, attached hereto as *Exhibit 1* (such agreement, as now in effect and as may be further amended, the "County Agreement"), pursuant to which PIC agreed to establish and administer the Public Behavioral Health Workforce and Retention Program (the "Program") for the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services Agency ("HHSA") as described in the County Agreement;

WHEREAS, the Program's purpose is to distribute and monitor the use of funding to support individuals seeking a variety of training, tuition support, upskilling, and incentive opportunities designed to attract and retain workers in the public behavioral health field;

WHEREAS, PIC's contract award is pursuant to the bid proposal that PIC submitted in response to HHSA RFP 735 on behalf of a collaboration among PIC (as lead offeror), Trailhead and other subcontractors including Social Finance (collectively, the "Coalition");

WHEREAS, such bid proposal and the County Agreement reflect that PIC will utilize services from various organizations and partners to design and provide certain program management and delivery services for the Upskilling to Meet Professional Needs programs (the "Upskilling Programs"), a series of programs for workers seeking to advance their education, training and/or certification who may not have the income or ability to finance education or certifications, and/or capacity to take on student debt, to be provided by training and educational

Questions



Next Steps:

July 31: Last day to submit questions

August 4: Q&A Posted to ELEVATE website

August 27 @ 11:59 pm PT: Proposal due via email to ELEVATE@trailheadstrat.com

