



Employer Learning Community Kick Off Meeting

8.27.2025



Agenda

- Introductions (5 minutes)
- ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund Overview (10 minutes)
- Goals of the Employer Learning Community (5 minutes)
- Review of 5 ELEVATE Programs (25 minutes)
 - Goals
 - Status of each training program
 - How employers can benefit and engage
- Questions and comments (10 minutes)
- Review of upcoming meeting topics (5 minutes)



Speakers

Policy & Innovation Center



**Stephanie
Gioia-Beckman**

*Senior Director,
Workforce &
Community Impact*

Social Finance



Kia Kavooosi

*Director, Impact
Investments*

Trailhead Strategies



Andy Hall

Founder & CEO



Program Context and Goals

Context

The Elevate Behavioral Health Workforce Fund is a Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation Program approved for **\$75 million over five years** by the Behavioral Health Commission and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. MHSA Innovation funds are intentional in identifying innovative, new or adaptive approaches in addressing community mental health services.

Goals

The goal of The Elevate Behavioral Health Workforce Fund is to **attract and retain workers in the public behavioral health field** by deploying funding to support individuals seeking a variety of training, tuition support, upskilling, and incentive opportunities.

Team

The **Policy & Innovation Center** (PIC) was procured by San Diego County as the Program Administrator of The Elevate Behavioral Health Workforce Fund and will be partnering with two subcontractors **Social Finance** and **Trailhead Strategies** to implement The Elevate Behavioral Health Workforce Fund.





ELEVATE

Behavioral Health Workforce Fund

\$75M to help over 2,000 individuals start, succeed, and advance in County-funded BH programs over the next five years

San Diego Pay It Forward Loan Program

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

1

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Expansion Program

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

2

San Diego Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network

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

3

Peer Support Training and Placement Grants

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

4

Social Work, Counseling, and Therapy Internship Expansion Fund

Funding to provide paid, high-quality internships to clinical counseling students in public BH.

Eligible Employer List

Behavioral Health



Investing in the Future of Behavioral Health in San Diego

San Diego County faces a critical shortage of behavioral health workers, limiting access to vital mental health and substance use services and impacting individuals, families, and communities. The ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund is a bold initiative to address this challenge by investing \$75 million to grow and strengthen the local behavioral health workforce.

ELEVATE ELIGIBLE EMPLOYERS LIST: To qualify for loan forgiveness or serve as an upskilling training provider site under the ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund, organizations must appear on the ELEVATE Eligible Employers List. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Critical to participating in these programs





ELEVATE Eligible Employers List

Alpha Project for the Homeless	Interfaith Community Services
Alvarado Parkway Institute- Behavioral Health Unit	Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Amali House	La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc
Anthem Compassionate Care LLC	McAlister Institute for Treatment and Education
APEX Recovery LLC	Mental Health America in San Diego County
Aurora Behavioral Health Care San Diego	Mental Health Systems Inc. DBA TURN Behavioral Health Services
Behavioral Health Management System DBA Alpine Special Treatment Center	Metropolitan Area Advisory Commission (MAAC)
Carroll's Community Care	Milestone House
Casa De Amparo Inc.	Mission Treatment Services, Inc.
Casa El Cajon	NAMI San Diego
Catholic Charities	Neighborhood House Association
Center for Positive Changes	New Alternatives Inc.
Chadwick Center at Rady Children's Hospital	New Entra Casa
Changing Options Inc	North County Lifeline Inc.
Community Research Foundation	Orlando Guest Home
County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services	Palomar Family Counseling Services Inc.
CRASH Inc.	Pathfinders of San Diego Inc
Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.	Pathways Community Services, LLC
Crossroads Foundation	People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)
Deaf Community Services of San Diego Inc.	Prime Healthcare Paradise Valley -- Behavioral Health Unit
El Dorado Community Service Center	Rady Children's Hospital
Epiphany (T.H.E C.I.R.I.C.L.E By Epiphany)	Rancho Digius, LLC
Episcopal Community Services	Rite of Passage Adolescent Treatment Centers and Schools Inc.
Exodus Recovery Inc.	San Diego American Indian Health Center
Family Health Centers of San Diego Inc.	San Diego Center for Children
Fancor Guest Home	San Diego Freedom Ranch Inc
Fred Finch Youth Center	San Diego Second Chance
Genesis Recovery Inc.	San Diego Treatment Services, San Diego Health Alliance
GHC of El Cajon	San Diego Youth Services
GHC of Lakeside LLC	SBCS Corp
Harm Reduction Coalition of San Diego	Scripps Health - Behavioral Health Unit Only
Harmonium Inc.	Sharp Grossmont Behavioral Health Unit Only
Health Right 360	Sharp Healthcare
House of Metamorphosis Inc	Sharp Mesa Vista
Indian Health Council Inc.	



ELEVATE Eligible Employers List

SOAP MAT, LLC.	The Way Back Inc.
Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) San Diego Inc.	Traditions Psychiatry Group PC
Southern Caregivers Resource Center	Turning Point Home of San Diego Inc.
Southern Indian Health Council	UC San Diego Health
Star View Adolescent Center Inc.	Union of Pan Asian Communities
Stepping Higher Inc	Urban Street Angels, Inc
Stepping Stone of San Diego Inc.	Varsity Team Inc.
Survivors of Torture International	Vista Community Clinic
The Fellowship Center	Vista Hill Foundation
The Meeting Place Inc.	Vista Woods Health Association LLC
The Twelfth Step House of San Diego	YMCA of San Diego County

To request inclusion on the ELEVATE Eligible Employers List, please email ELEVATE@thinkpic.org with an explanation of why you are requesting to be added to list and provide the following details:

- Organization name
- Organization type, e.g. non-profit, FQHC
- Do you provide services in San Diego County?
- Does your organization provide services to clients who are Medi-Cal enrolled or eligible?
 - If yes, does your organization provide mild to moderate or serious mental illness / serious emotional disturbance services, and/or substance use disorder services?
- Does your organization serve special populations, e.g. low-income, special needs, culturally or racially diverse, specific regions, etc.

Goals of the ELC

- Provide executives, HR leaders, and hiring managers from eligible ELEVATE employers the latest updates on ELEVATE programs
- Explore opportunities to use ELEVATE programs to advance your hiring, internal training, and retention goals
- Ask questions and raise issues about how the programs are operating and how they can be improved
- Connect with program partners (education institutions, training providers, etc.)
- Learn from peer organizations about workforce best practices and lessons learned



PROGAM UPDATES AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

8.27.2025

Learn more about each program at
thinkpic.org/work/behavioral-health/

San Diego Pay it Forward Loan Program

Current Status

- **Phase 1: Master's Programs that lead to LCSWs and MFTs**
 - SDSU and CSUSM programs approved and currently accepting loan applications
 - In process with the financial aid offices at NU
- **Phase 2: Nurse Practitioner Programs**
- **Phase 3: Exploring feasibility of ELEVATE “incumbent worker” sections or cohorts**

Opportunities to Engage

1. Share the opportunity with current staff and other professionals in your network using the San Diego Pay It Forward Loan Program materials and application information.
2. Support employees participating in the San Diego Pay It Forward Loan Program by offering opportunities to participate in internships, practicums, and other work experience programs while they attend their educational institution, to increase their chance of securing a job in behavioral health after completing their education.
3. Communicate with potential job candidates participating in the San Diego Pay It Forward Loan Program that you are an approved ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund Eligible Employer, and notify them that if they work at your organization, they are eligible for loan forgiveness.



Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network

Current Status

- RFP closed on July 2nd
- **The LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network has been selected**
- **Contract target date is September 1**
- **September 24th ELC meeting will be focused on apprenticeship**

Future Opportunities to Engage

- Serve on apprenticeship employer committees to review skill and competency requirements, identify high-quality education and training partners, inform how individual apprenticeship programs operate.
- Identify and refer existing employees interested in participating in an available apprenticeship program to the lead agency.
- Hire new employees as apprentices, or trainees, (e.g., SUD Counselor trainee) creating an interim step into your organization for individuals who don't meet all the qualifications of your current role.
- Work with the lead agency to develop resources, or revenue sharing opportunities for meeting apprenticeship milestones, including enrollment, half-way completion, and program completion.



Peer Support Specialist Training and Placement Program

Current Status

- **RFP closed on July 2nd**
- **NAMI San Diego and Pacific Clinics have been selected**
- **Contract target date is September 1**

Opportunities to Engage

- Identify and refer existing employees interested in becoming Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPSS) to one of the selected Peer Support Training providers.
- Hire CPSSs (or individuals who plan to begin their CPSS training) from one or more of the selected Peer Support Training providers.
- Work with one or more of the Peer Support Training providers to expand peer retention and wellness services, including opportunities to develop resources for hitting placement and retention milestones.
- Work with training providers and PIC/Trailhead to identify subsidies to offset hiring, onboarding, and supervision costs.



Social Work, Therapy, and Counseling Internship Program

Current Status

- RFP closes September 4th
- Contracts expected to start November 1, 2025

Future Opportunities to Engage

- Review the RFP ([link](#)) and consider applying as a Lead or Partner agency RFP, that would require:
 - Expanding internship opportunities for master's students in accredited social work, therapy, and counseling programs.
 - Hiring and providing clinical supervision for associates that graduate and complete internships.



Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Expansion Program

Current Status

- **RFP closes August 27**
- **Contracts expected to start November 1, 2025**

Future Opportunities to Engage

- Pending RFP responses, potential opportunities could include:
 - Express interest in serving as a clinical placement site for nurse practitioner students
 - Express interest in serving as a placement site for post-graduate nurse practitioner fellows
 - Hire Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners that complete the program.



Discussion | Planned Schedule and Topics

- What critical information does your organization need to effectively engage with these programs?
- Based on the goal of the ELC, what other key discussion items should the ELC prioritize in 2025 and 2026?

Date	Topic
September 23 or 25th (TBD)	<p style="text-align: center;">The San Diego Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Launch Apprenticeship Network and its partners • Behavioral Health Apprenticeship 101 for Employers • McAlister Institute Apprenticeship Showcase
October 29th (tentative)	<p style="text-align: center;">Best Practices for Hiring and Integrating Peer Support Specialists Into Clinical Teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to NAMI San Diego and Pacifici Clinics Training Institute • Discussion on current challenges and opportunities in regions peer training, certifying, and employment “system”
November 19th (tentative)	<p style="text-align: center;">Incorporating Nurse Practitioners in Community Behavioral Health service models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the ELEVATE PMHNP Expansion program • Overview of NP scope of practice • Billing and administration
December (TBD) (in person – holiday reception)	<p style="text-align: center;">Holiday Reception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successes and lessons learned • 2026 future engagement opportunities





Appendix | Overview of each program

Employer Learning Community mtg: 8.27.2025



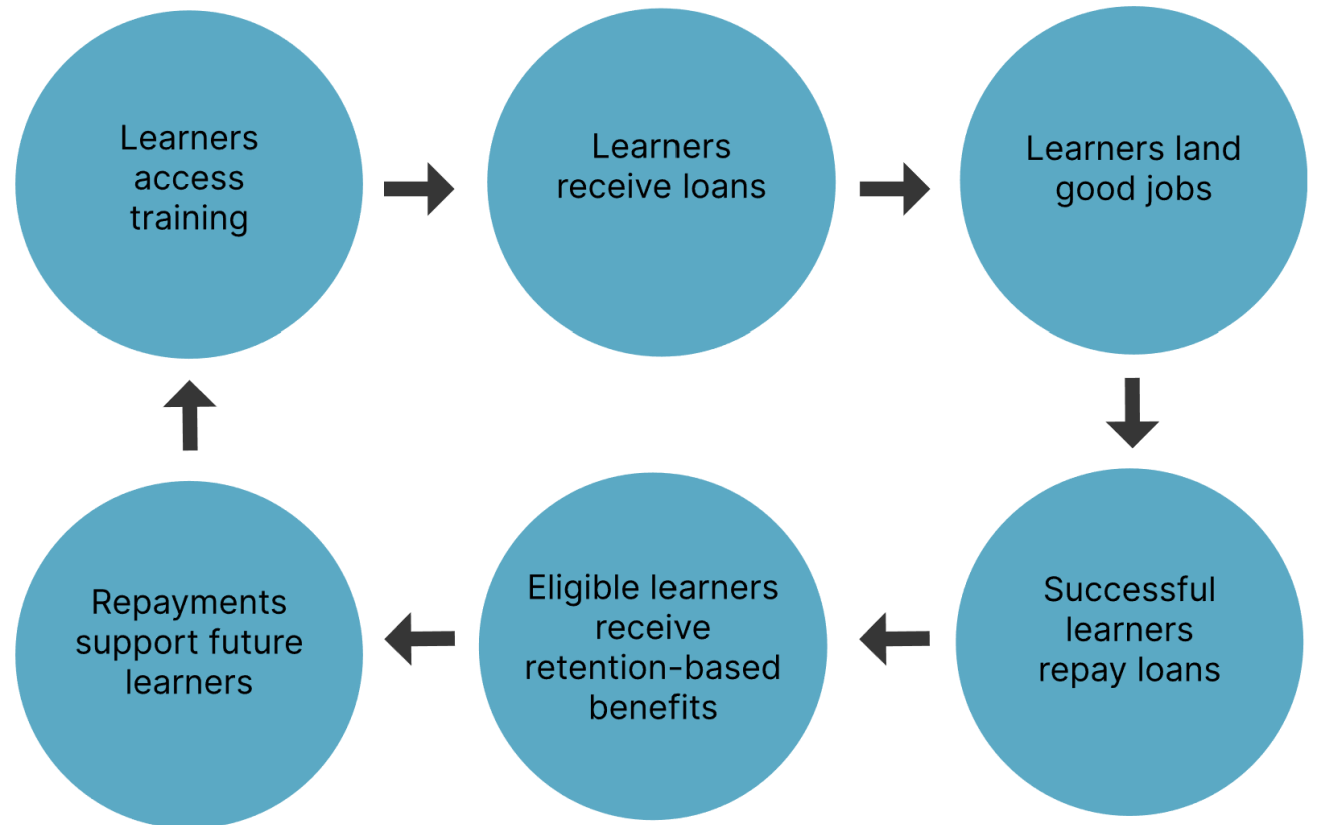
San Diego Pay it Forward Loan Program

The San Diego Pay It Forward Loan Program will support the training and retention of new and incumbent workers via student-friendly loans and will recycle loan repayments to serve additional individuals.

Description

- **0% interest** and no origination fees
- **Income-based deferment** (i.e., \$0 monthly payment amount) for borrowers below income threshold
- **Incumbent workers** are eligible for retention-based reductions of their loan balances
- **Loan forgiveness** after five years of service in public BH
- Borrowers' repayments **“pay it forward”** for future participants

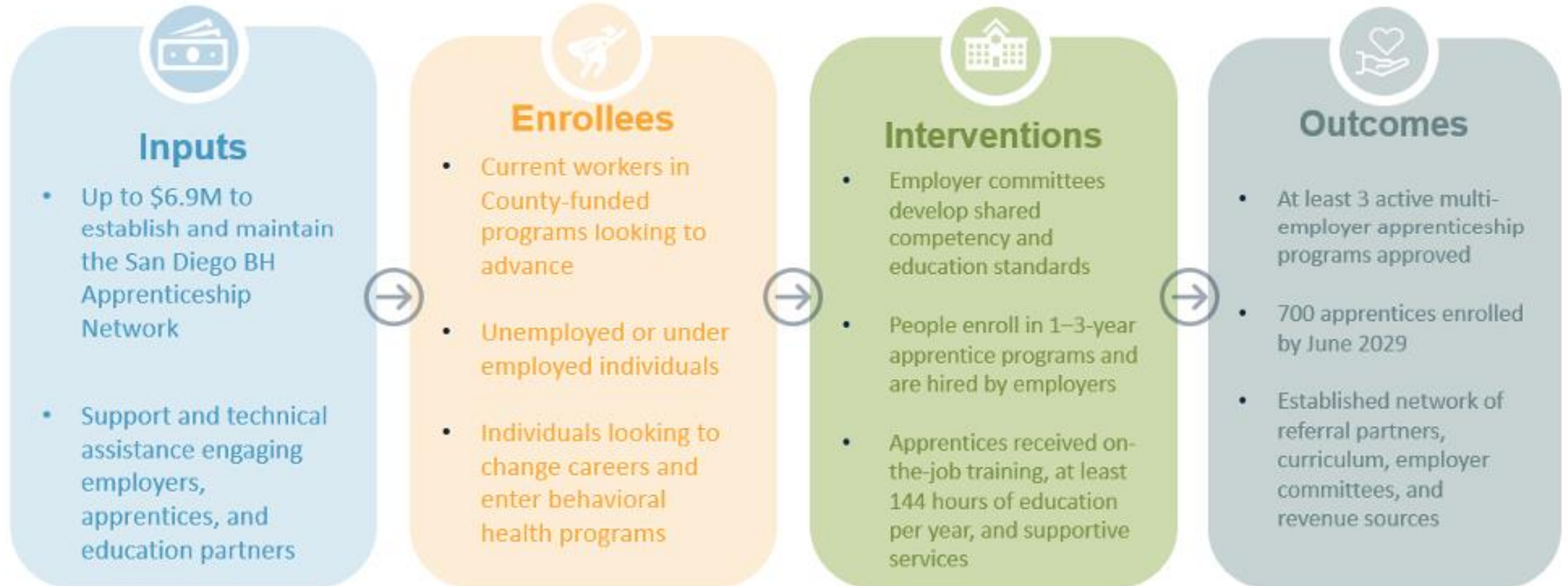
How it Works



Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network

Problem Statement

- There is a shortage of SUD Counselors, Case Managers, Community Health Workers, and other key BH fields.
- The traditional education model to enter these fields is not producing the needed professionals and can be particularly challenging for adult learners and individuals with lived experience.



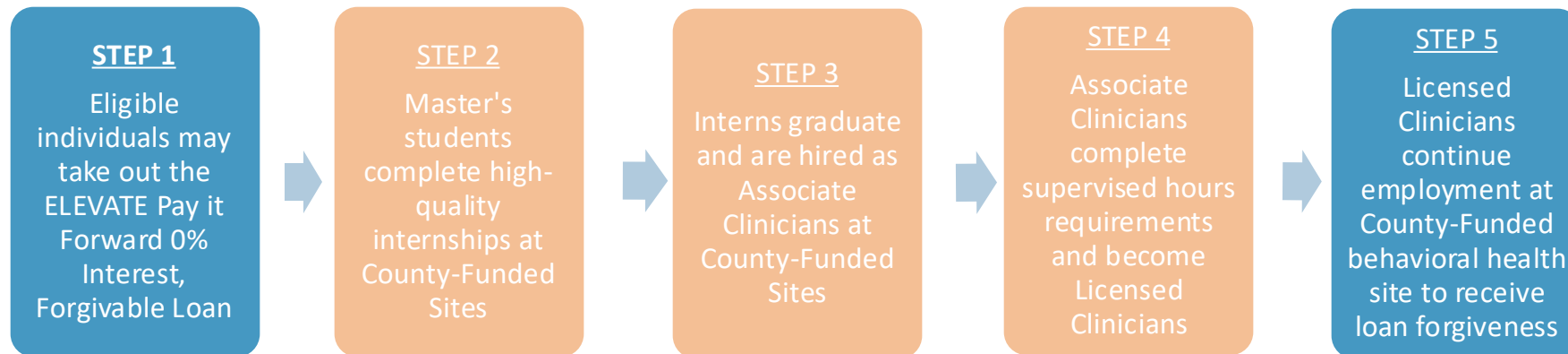
Peer Support Training and Placement Grants

- The goal of this program is to enroll a total of 400 individuals in California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA)-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification training programs by June 30th, 2029.
- Up to \$3,765,410 total is potentially available for performance-based payments.



Social Work, Therapy, and Counseling Internship Program

- 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
- 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).



LOGIC MODEL

Problem Statement

- There is a need for additional Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners in San Diego County.
- Graduate program tuition costs, a shortage of clinical sites and supervision opportunities, and a shortage of attractive post-graduate employment opportunities in public behavioral health settings have been cited as barriers to expansion.



Inputs

\$5.4M for 1-2 eligible education institutions for clinical supervision, education, and partnership development

0% interest, forgivable student loans through the San Diego Pay-it-Forward Loan Program



Beneficiaries

- Working RN's interested in becoming PMHNPs and working in County-funded programs
- Enrolled NP students interested in pursuing post-graduation employment in public behavioral health in San Diego County



Interventions

- Education programs expand clinical site partnerships with County-funded programs
- Programs offer specialty didactics and support to equip students for community BH
- 0% interest student loans cover tuition and living expenses, forgiven 5-year service requirement.
- Students receive post-graduation employment support/opportunities



Outcomes

- 1-2 new or existing programs enroll **~135 additional PMHNP students** by 2029
- Expanded clinical partnerships and PMHNP post-graduation employment opportunities with County-funded programs.