



Behavioral Health Employer Learning Community

10.2.2025



Goals of the Employer Learning Community (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



Agenda

- ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund Updates (10 minutes)
- ***Program Deep Dive: Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network***
 - Program overview (5 minutes)
 - The McAlister Institute SUD Certified Apprenticeship (20 minutes)
 - Introducing the Lead Agency | LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network (10 minutes)
 - Q&A (10 minutes)
- Upcoming Sessions and Next Steps (5 minutes)



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.





San Diego Pay It Forward Loan Program

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

SDSU

San Diego State University



Nurse Practitioner (NP) Expansion Grant Program

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

Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network

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



Peer Support Specialist Training Grant Program

Funding to train, place, and retain Certified Peer Support Specialists in San Diego County.



Social Work, Counseling, and Therapy Internship Program

Funding to provide paid, high-quality internships and associate supervision opportunities for social work, therapy, and clinical counseling students in public BH.

THE “WIFM” for Eligible Employers

“What is in it for me?” (The WIFM)

■ Pay It Forward Loan Program:

- Recruit master’s graduates that have take out a loan, and promote that they can receive loan forgiveness on eligible job postings and loan balance reductions for incumbent employees who return to an eligible behavioral health role
- Refer/support current employees to return to school and upskill to become licensed clinicians

■ Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network:

- Get education and certification costs covered to help current and new staff become get certifications (e.g., CADC I, BH Wellness Coach)
- Get a steady pipeline of unlicensed professionals, with potential subsidies to offset mentorship/supervision costs

■ Peer Support Training and Placement Grants:

- Hire CalMHSA Certified Peers
- Get current staff certified
- Receive services and TA to retain peers and support their advancement

■ Nurse Practitioner Expansion Program:

- Get supervision, support and technical assistance to incorporate PMHNP’s into your clinical services
- Serve as a host site for post-graduate PMHNP fellows

■ Social Work, Therapy, and Counseling Internship and Associate Program:

- (TBD) - still evaluating proposals.





The Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network



What is an apprenticeship?

Defining Features

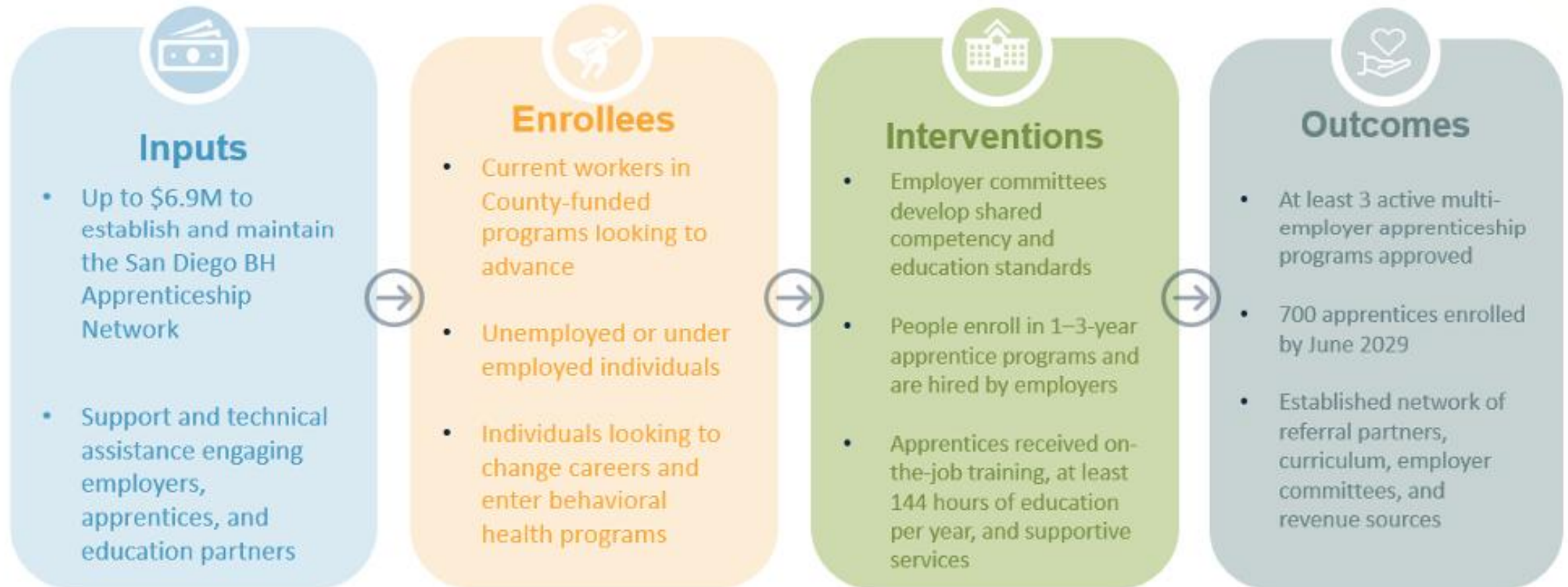
- 1-3 year programs where individuals “earn and learn”
- For New Hires and Existing employees
- Industry Led with Employers Signing Off on Curriculum
- Paid W2 Job
- Structured On-the-Job Learning with Clear Performance Reviews
- Structured Wage Increases
- Supplemental Education (at least 144 hours)
- Diversity
- Quality & Safety
- Leads to Industry Recognized Credentials



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.



Lessons from the Field: The McAlister Institute SUD Certified Apprenticeship Program

About LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network



In Partnership with
FOUNDATION for CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CURRENT INDUSTRY SECTORS



- **Registered Apprenticeship Program Sponsor & Intermediary since 2019**
- **25+ occupations dual-registered by DAS and DOL**
- **10+ occupations available through program sponsor partners**
- **1500+ apprentices registered, 200+ employers, 20+ CBOs, WDBs, intermediaries, etc.**

CORE PARTNERS



“What’s in it for me?” // The WIFM for Employers



In Partnership with
FOUNDATION for CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

■ Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network:

- Get education and certification costs covered to help current and new staff earn state certifications (e.g., CADDC I, BH Wellness Coach) through an apprenticeship tuition assistance program
- Get a steady pipeline of unlicensed professionals, with potential subsidies to offset mentorship/supervision costs
- Build out internal mentorship and supervision structure in your organization for key roles



Timeline / Next Steps



In Partnership with
FOUNDATION for CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Initial Priority Occupations:

- Substance Use Disorder Counselor
- Social & Human Services Assistant (e.g., case manager, outreach worker)
- Community Health Worker

Sept-Oct 2025

- Finalize contracts with core partners
- Hire Behavioral Health Manager
- Collect employer interest

Nov-Dec 2025

- Apprenticeship Information Sessions for employers

Jan-Mar 2026

- Launch new cohorts
- Launch Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Committee

To learn more or stay connected, contact Natalie Maris Weaver at Natalie@launchapprenticeship.org



Express Interest – Employer Interest Form



Employer Interest Form | ELEVATE Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network

Thank you for your interest in the ELEVATE Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network, a program of the [ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund](#). The [LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network](#), in partnership with the San Diego Workforce Partnership and the San Diego Community Colleges, are providing services and educational programs to help employers participate in apprenticeship programs for a range of behavioral health occupations. Please take this 5-minute survey to help us understand how we might best support your organization explore, plan and/or implement an apprenticeship program.

* 1. First, can you share a few things to quickly get started?

Name	<input type="text"/>
Title	<input type="text"/>
Organization	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Phone	<input type="text"/>

2. Which best describes your organization?

- ☐ We currently employ apprentices and are interested in expanding
- ☐ We have finished planning and we are ready to start an apprenticeship program
- ☐ We know other employers use apprenticeship, but need to learn more to see if it will work for our organization
- ☐ We have little to no knowledge of how apprenticeships work, but are open to exploring it
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WRL2HJT>



Employer Learning Community (ELC)

Upcoming Sessions

Date (First Thursday of the month)	Topic
October 2 @ 10am to 11am (virtual)	Participating in Behavioral Health Apprenticeships <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of the Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Network• Peer Learning: The McCalister Institute SUD Counselor Apprenticeship• Introducing the Lead Agency LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network• Next steps and the employer “WIFM”
November 6 @ 10am to 11am (virtual) Register Here	The Pay It Forward Loan Program <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of loan program• Aligning hiring and internal advancement and training opportunities with the Fund• Lessons from the Field: Interfaith Community Services MSW Scholarship program (tentative)
December 4 @ 2pm – 3pm (virtual)	Best Practices for Hiring and Integrating Peer Support Specialists Into Clinical Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to NAMI San Diego and Pacifici Clinics Training Institute• Discussion on current challenges and opportunities in the regions peer training, certifying, and employment “system”



Next Steps to Engage

- **Reflect** on your organization's hiring and internal training programs, plans, or goals for SUD Counselors, Case Managers, Community Health Workers, and other unlicensed roles for 2026
- **Complete** the 5-minute employer interest assessment survey to let us know your priorities, questions, and interest.
- **Register** for the next ELC meeting on November 6th to discuss the Pay it Forward Loan program



Questions and Discussion



In Partnership with
FOUNDATION for CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Natalie Weaver

Director of Programs and Projects
natalie@launchapprenticeship.org



TRAILHEAD
STRATEGIES

Andy Hall

President & CEO
andyhall@trailheadstrat.com

