



# Learning Collaborative on Improving Workforce Recruitment & Retention In Behavioral Health

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## *Request for Applications*

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**This Collaborative is open to 10 community behavioral health organizations that provide mental health and/or substance use services in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.**

[Download the Collaborative Application.](#)

A recorded [Informational Webinar](#) on this Request for Applications is now available to review online. Viewing the webinar is highly encouraged.

**The application deadline is September 14, 2022, at 5:00 pm EST.**

### Overview

Recruiting and retaining a workforce has been a longstanding challenge for organizations that provide mental health and substance use services. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, general labor shortages in the U.S., and the 'Great Resignation' have turned this challenge into a national behavioral health workforce emergency. Turnover and position vacancy rates have been at unprecedented levels during the past year. These are costly to organizations, place a heavy burden on remaining employees, and decrease access to quality care for individuals seeking services. It is particularly difficult to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and to foster equity and inclusion in the workplace.

To assist behavioral health organizations in addressing their recruitment and retention challenges, technical assistance is being offered through an all-remote Learning Collaborative, which is open to mental health and substance use service providers located in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The Collaborative will address: (a) recruitment and retention challenges during the pandemic, (b) the longer-term challenges post-pandemic, (c) fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, and (d) building structures and processes to sustain improvement on recruitment and retention over time.

Organizations that are accepted to participate will each create a three-person Recruitment and Retention Team for this initiative. All team members will participate in a series of three virtual sessions (three hours each) that involve education and workforce planning. During these sessions teams will receive: (1) information on best practices in recruitment and retention, including strategies to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion; (2) technical assistance on developing a recruitment and retention plan for their organizations; and (3) guidance on managing the change process in their organizations. After these sessions, teams will work within their organizations to fully develop their recruitment and retention plans, and then implement their plans with ongoing technical assistance from the Learning Collaborative facilitators.

### **Cost**

There is no fee for organizations to participate in this Learning Collaborative.

### **The Sponsor**

This initiative is sponsored by the [Central East Mental Health Technology Transfer Center](#) with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

### **The Technical Assistance Provider**

The Learning Collaborative was designed and is managed by [The Annapolis Coalition on the Behavioral Health Workforce](#), one of the nation's leading technical assistance organizations focused on mental health and substance use workforce issues.

### **Learning Collaborative Facilitators**

The Learning Collaborative will be led by Michael Hoge, Ph.D. and Manny Paris, Psy.D., both of whom are clinical psychologists. Dr. Hoge is a Professor of Psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine, Director of Yale Behavioral Health, and Senior Science & Policy Advisor of the *Annapolis Coalition*. Dr. Paris is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine, Deputy Director of Hispanic Services at the Connecticut Mental Health Center, and a Senior Consultant to the *Annapolis Coalition*.

### **Eligibility**

#### Inclusion Criteria

1. Community behavioral health organizations serving Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, or the District of Columbia.
2. Organizations in good standing with their state's or district's behavioral health, public health, and Medicaid agencies and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

#### Exclusion Criteria

1. Hospitals and health systems.

2. Organizations involved in other major change initiatives must attest to their ability to manage this initiative in addition to the other initiatives.

### The Learning Collaborative Process

Following are additional details about the process:

- Interested organizations apply to participate and designate in their applications three members of their proposed Recruitment and Retention Team. Optimally, the team will include: (a) the most senior human resource staff member responsible for behavioral health recruitment, (b) the most senior behavioral health services manager, and (c) one other individual of the organization's choosing.
- For organizations accepted into the Collaborative, all members of their Recruitment and Retention Teams will view a recorded Orientation Webinar.
- In advance of the formal start of the Collaborative, teams will gather and assemble information about their organization's priorities and data on current recruitment and retention.
- Recruitment and Retention Team members from all participating organizations will participate in the Collaborative Launch, which is a series of three virtual/remote educational and work sessions that each three hours in length. During these meetings, the Teams receive: (1) information on best practices in recruitment and retention, including strategies to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion; (2) technical assistance on developing a recruitment and retention plan for their organizations; and (3) guidance on managing the change process in their organizations. They also will be provided with templates to guide the development of a recruitment and retention plan for their organization.
- The teams will begin selecting their recruitment and retention goals and strategies during the educational sessions and will continue development of their plans after these sessions in consultation with senior leaders and others in their organizations.
- Throughout the process in individual meetings with agencies, the Learning Collaborative facilitators will provide technical assistance by Zoom and feedback on plans and implementation. This includes a review of each organization's recruitment and retention plan prior to implementation.
- CEOs of participating organizations will participate in a one-hour videoconference with Collaborative facilitators to discuss the CEO's role in supporting and guiding the efforts of their Recruitment and Retention Team.
- Participating organizations will submit relatively brief periodic reports containing updates to their plans and a summary of recent implementation activities.
- After the three Launch sessions, all teams will participate in three additional virtual meetings with other teams over the course of the Learning Collaborative to share and discuss goals, strategies, successes, challenges, and methods to sustain change. These sessions provide the opportunity for peer-to-peer learning, problem solving, and support.
- Each team will submit a brief final report at the conclusion of the Collaborative outlining their goals, strategies, results, obstacles, and plans to sustain their focus on recruitment and retention.

- Recruitment and Retention Teams will complete a questionnaire about their satisfaction with the Learning Collaborative.

## Expected Outcomes

Organizations can expect the following outcomes from participating in this Learning Collaborative:

1. Increased knowledge among key leaders and managers about best practices in recruitment and retention of the behavioral health workforce.
2. Increased structures within the organization to implement recruitment and retention best practices.
3. A thorough written workplan to address the organization's recruitment and retention priorities.
4. An increased number of active interventions underway to improve recruitment and retention.
5. An increased emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.
6. Measures of recruitment and retention variables at baseline and change over time.
7. Implementation of sustainability strategies to ensure continuation of behavioral health recruitment and retention efforts.

Note that improved outcomes in recruiting and retaining a workforce are dependent on a sustained focus on these issues. This Collaborative will assist organizations in implementing the processes and interventions that, over time, can bring about significant changes in its ability to find and keep its behavioral health workforce. Measurable change in recruitment and retention may be experienced by organizations during the formal phase of the Learning Collaborative and during a follow-up phase when the interventions have increasing effect.

Effective workforce development involves a continuous focus on workforce issues, rather than brief interventions. This Learning Collaborative is built on the concept of "continuous workforce development" just as efforts to improve the quality of care focus on "continuous quality improvement".

## Key Dates

### Application Phase

Event	Date/Time
The Request for Applications (RFA), the Application form, and a recorded informational webinar are posted for review and download at <a href="#">The Annapolis Coalition</a> .	August 15, 2022
Application submission deadline – due electronically to <a href="mailto:manuel.paris@yale.edu">manuel.paris@yale.edu</a>	September 14, 2022 5:00 pm EST
All applicants notified of selection decision via email.	September 21, 2022

When submitting an application electronically, put the words “R&R Application” and the name of your organization in the email subject line. Agencies will receive an email reply within **48 business hours** confirming receipt of the application. Agencies should contact Dr. Manny Paris ([manuel.paris@yale.edu](mailto:manuel.paris@yale.edu)) if a confirmation is not received. **Only those agencies that receive an electronic confirmation are considered during the review process.**

### Learning Collaborative Phase

Date/Time	Participants	Location
Orientation Webinar Available online September 21, 2022	All Recruitment & Retention Team Members	<a href="#">The Annapolis Coalition Website</a>
Virtual Launch Sessions October 12, 19 & 26, 2022 9:00 am – Noon EDT (Teams attend all sessions)	All Recruitment & Retention Team Members	Zoom Videoconference
CEO Briefing November 30, 2022 10:00 – 11:00 am EST	CEOs of Participating Agencies	Zoom Videoconference
Virtual All Team Meeting #1 February 1, 2023 10:00 – 11:30 am EST	All Recruitment & Retention Team Members	Zoom Videoconference
Virtual All Team Meeting #2 March 29, 2023 10:00 – 11:30 am EDT	All Recruitment & Retention Team Members	Zoom Videoconference
Virtual All Team Meeting #3 June 7, 2023 10:00 – 11:30 am EDT	All Recruitment & Retention Team Members	Zoom Videoconference

### **Organizational Commitment**

CEO/Senior Leader of the Organization:

- A commitment to this initiative and ultimate responsibility for its implementation in their organization.
- Appointment of a three-member Recruitment and Retention Team with a designated team leader.
- Participation in the CEO videoconference with Collaborative facilitators.
- Review and approval of the recruitment and retention plan developed by the Recruitment and Retention Team.
- Support of the Recruitment and Retention Team and plan implementation within the organization.

Recruitment and Retention Team Members:

- Review of the Orientation Webinar.
- Gathering information on the organization's recruitment and retention priorities and data.
- Participation in the three virtual/remote Launch Sessions.
- Development, securing organizational approval, and implementation of the recruitment and retention plan within the organization with support from the Learning Collaborative facilitators.
- Active participation in all technical assistance calls with their agency.
- Development and implementation of a sustainability plan.
- Submission of brief periodic progress reports.
- Active participation in the three All Agency virtual/remote meetings to share information with other agencies.
- Completion of a Final Report.
- Completion of a survey on satisfaction with this Learning Collaborative.

Note: To foster interaction among participants, all Recruitment and Retention Team members are asked to participate in the Virtual Meetings by using a webcam. A recent review of webcams is available in the Wirecutter article "[The Best Webcams](#)."

**Questions about this Request for Applications and the Collaborative should be directed to Dr. Manny Paris ([manuel.paris@yale.edu](mailto:manuel.paris@yale.edu)).**