

ACL announces funding for expanding public health workforce. Read further for more information in this week's *Washington Weekly*.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE HEAD INJURY ADMINISTRATORS

Washington Weekly!

By the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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Administration

ACL to Award Funding to ACL Grantees to Expand Public Health Workforce

The U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) announced this week that it would receive \$150 million to expand the public health workforce within the aging and disability networks. The funding is being distributed through aging and disability grantees and will be available until September 30, 2024, to help cover the costs of staff to conduct crucial public health activities, and to alleviate some of the strain networks have experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding can be used to cover wages and benefits, as well as the costs of associated equipment, training, and supplies for public health professionals. Public health professionals, as listed in the *Federal Register*, include: Case investigator, Contact tracer, Social support specialist, Community health worker, Public health nurse, Disease intervention specialist, Epidemiologist, Program manager, Laboratory personnel, Informaticians, Communication and policy experts, other positions as may be required to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

Funding will be awarded to 11 grantee networks, as follows:

- Centers for Independent Living - \$38.3M*
- Independent Living Designated State Entities - \$4.5M*
- No Wrong Door Systems/Aging and Disability Resource Centers - \$4.4M*
- Protection & Advocacy Systems - \$6.4M*
- State Assistive Technology Programs - \$4.5M*
- State Councils on Developmental Disabilities - \$4.5M*
- State Health Insurance Assistance Programs - \$4.3M*
- State Units on Aging/Area Agencies on Aging - \$49.8M*
- Traumatic Brain Injury State Partnership Programs - \$2.2M*
- Tribes and Tribal Organizations - \$22.6M*
- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities - \$7.6M*

**approximate -- rounded to the nearest thousand*

In addition, the Paralysis Resource Center and Limb Loss Resource Center each will receive grants of \$160,000. Funding was allocated evenly within each group to ensure that each grantee (or probable sub-grantee) receives enough to pay for approximately one full-time equivalent for about one year (depending on the type of professional). Funding for the aging

Funding for the aging network began this week with grants awarded to State Units on Aging. The majority of that funding is expected to be distributed through sub-grants to Area Agencies on Aging

and other community-based organizations providing direct services to older adults. Half of the total funding will be awarded over the next two weeks; the remainder of the funding will be awarded on a rolling basis over the coming months.

HUD and HHS Partner to Support Housing TAC

The U. S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Health and Human Services (HHS) have partnered to create the Housing and Services Resource Center to support people who work in organizations and systems that provide housing resources and homelessness services, behavioral and mental health services, independent living services and other supportive services, and others who are working to help people live successfully and stably in the community. The goal is to foster collaboration and cross-sector partnerships, in order to streamline access to services, better leverage resources, and ultimately make community living possible for more people. This partnership will expand accessible, affordable housing; help people exit homelessness; improve home and community-based services; and address the institutional bias in America's long-term care system.

The [Housing and Services Resource Center](#) will implement a federally coordinated approach to providing resources, program guidance, training, and technical assistance to public housing authorities and housing providers; State Medicaid, disability, aging and behavioral health agencies; the aging and disability networks; homeless services organizations and networks; health care systems and providers; and tribal organizations. Learn more [here](#).

SSA Implements COLA

Starting January 1, 2022, the Social Security Administration (SSA) increased Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for Social Security and Social Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits by 5.9%. This increase is the biggest year-on-year COLA since 1982. The 5.9% COLA began with benefits payable to more than 64 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2022. Increased payments to approximately 8 million SSI beneficiaries began on December 30, 2021.

HHS Holds Roundtable to Discuss Youth Mental and Behavioral Health Crisis

On January 12, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra hosted a virtual roundtable discussion to hear different perspectives from organizations helping tackle the nation's youth mental and behavioral health crisis. Secretary Becerra emphasized that HHS is not waiting to act; the Department is working to advance behavioral health for children, youth, and their families, with a focus on promoting equity, improving access, and fostering innovation.

The roundtable addressed topics including access, capacity, and equity to support services; health care coverage; workforce challenges; the upcoming 988 lifeline; Medicaid funding for services in schools; telehealth; and improved data collection. Participants included pediatricians, psychologists, mental health advocates, and children's afterschool program leaders.

A top priority for the group, according to participants, is to reduce the youth suicide rate. The roundtable underscored the importance of providing children and youth with meaningful access to behavioral health services, including in school and community settings. Secretary Becerra invited participants to recommend specific programs that HHS could engage to achieve measurable progress against this unprecedented crisis.

FCC Launches Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

On December 31, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [launched the ACP](#). This program, created by Congress in the Infrastructure and Jobs Act, is a longer-term replacement for the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program. This investment in broadband affordability will help ensure households can afford the internet connections they need for work, school, health care, and more. The FCC also launched a [toolkit of materials](#) for partners to download and customize to meet their needs. More materials will be added in the coming weeks.

The 9 million households fully enrolled in the EBB program as of December 31, 2021 will continue to receive their current monthly benefit until March 1, 2022. More information about steps current EBB recipients must take to continue receiving the ACP benefit after March 1, 2022 will be available in the coming weeks. For application questions, email ACPSupport@usac.org or call 877-384-2575.

HRSA Updates Preventive Care and Screening Guidelines

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has updated comprehensive preventive care and screening guidelines for women and for infants, children, and adolescents. Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), certain group health plans and insurance issuers must provide coverage with no out-of-pocket cost for preventive health services within these HRSA-supported comprehensive guidelines. The **Bright Futures Program** develops recommended evidence-informed guidelines for preventive care screenings and routine visits for newborns through adolescents up to age 21. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) convenes a team of pediatric primary care experts with funding from HRSA to review scientific evidence and new standards annually and recommend updates to the **Bright Futures Periodicity Schedule** based on the latest research and public comments.

On December 30, 2021, HRSA also accepted updates to existing Bright Futures guidelines. These updates include adding universal screening for suicide risk to the current Depression Screening category for individuals ages 12 to 21, and new guidance for behavioral, social and emotional screening. HRSA has also accepted new guidelines for assessing risks for cardiac arrest or death for individuals ages 11 to 21.

DETAC Announces New Results in Systems Excellence

The Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DTAC) has announced the “New Results in Systems Excellence (RISE) Peer e-Learning Community” is open to all Administration for Community Living’s Administration on Disabilities (AoD) grantees: Centers for Independent Living, Councils on Developmental Disabilities, University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service, Protection & Advocacy Entities, Traumatic Brain Injury Programs, and Projects of National Significance. Space is limited so those interested are encouraged to **apply now**. The launch meeting is scheduled for February 24, 3:00pm (ET).

As AoD grantees (directly or indirectly) support individuals with disabilities to obtain and retain competitive, integrated employment (CIE), they are faced with unprecedented challenges in supporting people with disabilities to access the vital assistive technology that is needed for daily living or CIE. Some individuals who desperately need the supports in the form of assistive technology cannot obtain what is needed due to funding limitations, lack of resources, or their provider’s inability to fund such supports. Grantees are presented with the dilemma in the lack of resources, funding, and partnerships that support individuals with disabilities to utilize the emergent technology needed to excel in activities of everyday life. If your grantee organization is experiencing some challenges with the lack of resources, knowledge, or partnerships to support the advancement of assistive technology for people with disabilities in your state, then this RISE Peer e-Learning Community in Assistive Technology and Employment is for you! Limited time only" or "only 7 remaining"!

Federal Grants

CDC Offers Two New Research Funding Opportunities

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) has announced two new research funding opportunities focused on preventing community violence, **RFA-CE-22-012: The CDC National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention (YVPCs): Rigorous Evaluation of Prevention Strategies to Prevent and Reduce Community Rates of Youth Violence**. The full Notice of Funding Opportunities and NCIPC program contact information can be found on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Announces Grant Opportunities

The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation National Paralysis Resource Center has announced grant funding opportunities through its 2022 1st Cycle Direct Effect and Expanded Impact Quality of Life (QOL) grants initiatives. Applications will be accepted from January 26th through March 9, 2022. The QOL tiered grants program is federally funded through a cooperative agreement with the Administration for Community Living (ACL). Please visit the Reeve Foundation [website](#) for an overview of an for an overview of the QOL Grant **Program**.

Reports and Resources

CMS Releases Medicaid LTSS Annual Expenditures Report

This week, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the Medicaid LTSS Annual Expenditures Report for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019. This report discusses the LTSS rebalancing trends and growth in expenditures for home and community-based services (HCBS) as compared to institutional spending during the time period reviewed. Some of the highlights from this report show:

- Total Medicaid LTSS spending continues to increase. Expenditures increased from \$129 billion in FY 2018 to \$162 billion in FY 2019.
- The percentage of HCBS expenditures comprising total Medicaid LTSS expenditures has steadily increased over the last three decades, but it has slowed in recent years.
- The U.S. total surpassed the long-standing benchmark of 50 percent of LTSS expenditures in FY 2013 and has remained higher than 50 percent since then, reaching 58.6 percent in FY 2019.
- Nursing facilities represented the greatest share of institutional LTSS expenditures, accounting for 80 percent of these expenditures in FY 2019.
- Section 1915(c) waiver programs represented the majority of HCBS expenditures in FY 2019, accounting for slightly more than 50 percent of these expenditures.
- The amount spent on managed LTSS (MLTSS) programs increased more than three-fold in the past 20 years, climbing from \$6.7 billion in FY 2008 to \$47.5 billion in FY 2019.

Please learn more [here](#).

CMS Releases 1915(c) Waiver Programs Annual Expenditures and Beneficiaries Report

This week, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the Medicaid Section 1915(c) Waiver Programs Annual Expenditures and Beneficiaries Report, Analysis of CMS 372 Annual Reports for 2017-2018. This report provides summary information from annual CMS Form 372 report submissions and focuses on trends in section 1915(c) home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver program participation, service use by HCBS population, and expenditures for 2017-2018. Section 1915(c) HCBS waiver programs comprise an important component of HCBS delivery systems in most States.

Some of the highlights from this report show:

- Nationally, in 2018, approximately 1.8 million individuals participated in section 1915(c) waiver programs, representing a 4.9 percent increase from the prior year.
- When normalized for overall U.S. population growth, there were approximately 5.81 section 1915(c) waiver program participants per 1,000 total U.S. residents in 2018.
- In 2018, average section 1915(c) waiver program expenditures per participant per year were \$29,453.

Please learn more [here](#).

NCAPPS Offers Video Shorts on Culture and Person Centered Practices

The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) has released the first five videos in the Culture and Person-Practices video series and will be releasing more videos during the next few weeks. [Visit the NCAPPS Shorts webpage to view the videos.](#) Acknowledging and understanding a person's racial and cultural identities is essential for providing person-centered supports. However, there are few resources that directly address the intersection of culture, language, and identity with person-centered thinking, planning, and practice. NCAPPS wants to further this conversation—a conversation that is crucial for systems to build cultural humility and cultural competence into person-centered thinking, planning, and practices. In a series of short videos, community members from the NCAPPS share their thoughts on how their racial and cultural identities shape their expectations and views of support systems.

Upcoming Webinars

ACL and CMS to Host HCBS Webinar on Settings Regulation

On Thursday, January 27, the Administration for Community Living and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will hold a webinar in their Promising Practices Series: The “Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Regulation: Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going” which will be held from 4:00pm – 5:30pm (ET). [Register for the webinar for the webinar.](#)

The requirements of the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule provide an opportunity to enhance the quality of HCBS and provide additional protections to individuals that receive services. With the transition period coming to a close on March 17, 2023, it’s important to understand both the current state of the transition and what will be needed going forward to ensure continued compliance.

National Academy Offers Webinar on State Policies to Improve Direct Care Workforce

Funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation and the RRF Foundation for Aging, the National Academy for State Health Policy’s RAISE Family Caregiver Resource and Dissemination Center is hosting a webinar on February 8, 2022, 1:00 – 2:00pm (EST) to discuss State policies to improve the quality and supply of the direct care workforce, which are featured in its RAISE State Policy Roadmap for Family Caregivers. The webinar will provide an overview of these policies and will feature a national leader as well as leaders from Arizona and Colorado who will share their policies and innovations to strengthen the home and community-based services workforce. For more information and to register, visit the [website](#).

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The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families.

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