

MHSA Innovation Component

The MHSA Oversight and Accountability Commission's Innovation Committee defines Innovative Programs as novel, creative, ingenious mental health approaches developed within communities in ways that are inclusive and representative, especially of un-served, underserved, and inappropriately served individuals.

An innovation is, for purposes of the guidelines,

- Something that contributes to learning rather than a primary focus on providing a service,
- Introduces a new mental health practice/approach that has never been done before, or
- Makes a change to an existing mental health practice/approach, including adaptation for a new setting or community, or
- Introduces a new application to the mental health system of a promising community-driven practice/approach or a practice/approach that has been successful in non-mental health contexts or settings.

Essential Purposes to Innovation:

- Increase access to underserved groups
- Increase the quality of services, including better outcomes
- Promote interagency collaboration
- Increase access to services

Scope of Innovation:

Innovation(s) may introduce a novel, creative, and/or ingenious approach to a variety of mental health practices, but not limited to mental health services. As long as the Innovation contributes to learning and maintains alignment with the MHSA Essential Elements it may affect virtually any aspect of mental health practices or assess a new application of a promising approach to solving persistent seemingly intractable mental health challenges. These approaches can include the following:

- Administrative/governance/organizational practices, processes or procedures
- Advocacy
- Education and training for service providers (including people not currently defined as mental health practitioners)
- Outreach, capacity building and community development
- Planning
- Policy and system development
- Prevention, early intervention
- Public education efforts
- Research
- Services and/or treatment interventions

A few more features of the guidelines for this component:

- Innovation projects are similar to pilot projects or demonstration projects in that they are time-limited,
- May not turn out as expected and can be terminated,
- If proven successful and to be continued, must be transferred to a different funding source, such as CSS or PEI funds
- Leveraging with collaborative partnership is encouraged
- Can involve regional collaboration with other counties
- Analysis of effectiveness and reporting of progress is required.

The resource paper can be found at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSOAC/docs/InnovationResourcePaper111907.pdf>