



## **INNOVATION PLAN APPROVAL SUMMARY**

### **Contra Costa County Innovation**

**Name of Innovative Programs:**

**Recovery through Employment Readiness**

**Total Requested for Innovation: \$1,109,780**

**Duration of Innovative Programs: Four Years**

**Staff Recommends: APPROVAL**

#### **Review History**

County Submitted Innovation Plan: June 4, 2014

Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) vote on Innovation Plan: July 24, 2014

#### **Innovation Plan Summary**

Contra Costa County is seeking MHSOAC approval for the following Innovative Program:

##### **Recovery through Employment Readiness**

Contra Costa Mental Health recently completed their Community Program Planning Process and identified strengthening their employment readiness program for individuals with serious mental illness as a critical unmet priority. The primary purpose of this Innovation program is to increase the quality of services, including better outcomes, by adding a pre-vocational preparation service to an existing “place and train” employment service, an evidence-based mental health practice currently offered by the Contra Costa Mental Health Cooperative program. Contra Costa County stakeholders wish to evaluate whether adding a vocational counselor as an integrated part of the treatment team will significantly increase the number of consumers actively working on employment readiness as part of their mental health treatment plan, foster stable employment, and promote recovery.

This four-year Innovative Program combines the current employment program available through the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) with a “train first and then place” model to assist those who lack employment readiness skills and are currently being screened out for multiple barriers such as lack of appropriate work habits, fear of losing disability

benefits, language and computer communication challenges, manifestation of psychiatric symptom, criminal justice history, transportation challenges, and citizenship issues. The program will make a specific change to an existing mental health practice by integrating a vocational rehabilitation counselor as part of the mental health multidisciplinary team that works with persons with serious mental illness to implement a treatment plan. A vocational counselor will partner with the consumer to address any and all issues that affect employment readiness prior to any potential referral to the existing job placement specialist and job coaches that are part of the mental health cooperative program. Flexible funding will be available to remove barriers to consumer employment. Other program strategies could include support for such intermediate meaningful activities as volunteering, school participation, travel training, improving social skills, and/or clearing legal issues.

Contra Costa County will provide training and conduct forums to expand service providers' sensitivity, knowledge base, and expertise in adapting effective employment readiness approaches to the numerous non-dominant cultures in the County, such as inner city African American and Latino populations, Urban Native Americans, non-English speaking immigrant populations, and individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or who question their sexual identity.

### **Evaluation:**

The Innovation Program will measure effectiveness by comparing pre-and post-intervention outcomes to determine whether this new model of services will result in more consumers who:

- Successfully engage in the current employment program
- Complete their treatment plan
- Secure competitive employment
- Maintain competitive employment for at least six months
- Reduce symptoms
- Reduce psychiatric crises
- Improve quality of life

The County will track outcomes of the existing mental health cooperative program before and after the addition of the Innovative Program is added (e.g., Number of persons able to engage in supportive employment services, number obtaining competitive employment and the number maintaining competitive employment for at least six months).