



## **INNOVATION PLAN APPROVAL SUMMARY San Francisco County Innovation**

**Name of Innovative Program: Transgender Pilot Program**

**Total Requested for Innovation: \$536,392**

**Duration of Innovative Program: Two Years**

**Staff Recommends: APPROVAL**

### **Review History**

County Submitted Innovation Plan: January 26, 2015

MHSOAC Vote regarding Plan Approval: February 26, 2015

### **Innovation Plan Summary**

San Francisco County is seeking the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission's approval for an Innovative Program, the Transgender Pilot Program. The primary learning goal is to increase access to services for underserved groups by creating social support networks to engage Trans Women of Color into culturally responsive mental health services.

Transgender individuals are at high risk for mental illness and are significantly underserved. According to a 2011 study published the National Center for Transgender Equality, the following is the outlook for transgendered people:

- 41% have attempted suicide
- Trans clients experiences of violence and harassment that has the propensity to produce high levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental illnesses
- 50% report having to educate their provider on Transgender care
- 26% report worsened health conditions because they postponed care

Transgender women of color are especially unlikely to receive needed treatment and experience frequent social isolation. The Innovative Program will evaluate three methods to engage and support this population through: peer-led support groups, targeted outreach, and an annual Transgender Health Fair to act as a one-stop shop for linkages to mental health and other services.

San Francisco expects increased access to a range of community services and supports to improve mental health outcomes in at least two ways: by increasing access to services that directly promote mental health outcomes and by participants' increased perceived connection to caring and supportive individuals and community.

The new Innovative Program will:

- Produce culturally-informed training curriculum and engagement strategies and tools to help transgender women of color engage in mental health services located at city clinics.
- Conduct weekly support groups linking participants to survival-based community services that include a mental health component. While all of the support groups will be strength-based and resiliency-focused with the overarching goal of supporting consumers to engage in mental health services, each will have a different focus: for example, pre-treatment/pre-placement services or community clinic services for Human Immunodeficiency virus HIV-positive clients.
- Conduct a peer-run, one-stop event that will directly engage participants with mental health providers, to determine if participants are more likely to sign up for mental health services if they can easily access what they need in one place and meet service providers face-to-face.

The County expects that decreasing isolation and linking clients to services will help prevent mental illness, or the negative consequences of mental illness, in this population. Transgender women of color frequently identify isolation as one of the key factors that has a negative impact on their mental health. In addition, directly linking those that already have identified mental health challenges into cultural responsive services will promote and improve Wellness and Recovery in the population.

#### **Evaluation:**

San Francisco County will assess the following outcomes related to increased access:

- Did participants increase their access of mental health service as a direct result of the provided services?
- Was there an overall increase in enrollment in county services by transgender women of color following implementation of the program?
- Is there an increase in community services that promote recovery from mental illness?

Each of these methods will be evaluated individually and compared to determine which approaches are most effective. For example, the County intends to assess if transgender women of color feel more comfortable using community mental health services compared to a traditional clinic-based service.

The evaluation will also assess recovery outcomes: for example, increases in participants' sense of connection to caring and supportive individuals and community, reduced anxiety or other mental health symptoms.

Information will be collected from survey instruments to be developed in cooperation with San Francisco County Mental Health Services Act evaluator, who will also assist with focus groups.