

INNOVATION PLAN
COUNTY OF FRESNO

**CALIFORNIA REDUCING DISPARITIES
PROJECT EVOLUTIONS
FY 2023 – 2024 ANNUAL UPDATE**



Department of
Behavioral Health

Introduction

This is the third annual update for Fresno County's Innovation Plan, The California Reducing Disparities Project Evolutions (CRDP-Evolutions). This effort by Fresno County and three of its community-based providers has sought to develop a process to transition Community Defined Evidence Practice (CDEP)s from what was at the time state funded CRDP Phase II programs to Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) program, which would now be Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) programs. Prior to BHSA passing in March of 2024, the plan was seeking to develop a path for these programs to become eligible for Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) fund component of MHSA. With the change to BHSA, the project must start over in exploring viable sustainability funding options.

The original goal of the project was to work with each of the three CDEPs in this plan, along with the stakeholders (community supporters, participants, past participants, etc.), to help identify which of the six MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) strategies the program best fits. Then with community input, identify any adaptations to the existing program that will also help the program better align with outcome requirements of the chosen PEI category. This community driven adaptation would have then helped transition the CDEP into PEI funded program to meet the needs of specific local underserved or inappropriately served communities.

With the passing of BHSA, the state still embraces and emphasize the importances of having CDEPs but many CRDPs are prevention-based and may not transition from MHSA to BHSA without changes to current models or under the current funding source (i.e. PEI).

Background

The CRDP Evolutions were approved by the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) in April of 2021. Upon approval of the program by the MHSOAC, the Department established three-year service agreements for the following programs:

- *Hmong Helping Hands*, coordinated by The Fresno Center, is working with older adults from Fresno County's Hmong community to provide services in a culturally appropriate manner, including in the language of the community members.
- *Sweet Potato Project II*, coordinated by West Fresno Family Resource Center, targets local African American Youth, using agriculture and entrepreneurship.
- *Atención Plena and Placticas*, coordinated by Integral Community Solutions Institute (ICSI), is an intervention and approach being provided by targeting local Latino youth.

The INN plan with details of the need, the specific CDEP utilized by each of the providers, and the overall project design can be viewed by accessing this link to the approved INN Plan ([Here](#)).

The funding for the 35 statewide CRDPs was to come to a conclusion at the end of 2021. This had been a key factor in having the plan approved and to develop service agreements with the three providers, to ensure the programs did not cease once the State funding ended and until agreements could be established. However, at the end of the legislative calendar, the state approved additional state funding for the CRDPs for an additional five years. While this was a positive outcome for all 35 CRDPs, it did create some challenges for the three which were now receiving funding through a County Innovation Plan. As the goal with the Innovation plan was to take the existing service and programs and identify and then implement one community driven implementation to help it align with Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI), it meant that the programs needed to maintain the status quo, for effective assessment. As such local CDEPs had to run two programs/services to meet two different objectives (the state funded services and Innovation Plan project).

When BHS passed in March 2024, Prevention funding and activities were no longer charged to local counties, therefore Fresno County needed to make some changes to the future of this INN plan. In May 2024, DBH received approval from the MHSOAC to extend the CRDP Evolutions INN for two years to continue program evaluation and assist programs in gaining insight on their program and possible new models for sustainability. In the amendment for the extension, DBH

also received approval to contract with Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc. for technical assistance to research potential sustainable funding sources outside of BHSA.

Project Activities

In the CRDP project so far, the initial year (which was only part of a fiscal year (FY)) was focused on start-up, working with the community to discuss and inform the public and providers about MHSA PEI, the regulations, required outcomes, etc. This was to set the foundation for possible changes, additions, redesign, or expansion that providers may have sought to do with their extended state funding had to be done separate from the County INN funding. It was critical to understand what could be adapted to an existing program which had allowed it to become a CDEP, and to see what could be done to help it align with a PEI strategy outcome, without having a negative impact on what had made the program a CDEP.

Provider	Population	Age Group	Total Number Served:		
			Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
ICSI	Latino	TAY	136	28	14
The Fresno Center	SouthEast Asian/Hmong	Older Adults	43	48	19
West Fresno Family Resource Center	African American	Youth/TAY	30	26	25

In year two (FY 2022/23), the programs have each continued to render services to their target populations, in a manner consistent with their program design and format. A large focus of the second year was on data collection, systems identification that will allow for assessment of the program/services, but to also help understand the services and where there may be adaptations to the program to align with current PEI Regulations. Throughout the year the providers and the evaluator have met regularly to discuss data collection needs, measure and methods to be applied for assessment, and to help explore what aspects of current program may help meet a PEI component and/or based on which PEI strategy they see their program best aligning with would need to have measures or outcomes to match.

The County submitted the request on June 5, 2023, to the MHSOAC for approval of a one-year extension making this a four-year plan rather than a three year with no additional funding at that time. The MHSOAC approved the request on June 8, 2023.

In year three (FY 2023/24), the programs continued rendering services to their target populations. Each CDEP organization, with the assistance of the local evaluator, Dr. Iran Barrera, began formalizing each of the program's curriculums.

In March 2024, the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) passed and changed the funding of PEI to where the Department needed to rethink how these CDEPs can be funded in the future. Fresno County returned to the MHSOAC in May 2024 to request an extension of two additional years and add \$2,953,244 in additional funding. The MHSOAC approved the request on May 23, 2024. The additional extension and amendment to the original agreement allows these programs to explore a model sustainable under BHSA or find other possible funding now that some of the PEI funding is slated to end. The amendment to the CRDP seeks to use Third Sector to provide technical assistance in hopes they can review the three programs and create sustainability plans through billable services, grants, new Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) or other sources. This project with the extensions will not exceed five years.

Next Steps

In the past, DBH has been working with the three programs to narrow down their program to a specific PEI strategy, and in some instances the challenge has been how to measure their work in a way that will align with outcome requirements under different funding strategies. With the passing of BHSA, the Innovation plan has changed to explore how the three CRDPs can be sustainable under other funding types under or outside of BHSA. In the coming year, the programs will be exploring all areas of the programs, what challenges they are still having, and what data can be used to develop sustainable funding.

Presently none of these programs are utilizing a Medi-Cal billing options for the programs, and only two have experience as an organization in rendering Medi-Cal reimbursable services. As the

programs examine area of possible focus, the programs have also had to examined what will be the focus, goal or outcome of those efforts.

The project’s evaluator has been working with the providers to create curriculums around what is it specifically is that program seeking to prevent, what activities are tied to prevention, and/or how will the program be able to measure the effort?

DBH will be bringing on Third Sector Capital Partners for FY 24-25 to provide additional technical assistance. Third Sector will review all programs and recommend sustainability plans under Medi-Cal billable services, the new BHSA or other recommendations for outside funding.

Budget

The CRDP Evolution was originally approved for a total of \$2,400,000 over three years, which later received approval for extension for the same amount with an additional two years. After BHSA passed, the MHSOAC approved an additional one year extension in which the new Innovation plan budget is now \$5,353,244 for a total duration of five years. The total of the agreements for the three CRDPs is \$4,406,207. The budget for third year of the program and the expenditures are provided in a table below.

A total of \$380,000 has been allocated for evaluation and related technical assistance.

With the latest extension (after the passing of BHSA), a Suspension of Competition was approved to include Third Sector Capital Partners a part of this Innovation plan for a maximum compensation of \$550,000. Third Sector will be providing technical assistance in reviewing programs and creating sustainability plans for each program.

Only \$20,000 was allocated for the Department’s administration and operations costs for the five years, as the Department focused on investing the funding into the programs/services.

Below is a table demonstrating the budget for each of the three projects in FY 23-24 and what had actually been spent.

	TFC	ICSI	WFFRC	Evaluation	Total
FY 23/24	\$326,609	\$276,455	\$273,558	\$90,000	\$966,622

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Spent	\$305,465.27	\$274,258.56	\$228,282.12	\$90,000	\$898,005.95
% Spent	94%	99%	83%	100%	

The planned budgets for the coming FY (2024-25) are presented in the table below.

	TFC	ICSI	WFFRC	Evaluation	Third Sector	Total
FY 24/25 Max	\$388,609	\$326,455	\$323,558	\$90,000	\$550,000	\$1,678,622