

NCMHA 2023 Learning Collaborative

How SAMHSA Block Grants Can Support Older Behavioral Health



TOOLKIT ACTION STEPS

- Utilize information in SAMHSA guide – *State Behavioral Health Planning Councils, An Introductory Manual, April 2023* - to access your State Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG)
 - Note: information may be separate from Substance Use Block Grant –SUBG; may be a combined Mental Health and Substance Use Block Grant

- Review the MHBG Priority Area - *Improved Access and Reduced Disparities* – All Priority Areas require Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Indicators and Targets
 - There are 5 Statutory Criterion for MHBG; *Targeted Services to Rural and Homeless Populations and to Older Adults is Criterion 4*
 - Provides outreach to and services for individuals who experience homelessness; community-based services to individuals in rural areas; and community-based services to older adults

- Your State is required to have a Planning and Advisory Council which reviews and makes MHBG recommendations
 - Locate the Council meeting schedule – meetings are open
 - Attend the meetings
 - Communicate with the grant writer/Council Liaison about current Council membership and vacancies
 - SAMHSA requires specific membership identities (person in recovery, provider, family member, etc.) and membership percentages)
 - If you are interested in serving and qualify, request that you be nominated for membership

- Meeting attendance – invite others in your network

- Every meeting has “public comment” – advocate for inclusion of older adults as an underserved population
- When services/strategies are described, inquire if they include older adults

- **Additional advocacy**

- MHBG is posted for public comment – involve your network in sending comments/recommendations about the behavioral health disparities that exist for older people

- **Develop a plan for your State**

- Research – address the existing disparities
- Identify available resources that could be utilized
- Develop your ask –(examples) services for older adults; workforce training on aging issues; coalition support; peer support; evidence based programs
- Present you proposed block grant items to the Liaison for consideration – items will require a recommendation from the Planning Council and the approval and authorization from Leadership of your mental health authority