



CaIMHSA

California Mental Health Services Authority

Compassion. Action. Change.

Alameda County Loan Repayment Program Application and Program Guide

Application Submission Deadline: 9/10/2020 5:00 PM PST



**Mental Health
Services Act (MHS)**
Alameda County Behavioral Health

California Mental Health Services Authority

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Executive Summary

The Alameda County Loan Repayment Program (ACLRP) was developed by the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (ACBH), through its Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce Education and Training (WET) component funding and in collaboration with California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA). It will award up to \$10,000¹ to qualified providers within the Alameda County behavioral health care provider network that commit to a 12 month service obligation in a recognized hard-to-fill or hard-to-retain position.

Through this program, Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services seeks to support its qualified providers that service the most underserved populations within the county and work in the most hard-to-retain positions.

¹ Only applicable towards qualifiable educational loans (see “C. Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Educational Loans”)

Section I: Application Guide

A. Eligibility Requirements

ACBH applicants must meet the following criteria to be considered eligible for the ACLRP:

DIRECT CLINICAL SERVICE STAFF	
<p>Work Hours & Location Must work a minimum of 32 hours per week in an eligible ACBH County-operated public mental health setting or a contracted, community-based mental health or substance use disorder agency. Psychiatrists must work a minimum of 20 hours per week in a public mental health program.</p>	
<p>Employment Status Must be employed in an eligible provider role as identified in the ACLRP application, for a minimum of six (6) months in a permanent position.²</p>	
<p>Total Weekly Hours of Direct Clinical Service³ Must provide a minimum of 20 hours of direct service per week. Part-time psychiatrists are exempt from the minimum 20-hour direct service requirement.</p>	
AND AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:	
<p>Providers who are bilingual in one of the county's threshold languages and/or who represent the ethnically and culturally diverse communities that ACBH serves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual in Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Farsi, or Vietnamese <li style="text-align: center;"><i>and/or</i> • Have lived experience as a mental health consumer/family member or represent a culturally or ethnically diverse community that ACBH serves
OR	
<p>Providers in hard-to-fill/retain positions, or those who possess experience or expertise in hard-to-fill/retain skill sets.⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners • Clinical psychiatric pharmacist • Psychiatrists, especially child psychiatrists • Providers with integrated primary care/behavioral health care experience/expertise • Providers who work in programs delivering services to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Older adults 2. Transitional age youth 3. LGBTQI2-S 4. Youth in the juvenile justice system 5. Clients with forensic mental health services 6. Clients with substance use/co-occurring conditions

² Change of jobs to a different organization during the application review process is cause for disqualification, as it voids the minimum length of time for the employment requirement. However, a change of job with the same organization, serving the same population in a hard to fill/retain position will not disqualify.

³ Direct Service is defined as: services that generate units of service, opening or closing cases, crisis intervention, assessments, individual /family/group therapy, rehabilitation services, medication evaluation/consultation, integrated behavioral and EBP interventions.

⁴ To receive credit, clearly identify your qualifying program, job functions and direct service hours on the "Employment Verification" section of the ACLRP application.

B. Eligible Professions

Eligible provider roles for the program are:

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Associate Clinical Social Worker,
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
- Associate Marriage and Family Therapist
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor
- Associate Professional Clinical Counselor
- Licensed Psychiatrist
- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- Licensed Clinical Psychiatric Pharmacist

C. Application to Program

The first step to applying for the Alameda County Loan Repayment Program (ACLRP) is to submit an initial application for the program through our online application software. This section of the Program Guide will outline how and where a user can access application information, what information applicants will need before and during the application process, and how and where they can submit their completed application. There are four distinct parts to the online application:

1. General Eligibility Criteria
2. Applicant Personal Statements
3. Applicant Information
4. Applicant Employment Verification

These four parts are explained in this Program Guide in the sequential order that an applicant will submit them during the online application. The time it takes an applicant to complete each section will vary, but applicants should assume that each part will take more time than the part preceding it. An applicant may begin and end their application at any time during the open application period. There is no time limit to submit materials or responses to the application within that period.

The applicant is responsible for providing all necessary information and ensuring that the information contained in the application is accurate.

As part of the requirements of the ACLRP, awarded applicants may not serve multiple service obligations concurrently and must only be in service of the ACLRP during the agreed upon 12 month service obligation.

Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic limiting access to both in-person correspondence and to limitations in the passing of physical media, CalMHSA cannot receive printed or mailed applications for the 2020 round of ACLRP applications.

Application Deadline

The open application period for the ACLRP will be from July 27th, 2020 8:00 AM PST to September 10th 2020 (5:00 PM PST). Due to the separation of the program application and the applicant employment verification, applicants will have up to two calendar weeks after the close of the application period to return the employment verification to CalMHSA. New applications received after the deadline will not be accepted. Applications found to have incomplete information may be disqualified from submission, and applicants that complete the initial application but fail to return an employment verification will be disqualified from consideration. Duplicate applications may disqualify applicant from submission.

Application Software

CalMHSA will be utilizing three different online software to facilitate the Alameda County Loan Repayment Program application process. This was done to ensure both secure collection practices as we collect sensitive applicant information, and to ensure anonymity from bias during the applicant personal statement review process.

CalMHSA will utilize software through “Career.Place” to facilitate the eligibility, employment, and personal statement information. Career.Place is a human resources software that CalMHSA is utilizing for this grant process due to the software’s superior ability to maintain applicant anonymity to prevent reviewer bias during content review.

In the course of completing an application in the Career.Place portal, applicants will be linked out to a Google Form meant to collect applicant information. This transition is well integrated into the application process and should not cause any confusion. The reason CalMHSA will utilize this method is to ensure that applicant information remains separate from the initial personal statement review process. This will ensure that the review process remains free from bias.

An applicant will be able to edit any section of their application prior to submission at the end of the applicant information section. There is no time limit to questions and the amount of time taken to respond to the application will not affect an applicant’s submission provided their submission is complete.

CalMHSA will be utilizing DocuSign to facilitate the process of acquiring an employment verification form from all applicants. DocuSign is a secure and simple online tool that allows electronic transmission of documents that require review and electronic signature from recipients while maintaining the security of the information transmitted.

C1. General Eligibility Criteria

The first section of the application will establish that applicants meet the basic necessary eligibility standards set by the ACBH needs for this program. If an applicant is unable to meet these requirements, they will be informed of their inability to participate in the program.

C2. Applicant Personal Statements

The second section of the application will ask applicants to supply written “personal statements” in response to questions designed by CalMHSA and approved by ACBH. These questions are designed to allow applicants the opportunity to give broader context to their history of service as mental health care providers while elaborating on how their positionality is uniquely valuable toward efforts to diversify its workforce. The questions were not designed as a test in written proficiency or narrative capacity, but as a tool for application reviewers to use to better ensure that the program services those who work for the underserved and unserved communities in Alameda County.

The questions will ask applicants to elaborate on:

- demonstrated commitment to addressing the behavioral health needs of underserved, unserved, and/or inappropriately served communities
- service to people of diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to racial, ethnic, cultural, military, and/or LGBTQI2-S communities
- efforts to serve communities in a culturally and linguistically competent manner

Applicant responses will be sent to an independent review panel of subject matter experts selected by CalMHSA. More details about the applicant personal statement review panel is explained in the section on [Application Personal Statement Evaluation and Scoring Procedures](#) of this program guide.

C3. Applicant Information

CalMHSA will be collecting general applicant information and work experience including contact information, jobsite information, and an invitation to self-identify demographic information. This information will be reviewed separately from the applicant personal statement responses to ensure that identifying information is removed from the content review process and is collected as a matter of necessity to facilitate the needs of the program. This was done to ensure that content-matter reviewers of your submissions will not have access to any identifying information about you that may inform reviewer bias. This will ensure a fair, objective, and equitable process for all.

C4. Employment Verification

Once an applicant has submitted their application to Career.Place, they will need to complete an employment verification form supplemental to the initial application. The process of reviewing and signing this document has been designed to fully conform with social distancing guidelines and will be facilitated digitally.

This employment verification will require completion and signature by the applicant, then review and signature by the applicant's immediate and direct supervisor. This transfer process will be facilitated by the software that CalMHSA uses to send and receive these documents.

The employment verification form will be sent to the applicant's email submitted in the Applicant Information segment of the online application. This process has been facilitated through a software called "DocuSign" to ensure secure transmission of information.

Applicants who have submitted their application to Career.Place and have not received an employment verification form via email within one calendar week of submission, please contact CalMHSA (ACLRP@CalMHSA.org) for assistance.

C5. Application Resources

Event	Date Posted
ACLRP Informational Webinar	July 29 th , 2020
ACLRP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	August 12 th , 2020

CalMHSA has designed and generated additional resources meant to assist those that wish to apply for the program and to address common questions, concerns, and issues. Due to current restrictions mandating social distancing and on large gatherings, these workshops will be conducted virtually and recorded for viewing at an applicant's discretion. The first resource is an Information Webinar video that explains the background of the program. The webinar will provide a visual and audio walkthrough of the application process. CalMHSA will also post a section to its website of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), generated from applicant correspondence with CalMHSA (ACLRP@CalMHSA.org). Both resources will be accessible on the CalMHSA website (www.CalMHSA.org).

D. Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Educational Loans

Government and commercial loans obtained for health care professional degrees qualify for ACLRP. Qualifying commercial lending institutions are those subject to examination and supervision by an agency of the United States, or by the state in which the institutions have their place of business.

The following types of debt are **not** eligible for loan repayment under the program:

- Loans in default
- Loans repaid in full

- Credit card debt
- Primary Care Loans
- Personal lines of credit
- Residency loans

The applicant must have obtained the eligible education loans in their own name. Eligible educational loans consolidated with loans owed by any other person, such as a spouse, are ineligible for repayment. For loans to remain eligible, applicant/participants must keep their eligible educational loans separate from other debts.

E. Post-Application

E1. Initial Completeness Review

Once the application period has closed, CalMHSA will be conducting a completeness review of all the applicant and application materials submitted. This will serve as a cursory review to ensure that all requirements have been met. All materials including the employment verification documents will need to be submitted no later than two calendar weeks after the close of the application period in order to be considered eligible and reviewed.

If CalMHSA identifies issues with any applications, it will be at the discretion of the administrator and ACBH to decide whether applicants will be given the opportunity to correct or modify their submissions. If CalMHSA extends this opportunity, they will attempt to communicate with applicants through their supplied contact information.

E2. Application Personal Statement Evaluation and Scoring Procedures

CalMHSA will receive all applications and review for completeness. If an application is missing information, it will not be selected to move forward to scoring and review. Following the initial review, all qualified applications will be reviewed and scored by an independent evaluation review panel. The evaluation panel will conduct a fair and impartial evaluation of applications received for this program.

Final awards include consideration of the following elements:

1. At the time of application closing, CalMHSA will check each application for the presence or absence of required information in conformance with the submission requirements.
2. An independent review panel, selected by CalMHSA, will score applications based on pre-established criteria (Subsection B Eligibility Requirements). ACBH intends for this application to support a wide range of provider populations and service communities by distributing awards throughout its area. CalMHSA may give preference to applications seeking to support underserved or unserved communities not addressed by other similarly scored applications.
3. CalMHSA may reject applications that contain false or misleading lender statements.

Evaluator Selection Process

The independent review panel is comprised of individuals with varied backgrounds, to include professional expertise, lived experience, personal knowledge, etc. Panelists' information will not be disclosed as a matter of confidentiality. CalMHSA is committed to ensuring the Evaluation Panel is representative of California's racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Details regarding the specific process of selecting evaluators as well as the results of the evaluation process will not be shared as a matter of confidentiality.

E3. Alameda County Behavioral Health Application Review and Employment Verification

Once all applications have been checked for completeness and reviewer personal statement scores have been submitted, Alameda County Behavioral Health will perform their verification of employment. During this process, ACBH may contact applicants and/or their designated supervising body to identify discrepancies encountered during the verification process. It is at the discretion of the county to determine their process for resolving discrepancies.

E4. Establish Individual Contracts & Begin Service Obligation

Once ACBH has performed their final review, they will identify those applicants intended to participate in the Alameda County Loan Repayment Program to CalMHSA, which will then inform those applicants with an intent to award and to establish individual contracts.

Chosen applicants will have until February 1st to respond to this inquiry and up to February 12th to provide any additionally requested information. If an applicant does not confirm acceptance of their award and submit the completed contract, CalMHSA may take this as a forfeit of their interest for this program.

F. Service Obligation

F1. General Service Obligation Information and Requirements

The service obligation is an agreement whereby applicants maintain their position and responsibilities servicing the communities they have identified in their application. Aside from performing quarterly service check-ins with CalMHSA, an applicant will only need to maintain their employment at their specified job site throughout the length of the service obligation period.

Refer to the section on [Worksite Absences and Employment Interruption](#) for information on disruptions in employment.

F2. Quarterly Service Verification

In addition to agreeing to the length of the service obligation, applicants must agree to quarterly service verifications (QSVs) throughout the length of their service obligation.

Every ACLRP participant must submit quarterly service verification documentation (QSVs) during the length of their service obligation. These QSVs serve as check-ins and are intended to ensure program eligibility requirements are being maintained and that circumstances requiring loan repayment do not change, such as loans falling into default.

The QSV form will be communicated during the establishment of contracts with the awardee and must be completed and electronically signed by the participant. Once completed by the participant, it will be forwarded to CalMHSA who will confirm with the applicant's practice site. By completing and electronically signing the QSV form, the participant and the practice site are certifying the participant's compliance or noncompliance with the clinical practice requirements during the preceding three-month period. The QSV will also record the time spent away from the service site during the three-month period for personal time off, medical and/or maternity leave, or other disruptions in employment.

While CalMHSA will take steps to alert both the participant and the site to the due date for a QSV submission, it is the participant's responsibility to ensure that their ACBH-approved service site completes the verification in a timely manner and that it is accurate.

Participants who fail to ensure that their QSV forms are completed and submitted on time risk not receiving service credit and being recommended for default. Participants who do not submit QSVs or who are consistently late in submitting them may not be eligible for future programs administered by Alameda County or CalMHSA.

If a participant works more than the minimum number of hours per week, then the participant only needs to report absences (or time spent away from the site) that will impede them from meeting the minimum weekly service requirement. This time should be deducted from the participant's bank of allowable absences, which is 35 workdays per service year.

F3. Worksite Absences and Employment Interruption

It will be the general policy of ACBH and CalMHSA to defer to the allowable job site policies in relation to interruption in service and duties at the job site. Change of job site is cause for disqualification, as it voids the minimum length of time for the employment requirement. However, a change of job with the same organization, serving the same population in a hard to fill/retain position will not disqualify.

A detailed allowance for job site interruptions will be articulated in an awardee's service contract upon intent to award.

Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave

If an applicant needs to request maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, they must contact CalMHSA. CalMHSA will defer to the preferences of ACBH to determine whether an extension will be allowed to accommodate for approved leave within the boundaries of current job site policies.

F4. Breach Policy

CalMHSA reserves the right to recover monies for the awardee's failure to perform the obligations set forth in the program agreement.

Section II: Program Guide

G. Program Information

G1. Program Timeline

Event	Key Dates
Open Applications	July 27 th , 2020
ACLRP Informational Webinar	July 29 th , 2020
ACLRP FAQ Question Submission Deadline	August 10 th , 2020
ACLRP FAQ Posted	August 12 th , 2020
Close Applications	September 10 th , 2020 5:00:00 PM PST
Program Winners Selected & Contacted	January 2021
Applicant Contracts Generated, Lender Information Requested	Jan. 2021 – Feb. 2021
Service Obligation Period Begins	March 1, 2021
Service Period Check-In 1	May 2021
Service Period Check-In 2	August 2021
Service Period Check-In 3	November 2021
Service Period Check-In 4 (Final)	January 2022
Service Obligation Period Ends	February 28 th , 2022
Funds Dispersed	April 2022

G2. Program Background

The Alameda County Loan Repayment Program (ACLRP) was developed by the Alameda County Behavioral Health (ACBH), through its Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce Education and Training (WET) component funding and in collaboration with the California Mental Health Services Authority (CaIMHSA).

The purpose of ACLRP is to provide financial incentive to retain current qualified, eligible employees in “hard to fill/retain” positions in the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care system. A limited number of awards will be available for up to \$10,000 towards repayment of educational loans in exchange for a 12 month service obligation. Eligible applicants must work in ACBH county-operated settings or in contracted, community-based mental health or substance use disorder agencies in a “hard to fill/retain” position, as defined by ACBH. Please refer to the attached document for the “hard to fill/retain” criteria established by ACBH to meet our critical workforce needs.

ACLRP is a financial incentive strategy that is included in the ACBH WET Plan. It is designed to retain mental health professionals in ACBH who reflect Alameda County’s diverse population and share the same ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds of the underserved and unserved communities that ACBH serve. Through this program Alameda County Behavioral Health seeks to support qualified employees who meet eligibility requirements and commit to a 12-month service obligation.

G2.1 Issuing Body

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is a Joint Powers Authority, an independent government agency created by California counties and cities, focused on the efficient delivery of California mental health projects for its Members. CalMHSA works collaboratively with the Member Counties/Cities to implement mental health services, project, and educational programs across the state, regionally, and locally.

CalMHSA will perform contract oversight and maintenance for the ACLRP. In this role, CalMHSA will serve as point-of-contact between awardees and Alameda County Behavioral Health in issues regarding the ACLRP. CalMHSA will also maintain contact with all recipients of awards and their educational loan providers.

G3. Available Funding and Amounts

Individual awards will not exceed \$10,000 for each applicant per service obligation. CalMHSA and ACBH may award full, partial, or no funding to an applicant based on a combination of application eligibility criteria, strength of personal statement submission, and available funding.

CalMHSA and ACBH may award full, partial, or no funding to an applicant based on the applicant's success in meeting the selection criteria, and the amount of available funds.

H. Communication Requirements

Grantees must email CalMHSA (ACLRP@CalMHSA.org) within these specified timeframes for the following reasons:

A. Immediately:

- If you are no longer employed by the approved job site.

B. 30 calendar days if you:

- Change to your name, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address or lending institution.
- Will be changing your position within your organization but remain within the bounds of the agreement
- Begin a leave of absence for medical or personal reasons.

C. 60 calendar days if you:

- Begin maternity/paternity/adoption leave.
- Are requesting to switch from full-time to half-time status.

Leaving an Approved Job Site/Provider Role Prior to Completion of Service

CalMHSA expects that participants will fulfill their obligation at the ACBH-approved job site in their specified role identified in their initial application. If a participant feels they can no longer continue working at the approved job site or in their hard-to-fill/retain role, the participant should discuss the situation and/or concerns with their ACBH-approved job site management and must contact CalMHSA immediately via phone or email.

If the participant leaves their ACBH-approved job site without prior communication with and approval of CalMHSA, they may be placed in default as of the date they stopped providing client care at the ACBH-approved job site and become liable for any monetary damages specified in the participant's CalMHSA contract. Participants who are terminated for-cause by their job site will be placed in default and will no longer be in approval of the obligations of their service period requirements.

Transfer Request to another ACBH-Approved Job Site/Position

Because the ACLRP is a retention tool, transfers from one job site or provider role into another job site or provider role is not allowed and will break the requirements of the 12 month service obligation. If an awardee requests a job site transfer due to extenuating circumstances, the awardee must contact both their job site management and CalMHSA.

Unemployment During Service Obligation

Participants who voluntarily resigned from their sites without prior communications and approval with CalMHSA, were terminated for cause, or are deemed ineligible for site assistance will be in violation of the 12 month requirement of their service obligation and will no longer be eligible for participation of this or future Alameda County loan repayment programs.

Cancellation of ACLRP Obligation

The ACLRP obligation will be cancelled in its entirety in the event of a participant's death. No liability will be transferred to the participant's heirs.



Section III: Additional/Supplemental Information

I. Contact Information

CalMHSA ACLRP Program Team

ACLRP@CalMHSA.org | Responses will be sent within 24-72 business hours

(855) 226-4572 (Mon-Fri 8AM – 5PM)

*This should be the primary contact for all inquiries related to the Alameda County Loan Repayment Program through the Application, Evaluation, and Service Obligation periods.

Alameda County Workforce Education and Training (WET)

smazid@acbhcs.org | (510) 567-8071

*This should be the contact for questions relating to Alameda County Behavioral Health policy and guidelines.

J. Resource Links

[California Mental Health Services Authority](#)

Click on the link to be taken to the CalMHSA website

[Career.Place Application Portal](#)

Click on the above link to be taken to the online application portal

[ACLRP Informational Webinar](#)

Click on the above link to be taken to the Informational Webinar (this will also be posted to the first page of the online application)

[Alameda County Provider Website](#)

The above link connects to the online site for Alameda county providers where additional ACLRP resources will be made available