

## Call for Partners Info Session - May 23, 2018

### Q & A with Liz Baxter, North Sound ACH Executive Director

Q: What is the purpose of the question, "Does your organization have the current capacity to implement significant changes?" What will you do with the answer? Will organizations be excluded as partners if they do not have the capacity? Or will they receive more investment so that they *do* have capacity? What is the ACH's assumed definition of "significant change"?

A: If an organization is staffed in such a way that you can't take on the training or workforce changes to implement the strategies, this may not be the right fit for your organization. We are looking for partners who have the capacity to do things differently, and don't want to assume that is everyone. If you are committed to change but have obstacles or barriers you'd like us to consider, please add additional pages to explain.

Q: If multiple entities seek to work on a project together (i.e. GRACE Project), does each organization need to respond to the call for partners?

A: Both yes and no. Yes, if each partner is wanting to do a separate agreement (register in financial executor portal, is eligible to receive federal funds, can meet recording requirements, etc.). If there is a lead organization that wants to be a partner on a project and take responsibility of what's happening with sub-partners, that's an opportunity, but what it means is we're not collecting data from the sub-partners, only from who signed the partner agreement. Could go both ways.

In 2018 we are not talking about our implementation partners in this Call for Partners. We are looking for partners who are willing to do their own implementation plans to help us with our very detailed implementation plan, and it's very possible that partners who are part of implementation strategies will come in later in the Fall. It really is how you see your organization and how you fit in this Call for Partners and if you're able to carry out what's expected of you.

Q: How will the ACH ensure coverage across all areas of the region when the Partner Application only asks organizations to list which "Counties are served by your organization". This question can be interpreted in many ways, and an applicant's response will reflect those different assumptions. Is it 'county residents served by that organization'?

Does the organization have to have a physical presence in that county? Do they cover the entirety of the county, or only a portion of it?

**A:** The ACH, depending on which initiative we're talking about, is not working on the assumption that everything will cover all of the region. Some will be place-based, or population based. What we're trying to figure out is where is it that you serve, in which counties. The next level of specificity will be in Part 2 of the application. We are looking for partners who are serving people in the five counties; we did not require that your organization's physical address be in that county. Right now we really are looking for 'in which counties does your organization actually serve people.'

**Q:** If there are organizations who want to help solely with domain I activities (i.e. workforce development), should they fill out the application?

**A:** We are erring on the side of 'yes', Part 1 of this application contains required elements, such as getting set up in the financial executor's portal, our master service agreement...the North Sound ACH is doing more specific scopes of work with domain 1 partners, but the full contractual agreement is happening via the portal. If someone is wanting to work on workforce strategies, but they don't have a commitment to equity, the North Sound region, people on Medicaid, we want to know that. We are asking everyone, anyone interested in partnering to apply.

**Liz' emphasis:** We would like everyone to complete Part 1 of this application to indicate to us whether we have enough partners across the initiatives that we're talking about. We committed to all eight of the toolkits areas, but if we don't get partners who have responded that fit in those areas, that tells us the work our team has to do to reach out to potential partners who may not have responded.

We tried to make the packet not overly burdensome, but we strongly suggest that if anyone has questions about specific strategies, that you review our Project Plan Template, especially the areas you're interested in, and see the data that's supporting it, how we were thinking about each of the areas, what challenges we thought we'd encounter, etc. We hope people are going back and reading the information, so we shift away from the notion that we're waiting for people to submit proposals—we have a lot in writing already around the strategies that were laid out. Get familiar with Heather Washington, our Project Plan Template, and keep sending questions our way.

**Q:** Part 1 of the call for partners seems like a current state assessment. Is that how the North Sound ACH views it?

A: No. Part 1 and part 2 are kind of like 80% and 20%. They're all part of the state assessment, but there's not a lot of detail that's expected in Part 1. The current state assessment has been going on for several months, and will continue with what we're going to ask of people in Part 2. It will include much more detailed questions about the organizations themselves, some HIE and HIT assessments. We hope to release Part 2 in the early part of July. All rolling into the current state assessment.

Liz, re: Pathways: For anyone interested in Part 1 and also interested in being one of the care coordination agencies under the Pathways initiatives, there is a separate set of questions released. You still have to complete Part 1 of the application, the Call for Partners AND the Pathways supplement application. (now on our website).

Q: Can we identify our organization as a "coordinator" for partners in our county, particularly very small partners?

A: The way that this Medicaid Transformation project works, is that the ACHs have to perform and deliver on certain things and earn funds, then we require things from our partners, and if they deliver on those expectations, they in turn earn funds. We are actually not required to track what our partners do with those funds when they earn them. So if in your area there are smaller organizations that don't have the staffing to do the application on their own, and you want to include them when thinking of your capacity when you are doing the application, that's fine. But when you get the funds, you would be responsible for dispersing those funds, sharing what you'd earned. We wouldn't need to track that. Our agreement would be with you; you are the organization held accountable.

If acting as a coordinator, you'd need to speak for that organization and responsible for their work. Make sure that organization isn't already applying on their own. This situation may be more of an implementation strategy than how we're identifying partners for this planning stage.

Q: Can you say more about how community-based organizations fit into some of your work? Many of these strategies feel largely clinical in scope.

A: We had a large meeting with community-based organizations May 1 and greatly value these partnerships. (Contact [hillary@northsoundach.org](mailto:hillary@northsoundach.org) if you would like those meeting materials.). The measures we are attempting to shift— many of those in two or three years, are clinical. But the reality is, only thinking about things in a clinical setting isn't going to change anything. To make real change, community-based organizations have to get

involved, to address transportation, housing, etc. Our team has put a high emphasis on the notion of clinical and non-clinical providers. For the first Call for Partners, we're asking questions like "Do you track the number of Medicaid lives in your organization". If the answer is no, that's going to impact whether we use the number of Medicaid lives in figuring out how we're going to share dollars. If we have to figure out a proxy measure around poverty, the only way we're going to know that is if we have community-based organizations tell us if we keep track of that. So we're asking a breadth of questions that's going to tell us what you track. But we're pretty clear as a region, that we need to have community-based organizations involved in this work.

Q: What are you asking potential partners to commit to?

A: There's a list on page 3 of the narrative— as I think about the criteria, these are the main things: you must be signed up in the Financial Executor's portal, be providing services in the North Sound region, be committed to serving people on Medicaid, and make a commitment to improving health equity. Your organization must be working in at least one of the initiative areas, and working with at least one of the populations we're working on. You need to have staff that can work with us on this over 4-6 months. We are looking for partners here in 2018 that have the capacity to step in and do the work with us, and help us define the implementation plan. If you don't meet this criteria, it doesn't mean you can't be part of the implementation strategy, but right now we need people to help with the plan. In 2019, we'll need the implementers.

We have a report due to the Health Care Authority we'll be wrapping up on end of June. We're asking for this Part 1 application by June 21, our board meets the following week. We'll do a rapid review, and by the first week of July, we'll send out the components of the Part 2 of the application, which will be due September 1. By September 30, we need to have completed our detailed implementation plan. We have deliverables due to the state, and we're really hoping partners can help us complete those.

Q: Can you say more about how the partners you bring to the table in 2018 is going to be different than 2019 and beyond?

They could be the same people, they could be different...we're assuming there will be additional. We have the ability to add partners throughout the life of the Medicaid Transformation, so just because you don't get in now, doesn't mean you won't be joining at a later date. We'll find out on this first deadline if we got to the partners we needed to get to.

Q: If our organization works in multiple ACH regions (i.e. North Sound and King) - should we become partners with both ACHs?

**A: Yes. They don't have to sign multiple master service agreements, however (just accept an additional invite in the portal). Once you sign the master service agreement, you have the ability to partner with any ACH in the state. An individual scope of work or participant agreement would be ACH specific.**

Q: It looks like one of your focus areas is mental health/substance abuse - does this scope of work include services serving individuals and families facing a progressive dementia?

**A: The possibility is yes. What we have is a unique position where we could pick dementia or the dual-eligibles, or seniors, as one of our target populations. The challenge is none of our measures and metrics have to do with seniors, so we're trying to figure out how we start down this path of transforming the delivery system. At the moment there's nothing that excludes that possibility, but by the time we submit the Implement Plan in October, we'll know if that's one of our target populations or not.**

Q: What's the expected process of linking implementation planners and 2019 implementers? Is it assumed that even if not "registered", that 2019 implementers need to be involved in planning activities with the planning organization? Will we need to work with the implementers to make sure they're in the loop with what we've planned, since they're not signed on yet.

**A: Last summer/fall we had a variety of workgroups. Our hope was that those groups would be identifying other folks that were not at the table and needed to be. We'll ask that of the partners in 2018 to identify that as well. Hopefully the incentive to be part of the planning and not just implementation will be enough to get organizations to apply for Part 1. How do we know who are partners are enough to have an implementation strategy, but still leave room for partners we don't know about yet? That's our challenge.**

Q: Can we have a list of invited partners to ensure coordination?

**A: We sent this Call to Partners to our entire email list (900 addresses) and have asked all recipients to share within their networks. We don't have a list of targeted organizations.**

Q: Can we have a list of organizations who receive funding?

A: We try to be transparent. Every board meeting is open to the public, and it states in the packet who we're contracting with. That info is always available. As we move toward milestone 1 and milestone 2 payments, that info will also be shared with the board and will be public information.

Liz, re: portal: The Financial Executor's Portal is where the master service agreement lies, it's how funds will be shared with partners. There's an EIN verification process, a registration process, each partner has their own login and password. Getting set up in the portal isn't a guarantee that you will earn any dollars, but you won't earn any dollars if you're not set up in the portal. It's the system the state has set up for payments.

Q: How should implementation planners within a domain, coordinate across domains with other implementation planners, in particular when implementing organizations may work with multiple plans/domains?

A: We're not going to use the eight categories we used for workgroups moving forward. Our staff will be pulling together providers, different groupings of individuals, and instead of things based on the project areas, we'll do them based on how we're doing the implementation plans. Frequency and duration will vary. Gatherings will not fall into the specific project categories, however.

There is an assumption that the ACHs already know who the partners are and how we'll be paying our partners, because we should know what we're doing. But the approach is, in this Call for Partners, is to clearly ask potential partners to 'opt in' and commit. It is our opportunity to identify our first group of partners. We have not assumed anyone's commitment, we're asking for it now.