

MHSA Funds for Non-Mental Health Supportive Services and Goods Reference Guide

El Dorado County

Note: This guide applies only to El Dorado County Behavioral Health Services Civil Service Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs. It is recommended that FSP Contract providers use this guide as a reference in creating internal policy around use of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Funds Non-Mental Health Supportive Services and Goods.

Section A: Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the use of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Funds in Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs. FSPs are intensive and comprehensive therapeutic and case management services that are based on a client- and family- centered philosophy of doing “whatever it takes” for children, youth, adults and older adults experiencing symptoms related to Severe Mental Illness or Severe Emotional Disturbance and intended to help them lead healthy, connected, family-centered, independent, meaningful, and engaged lives.

MHSA Funds are monies that are set aside specifically to address children, youth, adults, older adults and their families’ needs and provide support services that are outside the scope of traditional specialty mental health services. These funds are designed to build collaborative service plans with children, youth, adults, and older adults and their families focused on healing, wellness and recovery.

MHSA Funds are available for clients and/or family members served by FSP staff as well as individuals served by EDC Behavioral Health. A client must have an active, open episode in an FSP and be enrolled in the MHSA Data Collection and Recording (DCR) System. Individuals served by EDC Behavioral Health must provide minimal demographic data in order for them to receive MHSA Funds.

MHSA Funds can be accessed through the following processes:

1. MHSA Funds Request for Non-Mental Health Supportive Services and Goods Form
2. Use of Identified Fiscal Intermediary (For Client Expenses Only)

Section B: Eligibility

All members of the Mental Health Plan who meet MHSA FSP population criteria are eligible to receive MHSA funds. Expenditures should be considered on a case-by-case basis at the FSP program-level. **The use of funds is not an entitlement.**

Family members/caregivers may also be eligible for MHSA Fund assistance.

Section C: Use of MHSA Funds

The use of MHSA Funds by program staff for Youth and Families, Adult, Treatment Team, or Older Adult FSP programs is consistent with the “whatever it takes” philosophy of the Mental

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Health Services Act to help clients meet their goals and is intended to assist clients and their families with short- term needs which are related to meeting goals within the client's Wellness and Recovery or Healing Plan. MHSA Funds can also be used to help clients and their families initiate action toward goals that are consistent with client Wellness and Recovery or Healing Plans.

For instance, in the situation where a conserved client is hospitalized in an Institution for Mental Disease (IMD), staff and the client may start the accelerated discharge and placement process with frequent field visits. Staff may need flexible funding to incorporate meaningful content in these field trips so that real activities may occur and a realistic expression and enhancement of the client's strengths and resiliency can be harnessed to further the client's goals.

MHSA Funds can be used for services and supports that include, but are not limited to, expenditures that would be consistent with a client's Wellness and Recovery or Healing Plan Goals, such as:

- Transportation
 - Gas to help a client get to an assessment, counseling, medical, or employment appointment
 - Transportation needs (e.g. Bus passes, DMV fees)
 - Vehicle Repair
 - Transportation for the client's friends and family (their naturally occurring social system) who might accompany the client to mental health, pro-social activities and other appointments/activities.
- Health needs
 - Over-the-counter medication for clients in immediate need of care (e.g. cream for severe eczema)
 - Medical Procedures
- Client Incentives
 - Outreach/Client Incentives Engagement Activity fees Stipends
 - Meals/snacks for clients
- Pro-social activities
 - Extra curriculum activities

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- Recreational/pro-social activities for clients and their families
- Home-related
 - Housing Support and Assistance (e.g. security deposit)
 - Household Establishment Assistance (e.g. Supplies/items needed for a new home)
 - Minor home repair including appliances
 - Toiletries
- Treatment/Support/Education-related
 - Augmented Treatments
 - Wellness Activities/Speakers Education-related expenses
 - Parenting courses
 - In-home behavioral support
 - Tutoring services/mentoring programs
 - Parenting courses
 - Individual and group treatment for children
 - School-based services and supports
 - After-school services and supports
- Other
 - Professional services (e.g. care-giving, housecleaning, tutoring)
 - Miscellaneous items that would be helpful in achieving the client's Treatment Plan goals.

Examples of the kind of support for which MHSA Funds might be required include:

- Schedule staff to take the client out of an IMD and reorient them to the community by ensuring the client is away from the locked institution 8 to 20 hours a week prior to placement.
- Buy lunch, go to a movie, or other recreational venue
- Visit prospective placements

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- Teach client how to ride the bus and navigate the public transportation system
- Visit adult day center for a day or provide other socialization opportunities
- Create opportunities to normalize client experience and behavior in a variety of public settings
- Exposure to employment, educational, and volunteer activities
- Purchase any assistive devices that will be needed to achieve successful community placement
- Assistance with expenses related to moving or relocation

Section D: Protocol for the Use of Gift Cards Purchased with MHSA Funds

Because gift cards are considered the equivalent of cash, strict protocols are necessary to maintain accountability for all gift cards distributed to individuals in FSPs. Staff will accompany individuals receiving over \$20 in gift cards when they make their purchase to ensure that funds are used as intended and approved.

Gift cards should not be routinely given to individuals and should only be used to supplement an individual's or family's resources when there is a clear clinical benefit to each expenditure. Gift card allocations per month per client should not exceed \$150, unless prior approval is received from the FSP program manager/clinical director.

Items must be used in the fiscal year in which they are purchased. When using MHSA Funds to purchase services, the services must be delivered to the recipient in the fiscal year in which they were purchased.

FSP program managers/clinical directors are responsible for ensuring that gift cards are properly secured and accounted for by maintaining a Gift Card Tracking Log and putting in place sufficient internal procedures and controls to ensure careful distribution and safety/security of gift cards.

The Gift Card Tracking Log shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Gift card vendor name
- Gift card serial number
- Date gift card was issued
- Name of the individual who received the gift card
- Signature of the individual upon receipt of gift card
- Statement regarding how the items or services purchased with the gift card relate to the individual's Treatment Plan

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- Gift card balance (if any)
- Copies of receipts for purchases made with gift card

This information shall be available for review by EDC fiscal staff upon request.

Gift card inventories are subject to random audits by EDC UR or fiscal staff at any time.

Section E: Excluded Purchases Items and purchases that are excluded from Flex Fund use include the following:

- Alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances and activities
- Sexually explicit materials
- Costs for staff to accompany clients on outings (sporting events, concerts, amusement parks, etc.)
- Office supplies
- Incentives not linked to a clinical outcome or mental health need
- Covering Medi-Cal Share of Cost
- Prescription medication otherwise available through medication or prescription assistance programs

Section F: Reasonable Purchase Limits

Every attempt should be made to purchase items as economically as possible, including using vendors that sell previously-used merchandise where feasible (e.g. Good Will, Salvation Army, on-line vendors, etc.).

Section G: Protocol to Access Non-Mental Health Supportive Services and Goods

Before using Flex Funds, FSP staff must explore all available options to address the need by other means including the individual's support system, the community, and/or other funding sources.

The clinical or mental health related need for MHSA Funds must be documented in staff progress notes.

There are two ways staff can access MHSA Funds:

1. MHSA Funds Request for Non-Mental Health Supportive Services and Goods Form
 - These funds are only for clients.

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- Complete the “MHSA Funds Request for Non-Mental Health Supportive Services and Goods” form.
 - Attach a copy of the receipt for item.
 - Submit documentation with monthly invoice
2. Use of Fiscal Intermediary to access MHSA FSP Flex Funds
- Gift Card

