

VERMONT MENTAL HEALTH BLOCK GRANT  
PLANNING COUNCIL  
Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2021

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: WSOC, Cherry A  
and Microsoft Teams

**Members in Attendance:** Marla Simpson (chair), Dan Towle (NAMI VT, PVT), Michael Hartman (LCMHS), Caroline Rubin, Cinn Smith (CYFS SPSC), Laurie Mulhern (CYFS SPSC), Alice Maynard (ACT 264), Anne Rich (DMH)

**DMH Staff and Guests in Attendance:** Christina Thompson (DMH), Nicole DiStasio (DMH), Cheryle Wilcox (DMH), Steve Walsh (public member), Steve DeVoe (DMH), Katie Smith (DMH), Eva Dayon (DMH), Trish Singer (DMH).

**Convene Meeting, Introductions:**

- Meeting convened at 1:05 PM
- Reviewed agenda, made introductions

**Review October 2021 Meeting Minutes:**

- Alice moved to accept the October meeting minutes as drafted; Dan seconded the motion. All in favor and the motion passed.

**Review MHBG Outcomes**

- Christina presented an overview of 2020 MHBG Outcomes.
- Feedback on Table of Contents page: Goals number 2 and 5- please add more description to titles such as “Respite for Children and Families.” [DMH: Thank you, we will consider this feedback. They are currently labeled to match the grant name and label on the grant spreadsheet.](#)
- Goal #1: Regarding the graph- this doesn’t feel like a meaningful metric. Would like more specific information if possible.
- Goal #2: Where were the youth receiving respite if not in their own home? [DMH will follow up.](#)
- The council acknowledged that this report is an improvement over previous years and appreciates the effort that went into that update. [DMH: Thank you! We agree there is still work to do to improve it, especially including more explanations for graphs.](#)
- Goals #3 and 4: It would be helpful to have other outcome metrics beyond the number of people served, especially something that is an outcome or communicates impact. This is not specific to this goal, but especially for goals 1 and 3. It would be helpful to have the number of people served if there is no other data (such as goal #4). Data could be qualitative, too.
- Goal #5: Are these discrete individuals or total interactions? [DMH will follow up.](#) Members would like to see the total number of interactions in addition to total individuals.
- Goal #6: Recommendation for the name of the goal to state “at DCF”. Why is CMC receiving funding for SharePoint but other agencies are not? [DMH will follow up. DMH clarified any unspent funds \(\\$300\) will be returned to the federal government.](#) Council members expressed concern for this missed opportunity.

- Goal #7: Would like to see any outcomes for this goal. Members acknowledge that it can be challenging to share specific outcomes or performance measures when funding is one part of a larger program. Members recommend that DMH shows data on the program overall.
- The Planning Council would like to hear a distinction between performance measures (how much, how well) and outcomes (better off) in this report.
- DMH clarified that members are not expected to do work outside of meeting time. Documents are shared before the meeting as a courtesy. Members questioned how they could participate fully without reviewing before the meeting time, which would require work outside of the meeting.
- Goals #8 and 9: Members requested the previous year/two of this report. DMH will follow up. DMH: for item 3, The result is different from the target, which may reflect the time of training new staff and switch to virtual meetings. Members noted that of the measures presented, many are underperforming. One member also noted that reducing the number of copies of Counterpoint available does a disservice to people with lived experience. There were some concerns with the accuracy of the report as written under the heading 'summer issue.' Members noted that reading counterpoint digitally is challenging, especially on a small device.
- For this report, it would be helpful to see how this year compares to previous years (such as over 5 years), as a point in time it is hard to make sense of them.
- Goal #10: Members expressed concern with outcomes/measures being late and encouraged DMH to seek bidders in the future who can return data on time. DMH: outcomes will be shared with the committee when they are available. DMH will loop back on why these outcomes/measures are late and if there is a timeline for submission.
- Goal #11: Members appreciated the clarity of this graphic.
- Goal #12: Would like to see a footnote where data is not complete or accurate. Noting that these counts are likely an undercount or those on just one fund source (through CHL). VT is a leader in the nation with people trained to deliver CAMS. One member noted that the high price of admission to the Suicide Prevention Symposium is a barrier to attendance for peers and families. Scholarships were available, but individuals had to proactively reach out to DMH in order to achieve this access. DMH will explore if a login can be provided to view the symposium after the fact.
- Goal #13: One member appreciated that these are available on YouTube. One member expressed interest in the DMH promoting these YouTube links to the public. DMH will pass along this suggestion.
- Goal #14: It is surprising to see the sex differentials to these diagnoses. One member shared personal experience with diagnosis being assigned in a stereotypical way.
- Goal #15: Where were these funds reallocated to? DMH: This grant was cancelled one month before the end of the fiscal year. There were many pieces at play, including staffing levels at the VFFCMH. One member also noted this was a complex issue and should not reflect badly on the grantee, specifically.
- Goal #16: DMH clarified that active rescue is when the staff responding to a texter in distress dispatched rescue crew to support the texter. Members would be interested in hearing if individuals who had received the active rescue went on to use the service again in the future.
- Goal #17: This was the last goal reviewed with the MHBGPC during this meeting.
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## MHBG Funding Proposal Survey Results

- Nicole shared the funding proposal voting results from members. The next step is that DMH leadership will create a subgroup to learn more information about these proposals. None of these proposals have been reviewed or approved by SAMHSA yet. These priorities relate to the COVID funds, as well as the pre-COVID funds. DMH is determining who at the department should be point on supporting the Mental Health Block Grant. The project coordinator starts on Monday, 11/15/21: Maven Group. DMH will share the RFP. Maven Group have experience working on federal grants and projects. The total funding is for two years at about 15 hours/week with a total contract of \$150,000. Two proposals were received. Members expressed interest in seeing the outcomes/performance measures of this contract.

#### **Public Comment**

- A member of the public, Steve Walsh, expressed concern with the percentage of each DMH committee that is made up of non-state employees, as well as the role of the Mental Health Block Grant Planning Council. He is concerned that the Mental Health Integration Council charge conflicts with the Mental Health Block Grant Planning Council charge. DMH clarified that each designated agency has a local standing committee separately for youth and adults, which is where members of the public can provide feedback direct to agencies.

#### **Adjournment:**

- The meeting adjourned at 3:03 PM

#### **Action Items:**

- ✓ DMH will follow up on the Planning Council's questions and feedback on the 2020 Outcomes document.
- ✓ DMH will share the Maven Group RFP with the Planning Council

**Next Meeting: December 10, 2021**

**Location: Microsoft Teams meeting**

**Call-in Number: +1 802-828-7667**

**Conference ID: 506 092 440#**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Optional in person location: [WSOC Conference Room Cherry C](#)**