

Texas: Home and Community Based Services Spending Plan Narrative



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Quarterly Update – July 18, 2022

Quarterly Spending Plan Narrative Update

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is working internally to ensure appropriate controls are in place to accurately attribute general revenue funds to the increased federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) and will deposit funds into a specific account as general revenue is accrued. HHSC also continues to work to set up appropriate identification for each project to ensure controls are in place to track all dollars attributable to Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act. HHSC received necessary state approvals before claiming increased FMAP.

HHSC is making changes using red-line methodology, rather than highlighting, to ensure clarity. HHSC provides the latest updates available for each project. Most projects are still in the planning phase, but some projects initiated this quarter. As Texas prepares to begin spending the state general revenue savings attributable to the increased FMAP, Texas assures CMS:

- The state is using the federal funds attributable to the increased FMAP to supplement and not supplant existing state funds for HCBS in effect as of April 1, 2021;
- The state is using the state funds equivalent to the amount of federal funds attributable to the increased FMAP to implement or supplement the implementation of one or more activities to enhance and strengthen HCBS under the Medicaid program;
- The state is not imposing stricter eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures for HCBS programs and services than were in place on April 1, 2021 during the expenditure period;
- The state is preserving covered HCBS, including the services themselves and the amount, duration, and scope of those services, in effect as of April 1, 2021; and
- The state is maintaining HCBS provider payments at a rate no less than those in place as of April 1, 2021.

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Provider Supports

1. Provider Retention Bonuses

Texas proposes to provide time-limited reimbursement increases aimed at strengthening and stabilizing the HCBS workforce. Providers and provider agencies will be required to use at least 90 percent of these funds for one-time financial compensation for their direct care workforce, including, but not limited to, lump sum bonuses, retention bonuses, and paid time off for a COVID-19 vaccination. Providers eligible for the bonus are direct care attendants delivering: personal care services, self-directed personal care services, rehabilitative providers (day activity and health services under Texas's state plan), Section 1915(k), direct care and residential services provided in 1915(c) and 1915(i) programs, and nursing services delivered in non-institutional, community-based settings by registered or licensed vocational nurses through a 1915(c), 1915(i), or 1115 waiver HCBS program. The providers would be required to furnish data to document their vacancy rates in direct care positions and their retention percentage. Providers would be prohibited from using the funds for other methodologies that will result in future reductions in hourly wages when the temporary reimbursement increases are discontinued.

~~Texas HHSC is making completed~~ necessary system changes ~~required to implement the temporary reimbursement change~~ for most fee-for-service claims systems. ~~Although not all managed care organizations have completed system changes, all are expected to complete the processes needed to provide additional reimbursement by the end of July.~~ ~~finalizing and publishing administrative rules following a public rate hearing, and preparing to submit necessary amendments for approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services~~ HHSC obtained federal approval for HCBS waiver programs and is in process of obtaining approval for state plan services. The deadline for providers to attest they will use funds in accordance with this spending plan was extended From July 1, 2022 to August 15, 2022. Texas is developing reporting for expenditures and will provide expenditure information in the next quarterly update.

**Amount of General Revenue projected: \$\$266,885,123 million
(\$721,175,047 million All Funds)**

2. Enhance Technology to Support Waiver Providers

Texas is redesigning the long term services and supports (LTSS) delivery system for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) or other similar functional needs. Texas proposes to enhance technology that supports providers of LTSS to people with IDD, Local IDD Authorities (LIDDAs), and service coordinators. Texas is migrating aging systems to a more modern platform. This proposal will fund critical functionality to prevent gaps in eligibility or services for individuals enrolled in waiver programs. Enhanced functionality includes automation of reports regarding clients served by the provider and integration of summaries of historical information necessary to ensure there are no disruptions in a person's care. This will improve provider experience and ensure more efficient service delivery. The project will complete by August 31, 2023.

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~~Texas received approval of the Advanced Planning Document to secure funding for this project and executed a related contract amendment. Texas anticipates beginning to spend funds in May 2022~~Texas submitted an Advanced Planning Document on June 17, 2022 and HHSC is in process of hiring temporary staff to complete this project.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$1,312,960 (\$11,891,197 All Funds)

3. Enhance Technology to Support Other LTSS Providers

Texas proposes to enhance the long-term care (LTC) portal used by all community-based services programs. Today, a provider can submit certain eligibility assessments or service plans for state review using the state's LTC portal. If additional documentation is needed to review an individual service plan or some assessments, a provider must mail, fax, or email the documentation directly to state staff. Texas plans to use funds to enhance the LTC portal to allow attachments to be appended to a service plan or assessment directly in the portal. This will improve efficiency for providers and service delivery for recipients by ensuring documentation stays with a plan of care, is appropriately stored, and can be easily retrieved in the future. In addition, funds for this project will be allocated to program the state's claims system to recognize a new provider type, delivering individualized skills and socialization services described in the "Recipient Support" section of this spending plan. The project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

~~Texas~~HHSC is finalizing the project scope and timeline. Texas does not believe this activity is eligible for enhanced federal funding.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$500,000 (\$1 million All Funds)

4. Support Providers of Mental Health Services in Home and Community Based Settings

Texas proposes to make enhancements to the Youth Empowerment Services waiver and HCBS Adult Mental Health program (AMH is under 1915(i) authority). These program providers have requested technical assistance in recruiting providers of specialized therapy and support services and training. This work, which will be contracted out by the state, will include identifying and recruiting service providers across the state and strategizing with provider agencies to identify innovative solutions to provider shortages, created in part by the COVID-19 public health emergency. Funding would also be used to bring trainings to locations across the state that are convenient for providers to reduce travel costs and time. Trainings will focus on program requirements and specific topics identified by providers and stakeholders such as cognitive behavioral therapy, group and meeting facilitation, and peer support. By funding quality training for needs that are identified in real time, recipients may see improved quality in service delivery. Providing additional training opportunities will also assist provider agencies in recruiting new providers who can continue delivering HCBS-AMH and YES services even after the training initiative has ceased. The project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

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~~Texas is finalizing the project scope and preparing necessary contract scope of work documents. HHSC executed a contract in June 2022 with a vendor to develop outreach and recruitment of providers and to develop training modules to support providers. The contractor is currently working with HHSC to develop tools and strategies to support outreach and recruitment efforts.~~

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$625,000 (\$1.25 million All Funds)

5. Increase Technology Use by HCBS Providers of Mental Health Services

Texas proposes to purchase technology for providers in the YES and HCBS-AMH program to increase the availability of remote-delivery for mental health services. With the onset of COVID-19, remote service delivery became commonplace for providers and recipients when the technology existed to deliver services. It was found to be particularly beneficial in rural areas and for people without access to their own transportation or with childcare needs. Texas plans to purchase devices to assist providers in connecting their recipients with needed technology, including tablets and computers for use in both programs. The state will not provide ongoing internet connectivity costs but will provide information about programs which may assist with these costs. The devices will be available to providers for use by enrollees by August 31, 2023.

~~Texas-HHSC is finalizing the project scope and preparing necessary contract scope of work documents. HHSC is developing provider outreach materials to inform providers of the availability of funds for technology and applicable program policies.~~

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$625,000 (\$1.25 million All Funds)

6. Enhance Efficiency through Electronic Data Interfaces

Texas proposes to fund the development of an electronic data interface (EDI) between the LIDDAs and the LTC portal. LIDDAs provide service coordination to individuals with IDD in the community and in some Medicaid waiver programs. Each LIDDA chooses their systems and software to complete assessments, develop services plans, and store documentation. There is not an electronic data interface (EDI) with the state's LTC portal and LIDDA's systems. As a result, service coordinators who enter information in the LIDDA's system must manually enter the same information in the state's LTC portal. Funds will be distributed in grants to LIDDAs to allow them to build an EDI with the LTC portal, gaining efficiencies as dual entry into multiple systems will no longer be necessary. State resources are allocated in an existing project to build the EDI in the state's LTC portal. The development of an EDI will reduce manual work for service coordinators, creating efficiencies in their work processes and allowing staff more time to work directly with the clients they serve. This project includes \$2.145 million in state general revenue to support changes to LIDDA systems. This project also includes the changes needed to the state MMIS system to interface with the LIDDAs. HHSC plans to submit an Advanced Planning Document for the MMIS changes for this project, requesting enhanced federal funding. HHSC estimates requesting

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\$3,624,741 in federal funds to match \$417,796 in state general revenue for this purpose. This project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

HHSC is amending LIDDA contracts to facilitate distribution of funds for LIDDA system updates. Texas ~~is finalizing the project scope and timeline and preparing to submit~~submitted an Advanced Planning Document on June 29, 2022.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$2,562,796 (\$6,187,536 All Funds)

Recipient Supports

7. Implement Individualized Skills and Socialization

To comply with federal HCBS settings requirements, Texas proposes to create a new benefit available in the Home and Community based Services (HCS), Texas Home Living (TxHmL), and Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) 1915(c) waiver programs called individualized skills and socialization (ISS). This service will provide on and off-site, activities to develop skills and gain greater independence, socialization, community participation, or an individual's future employment or volunteer goals identified in their person-centered plan. HHSC plans to implement ISS by March 1, 2023.

~~HHSC posted administrative rules governing this service for informal public comment in March 2022. HHSC is making updates based on the informal public comments and will post updated rules for formal public comments~~HHSC is preparing to submit the statewide transition plan to CMS and is developing provider and client-facing training about the new service.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$35 million (\$91 million All Funds)

8. Provide HCBS Services to More Texans

Texas proposes to fund additional slots in Medicaid HCBS waiver programs. Specifically, Texas seeks to add the following number of slots to the respective programs:

- Home and Community-based Services- 542
- Texas Home Living- 471
- Community Living Assistance and Support Services- 381
- STAR+PLUS HCBS- 107
- Medically Dependent Children Program- 42
- Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities- 6

This allows the state to serve and help keep more Texans in the community. Individuals served by these programs must reside in the community and not an institution. This will increase enrollment in each program and the state will submit these changes through the appropriate waiver amendments. Individuals enrolled in these programs must reside in the community; institutional services are not covered through these programs. Program services are included in the descriptions

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in Appendix B of the May 13, 2021 State Medicaid Director Letter. Texas intends to continue serving this population after the expenditure period.

~~Texas HHSC has been releasing~~continues to release individuals from interest lists and assessing individuals for programmatic and financial eligibility ~~for the program~~. ~~Texas will report on updated enrollment and expenditure information in the next quarterly updated when updated projections are available.~~The state is developing estimates of the cost of services for newly enrolled Texans.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$30.08 million (\$76.9 million All Funds)

9. Assess the Needs of Texans on Waiver Interest Lists

Texas operates interest lists for its Medicaid 1915(c) and 1115 HCBS waiver programs. Individuals are placed on the interest list on a first come, first serve basis and are released to be assessed for the waiver program as funded slots become available. Texas proposes to fund a contract for the administration of a questionnaire for individuals who are on interest lists to determine individuals' needs and refer them for appropriate services until a waiver slot is available. Texas would contract with a vendor to assess all individuals while developing an integrated portal. The portal would allow individuals to see their place on the interest list, update their contact and demographic information, and update their needs assessment. On an ongoing basis, when a new person requests to be added to an interest list, Texas will conduct the needs assessment questionnaire and inform the individual of the availability of the portal. The project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

~~Texas HHSC exploring potential options~~continues to explore options related to contracting and is developing a scope of work for a contract.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$6.5 million (\$13 million All Funds)

10. Enhance the "No Wrong Door" System

Texas proposes to enhance its existing "no wrong door" approach for addressing recipients needs by integrating all Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) programs into a referral platform. Today, individuals who are elderly or are adults with disabilities who complete an LTSS screener have referrals automatically sent to their managed care organization (MCO) so the enrollees service coordinator can conduct timely outreach. Texas proposes to fund the integration of all MCOs into the screener's referral system. In addition, Texas proposes to expand the "no wrong door" portal infrastructure to allow individuals or their families to request placement on an interest list, complete or update a needs assessment, update contact information, and to view their placement on any interest list. The project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

~~Texas HHSC is determining the most effective platforms for this system~~is and working to developing the project scope and timeline.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$1.9 million (\$3.8 million All Funds)

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11. Campaign to Support Caregivers

Texas proposes to use funds for the development a one-time public health and educational awareness campaign and related materials for older adults and their family caregivers. The campaign would focus on aging issues and available services and supports with emphasis on public health, mental health/support, and emergency/disaster related resources to help the target audiences plan and prepare. This effort would complement existing caregiver efforts and ensure materials are relevant for older adults, family caregivers and Medicaid beneficiaries. A temporary staff person would oversee the one-time project and tasks would include: coordinating the media and design; developing content for print and electronic materials; disseminating resources and developing a plan to ensure funding is maximized. This one-time project would include a robust media contract to create turnkey, evergreen campaign materials that will lead the target audiences to well known, established organizations for resources. Awareness materials designed for regional/community use will be digital, editable "template" resources to allow for local resource/information inclusion and extend the life of the items. The project will include a vast media campaign, including television and radio platforms. The project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

HHSC ~~is finalizing the scope of work and determining t~~ anticipates a contract award before September 1, 2022.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$1 million (\$2 million All Funds)

12. Direct Care Employer Registry

Texas proposes to use funds for the development of a registry system that will assist in matching direct care attendants with employers, including home health agencies and employers participating in the consumer directed services model. The services supported by this registry include state plan personal care services, community first choice, and other HCBS programs. Texas will seek a vendor offering this service with capabilities to customize the platform to meet the state's ongoing needs. To support ongoing operation of the registry, Texas will seek legislative approval to secure ongoing funding, if necessary.

HHSC ~~is finalizing the scope of work and determining the vendor selection process.~~ executed a contract with a vendor and is beginning development.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$350,000 (\$700,000 All Funds)

Enhance and Strengthen the HCBS Infrastructure

13. Update Licensing Systems to Enhance Provider Oversight

Texas proposes to fund system changes to recognize a new type of licensed provider delivering ISS services to comply with HCBS settings regulations, provide enhanced oversight of the new ISS service, and ensure service delivery is based on a recipient's person-centered plan. Texas will oversee provider agencies which subcontract with providers of ISS. Funding will be used to update a licensing

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database that the state maintains and operates (The Texas Unified Licensure Information Portal (TULIP)). HHSC also proposes to update the database to recognize providers who will deliver services in the LTSS Redesign Pilot Program outlined elsewhere in this spending plan. The state will pursue approval of an Advanced Planning Document, if appropriate. The project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

~~Texas-HHSC is finalizing project scope and timelines hiring temporary contractors to complete the development and programming.~~

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$1,276,311 million (\$2,552,623 All Funds)

14. Build the Infrastructure for the LTSS Redesign Pilot Program

Texas proposes to develop critical infrastructure to support the operation of a pilot program to inform the future transition of 1915(c) waivers to managed care. The pilot will test the delivery of LTSS through managed care for people with IDD, traumatic brain injury that occurred after age 21, or people with similar functional needs as a person with IDD. The pilot evaluation will inform the future transition of the 1915(c) waivers to managed care. Funds will be used for information technology system changes needed to start the pilot, automation of a person-centered assessment, and automation of a service planning tool. Outreach materials and activities for potential pilot participants are included in this request. This project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

~~HHSC is preparing Advanced Planning Documents and necessary contract amendments with existing vendors to begin implementation of the necessary changes submitted an Advanced Planning Document on July 8, 2022 for part of the infrastructure development. HHSC is working with existing vendors on system changes necessary to support the pilot~~

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$5 million (\$19.5 million All Funds)

15. Strengthen Consumer Directed Services

Texas proposes to create a computer-based training for Consumer Directed Services (CDS) employers, Financial Management Service Agencies (FMSAs) and service coordinators and case managers to increase use of CDS and knowledge of CDS policies and practices. This project will supplement a Money Follows the Person project to ensure consistency and continuity of information about the CDS option and ensure training is available in an accessible format on an ongoing basis. In addition, providing computer-based training for FMSAs will address findings relating to meeting federal compliance thresholds. To implement, HHSC will hire time-limited contractors, including instructional designer(s), to support development of CBT descriptions, content and learning evaluations. This project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

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HHSC ~~is finalizing timelines and project plans~~ is evaluating the feasibility of this project.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$30,000 (\$60,000 All Funds)

16. Digitize Provider Oversight Tools

Texas proposes to develop an interoperable provider monitoring tool to oversee providers in community-based programs, including HCBS and consumer-directed services. The tool is currently completed on paper, then manually entered into a siloed database. Staff must run queries on multiple systems to complete oversight activities and to produce ongoing reports used for state and federal oversight. The development of a secure, interoperable portal will create efficiencies in the oversight process, allowing state staff to focus on provider monitoring and oversight and less on paperwork. Texas also plans to hire contractors to digitize all contract documents, allowing for easy retrieval of older contract documents. This will create more efficient provider oversight processes. This project will be complete by the August 31, 2023.

~~Texas HHSC submitted is preparing to submit~~ an Advanced Planning Document on June 3, 2022 and is finalizing the project ~~scope~~ and timeline.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$287,321 (\$2,872,308 All Funds)

17. Digitize Contract Documents

Texas proposes to hire contractors to digitize all contract documents, allowing for immediate retrieval of contract documents and historical contract information. The contracts are with providers of long term services and supports, including home and community based waiver programs, as well as hospice, and long term care facility programs. This will facilitate more effective contract administration and oversight functions while improving records management. This project will be completed by August 31, 2023.

~~Texas HHSC is developing the scope of work for a contract and~~ is determining the most cost-effective method of contracting for this project.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$1 million (\$2 million All Funds)

18. Assess Compliance with HCBS Settings

Texas proposes to contract with an organization to assess and support Texas' compliance with the HCBS settings rule. The contractor would assist the state in ensuring timely implementation of the statewide transition plan and compliance with the heightened scrutiny process. The contractor will also support the development of heightened scrutiny templates and complete templates for settings which must undergo heightened security, under the supervision of the state. This project will be complete by ~~the end of calendar year 2022~~ April 1, 2023.

HHSC is ~~determining the most cost-effective method of contracting~~ hiring temporary contractors to complete this project.

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Amount of General Revenue projected: \$175,000 (\$350,000 All Funds)

19. Enhance the PASRR Portal to Support Diversion and Transition from Nursing Facilities

Texas proposes to enhance the pre-admission screening and resident review (PASRR) Portal to enhance the identification, diversion, and transition of individuals from nursing facilities. Enhancements include improving the identification of individuals who could benefit from diversion from a facility to the community, edits to ensure all sections of the assessment are complete, and updates to lists of community programs. To implement, HHSC will use contractors to assist in project management and business analysis. State staff will oversee the contractors and develop requirements for system changes. The enhancements will improve usability and add functionality to ensure that specialized services are appropriately assessed, recommended, authorized, verified, and delivered, which will better prepare nursing facility residents to transition to community-based service settings. This project will conclude by August 31, 2023.

HHSC ~~is finalizing the project scope and timeline and preparing to submit~~ ~~an~~received Advanced Planning Document approval on June 27, 2022 and is working to execute a contract amendment to begin work.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$420,268 (\$4,067,262 All Funds)

20. Conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation of the HCBS-AMH Program

Funding will be used to evaluate the operational structure of the HCBS-AMH Program (active for five years) to determine if individuals' needs are being met in their communities, which aspects of the program are the most efficient/effective, if specific priority populations need to be addressed, and if person centered approaches/goals are being met as intended. Texas would partner with the University of Texas Health Science Center – San Antonio to conduct the assessment over a two-year period. HCBS-AMH staff will partner with the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health (affiliated with the University of Texas) to develop evaluation & reviewing findings. An effective program could potentially reduce psychiatric hospitals stays, emergency room visits, and arrests/justice involvement. This project will be complete by August 31, 2023.

HHSC is determining the most cost-effective method of contracting for this project.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$250,000 (\$500,000 All Funds)

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21. Conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation of Transportation in HCBS Programs

Texas proposes to contract with an independent entity to conduct a comprehensive study of transportation needs for enrollees in all HCBS programs. The study will examine the availability and awareness of existing transportation services across Medicaid. The study will also examine barriers to transportation and employment and provide the state actionable recommendations to reduce barriers and increase the availability and awareness of transportation services for HCBS enrollees, and other potential programmatic improvements. The study will conclude by August 31, 2023.

HHSC is determining the most cost-effective method of contracting for this project.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$250,000 (\$500,000 All Funds)

22. Improve Efficiency for Program Enrollment Activities

Texas proposes to make system enhancements to the Service Authorization System Online, the system of record for enrollment into the STAR+PLUS Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) program. Automation of corrected eligibility and enrollment information will reduce staff time making manual updates to ensure accurate information is relayed to trading partners, including the state's administrative services contractor and managed care organizations. This efficiency will allow staff more time to conduct outreach to potential enrollees working through eligibility and enrollment processes. Texas intends to complete this project by August 31, 2023.

HHSC ~~is evaluating potential system impacts and determining if this activity is eligible for enhanced federal funding~~anticipates beginning this project with an established vendor in October 2022.

Amount of General Revenue projected: \$50,000 (\$500,000 All Funds)

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Fiscal Summary

Category	General Revenue ^a	All Funds Total
Support Providers	\$272,510,879	\$742,753,780
Recipients Support	\$74,830,000	\$187,400,000
Infrastructure	\$9,416,732	\$34,307,856
Total	\$356,757,611	\$964,461,636

Texas proposes to claim enhanced FMAP for the following services. The 10% FMAP estimate is also provided:

Category	Total Estimate	Enhanced FMAP Estimate
1915(c) Waiver Services	\$1,667,082,857	\$166,708,285
MLTSS HCBS ^b	\$3,705,593,027	\$370,559,303
Total	\$5,372,675,884	\$537,267,588

^a General Revenue attributable to the state savings achieved through the enhanced FMAP.

^b The portion of the capitation attributable to HCBS was determined by the average difference between the HCBS and non-HCBS capitation and the community-based long-term services and supports portion of the capitation rate.