

BHS Policies and Procedures



City and County of San Francisco
Department of Public Health
San Francisco Health Network
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

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POLICY/PROCEDURE REGARDING: **Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Full Service Partnerships (FSP) Flex Fund Protocol**

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Director of Behavioral Health Services

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References:

New Policy.

Note: This policy applies only to Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Civil Service Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs. It is recommended that FSP Contract providers use this policy as a reference in creating for internal policy around use of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Flex Funds.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the use of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Flex 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.

Flex 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. Flex funds are designed to build collaborative service plans with children, youth, adults, and older adults and their families focused on healing, wellness and recovery.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Behavioral Health Services staff working in the Civil Service FSP programs.

Policy:

Section A: Definition and Access to Flex Funds

Flex Funds are available for clients and/or family members served by FSP staff as well as individuals served by System Navigators. 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 the System Navigators must provide minimal demographic data in order for them to receive Flex Funds. The MHSA Project Coordinator can be contacted for all the necessary forms and is available to provide training as well.

Flex Funds can be accessed through the following processes:

1. Program's Client Recovery Fund Form (Petty Cash)
2. Requisitions for Materials, Supplies, Equipment, and Services Form (BART and MUNI Clipper Cards)
3. Taxi Vouchers for Clients
4. 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 Flex 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 Flex Fund assistance.

Section C: Use of Flex Funds

The use of Flex Funds by System Navigators or Child, Youth and Families, Adult, Treatment Team, or Older Adult FSP programs is consistent with the "whatever it takes" philosophy of the Mental 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. Flex 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.

Flex 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
 - 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 Wellness and Recovery or Healing Plan goals.

An example of the kind of support for which Flex 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 venues
- Visit prospective placements
- 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 Flex Funds

(This section only applies if the City and County of San Francisco approves the use of gift cards by city/county departments/programs. At the time this policy was drafted, October 2017, the use of gift cards were restricted.)

- 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 director.
- Items must be used in the fiscal year in which they are purchased. When using Flex Funds to purchase services, the services must be delivered to the recipient in the fiscal year in which they were purchased.
- FSP 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:
 1. Gift card vendor name
 2. Gift card serial number
 3. Date gift card was issued
 4. Name of the individual who received the gift card
 5. Signature of the individual upon receipt of gift card
 6. Statement regarding how the items or services purchased with the gift card relate to the individual's Wellness and Recovery or Healing Plan for FSP partners or their mental health needs for individuals served by the System Navigators.
 7. Gift card balance (if any)
 8. Copies of receipts for purchases made with gift card
- This information shall be available for review by City's fiscal staff upon request.

- In compliance with the City's fiscal policy and procedures, FSP Providers are required to report all unused gift cards on or before June 30 of each fiscal year to MHSA@sfdph.org.
- Gift card inventories are subject to random audits by MHSA or Department of Public Health (DPH) 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
- Any item that can be procured via issuance of a valid purchase order
- 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 Flex Funds

- 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 Flex Funds must be documented in staff progress notes.
- There are four ways staff can access Flex Funds:
 1. Program's Client Recovery Fund Form (Petty Cash)
 - Download and complete the "Client Recovery Fund Protocol" form. Submittals must include appropriate documentation and approvals.
 - The following appointees must be designated prior to submission:
 1. A Primary Custodian
 2. A Secondary Custodian
 3. A Disbursement Authorizer
 4. A Replenishment Authorizer

- There must be at minimum four FSP staff involved in the revolving fund; however six is recommended.
 - Completed forms should be submitted to the fiscal department at 1380 Howard.
 - Once approved, the fiscal department will require a memo requesting to set up an advance fund in order to issue a check.
 - It is very important for FSP staff involved in the revolving fund to be familiar with the revolving fund policies and procedures as well as the protocol. The Controller's office has the guidelines on Accounting Policies and Procedures. Pay special attention to the section regarding "Disbursement of Funds" and "Replenishment of Revolving Fund".
2. Requisitions for Materials, Supplies, Equipment, and Services Form (BART and MUNI Clipper Cards)
- These flex funds are only for clients.
 - Complete the "Requisitions for Materials, Supplies, Equipment, and Services" form.
 - Include a justification letter for the request.
 - Email request to MHSA@sfdph.org for approval.
3. Taxi Vouchers for Clients
- Review "Taxi Voucher For Clients" policy/procedure.
 - Request approval from MHSA Director prior to submission to "Facilities & Operations" at 1380 Howard (CBHS1380howardfacilities@sfdph.org).
4. Use of Fiscal Intermediary to access MHSA FSP Flex Funds
- Submit a request to the MHSA Director for approval.
 - The following information is required for approval consideration:
 1. Tax payer ID
 2. Invoice (if applicable)
 3. Justification pertaining to wellness and recovery.
 4. DPH Fiscal staff will note the timeline for each request and respond accordingly.

Contact Person:
MHSA, Director

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