



Joint Fiscal Committee

Department of Mental Health

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Director of Mental Health Collaborations

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Pursuant to Act 78 of 2023, Sec. B.1101(d)(4):

In fiscal year 2024, the amount of \$3,000,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Mental Health to address workforce needs at the designated and specialized service agencies. These funds shall not be released until a plan to meet training and retention is mutually agreed upon by the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living and the designated and specialized service agencies and approved by the General Assembly or the Joint Fiscal Committee if the legislature is not in session. All or a portion of these funds may be used as matching funds to the Agency of Human Services Global Commitment program to provide State match if any part of the plan is eligible to draw federal funds. It is the intent of the General Assembly to maximize the value of this one-time funding through eligible Global Commitment investment.

Proposal for these funds

The Department of Mental Health would like to expand the recently completed Vermont Care Partners Employee Investment Program that went to all Designated and Specialized Service Agency staff with Vermont Care Partners (VCP) serving as the administrator of the program.

DMH would issue a grant to VCP for its administration of the program without any administrative fee. All funds would be utilized for staff as tuition reimbursement and/or loan repayment and would be maintained in a centralized pool.

Reports on utilization, expenditures and outcomes will be made by VCP to DMH on a quarterly basis. DMH will be prepared to report on outcomes with Vermont Care Partners to the committees of jurisdiction during the 2024 session if requested.

The general fund appropriation of \$3M would be used as matching funds for a total gross GC Investment amount of \$6.9M.

**Previous
Employee
Investment
Program
(\$1.5M)
which is
informing
the proposal
for this
allocation**

- The Vermont Care Partners (VCP) Employee Investment Program was established by the Legislature and administered by the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) through a two-year grant to VCP with support from the Department of Mental Health.
- Vermont Care Partners worked with state government and the Human Resource Directors of the Designated and Specialized Service Agencies (DA/SSA) to develop and implement the program.
- The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) provided invaluable guidance and support in developing the processes and procedures.

Data Source: Final report, Vermont Care Partners, September 2023.

- Approximately **500** staff received a total of \$1.5 million in forgivable loans.
 - 96% of employees who received tuition assistance or loan repayment fulfilled their commitment; this is a 26% increase over prior retention rates.

**Thank
you**

