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## **PATH Guidance: Technical Assistance Marketplace Initiative**

*Draft: November 2022*

### **Introduction**

CalAIM is designed to build a whole system, person-centered approach to care, in which clinical and social services are integrated to support people’s health and wellbeing throughout their lives. As a statewide, population health initiative, CalAIM will reach Medi-Cal members focusing particularly on advancing health equity by expanding resources available to populations and communities that have been historically under-resourced and under-served. CalAIM is an evolution of the work DHCS and its partners have been supporting in providing whole person care. California has been innovating in the delivery of integrated physical, behavioral and social services particularly through the Whole Person Care (WPC) and Health Homes Pilots in select regions of the state. Based on the success of these pilots and experience in Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) programs, a first stage of CalAIM implementation involves scaling impactful services from these initiatives statewide through Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports (California’s nomenclature for the state-approved In Lieu of Services/ILOS).

California has received targeted expenditure authority for the “Providing Access and Transforming Health” (PATH) initiative as part of its Section 1115 demonstration renewal to scale whole person approaches to care statewide with a clear equity lens, a strong foundation for integrated, comprehensive care, and a smooth transition from WPC and Health Homes that retains investments made by the state, local partners, and the federal government. PATH will provide funding for services to members during the transition to CalAIM and will also provide tools and resources to county and community-based providers including public hospitals, county, city and other government agencies, justice agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs), Medi-Cal Tribal and Designees of Indian Health Programs and others to ensure a successful implementation.

PATH is comprised of multiple aligned initiatives that will support implementation of ECM and Community Supports services in varying ways. See the DHCS PATH website [here](#) and California’s approved 1115 Waiver [Special Terms and Conditions](#) for additional detail on the various PATH initiatives.

**This document is focused on the PATH TA Marketplace Initiative.** This guidance captures the latest program design elements of this initiative as of 11/7/2022; however,



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some aspects of the program design described here may change prior to initiative launch. Updated guidance for this initiative may be disseminated in future webinars, guidance memos, FAQs, or application/registration forms for this initiative. Any future guidance related to this initiative will supersede guidance described in this document and will be posted on the PATH section of the DHCS CalAIM website. Stakeholders are encouraged to visit the PATH website [here](#) in order to view the latest guidance available for this initiative.

## Technical Assistance Marketplace Initiative

### Overview

This PATH initiative will make funding available for the provision of technical assistance (TA) for Applicants that are contracted to provide or intend to provide ECM and/or Community Supports. Applicants may apply for hands-on technical assistance support from vendors and access off-the-shelf TA resources in pre-defined TA domains. TA resources will be provided through a virtual “Marketplace,” which will serve as a one-stop-shop environment where entities can access TA resources. The DHCS-contracted PATH Third Party Administrator (TPA) will support the launch, administration, and management of the TA Marketplace.

Technical assistance resources may include, for example:

- Hands-on trainings for ECM / Community Supports providers regarding billing and reporting requirements, contracting with health plans, and other areas that may be tailored to the needs of the organization and the communities they operate in;
- Guidance for data sharing processes between ECM / Community Supports providers and health plans;
- Accelerated learning sessions or computer-based learning modules for CBOs;
- Support and best practices for entities implementing ECM / Community Supports; and,
- Customized project-specific support provided by vendors registered with the TA Marketplace.

### Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Applicants may include, but are not limited to:

- County, city, and local government agencies including public health departments;
- County and community-based providers (including but not limited to public hospitals);
- Community-based organizations;



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- Other ECM and Community Supports providers;
- Correctional agencies and other justice-involved stakeholders;
- Medi-Cal Tribal and Designees of Indian Health Programs; and
- Others as approved by DHCS.

Applicants must be actively contracted with an MCP, county, delegated provider or other entity authorized to contract with the Applicant for the provision of ECM / Community Supports, or have a signed attestation letter from an MCP, county, delegated provider or other entity authorized to contract with the Applicant stating that they intend to contract to provide ECM / Community Supports in a timely manner. MCPs are not eligible to receive TA Marketplace funding.

### Technical Assistance Vendors

TA Vendors on the Marketplace will either provide “off-the-shelf” projects available on the Marketplace (e.g., training programs, best practice guides etc.) or provide “hands-on” TA services (e.g., customized consulting project) to applicants. TA Vendors serving on the marketplace will be expected to have subject matter expertise and experience that qualifies them to provide TA in at least one of the TA domains described below. Vendors on the TA Marketplace will also be expected to have the organizational capacity necessary to deliver TA in a timely manner within budget and respond to TA recipient needs.

The TPA and DHCS will solicit, review, and approve applications from vendors to serve on the TA Marketplace. TA vendor applications will be released biannually in September and March of each year with contracting beginning on December and June respectively of each year. DHCS anticipates launching the TA Marketplace in January 2023. Eligible vendors must meet minimum qualifications and criteria that may include, but will not be limited to:

- Demonstrated subject matter expertise in one or more of the TA Domains described below
- Demonstrated experience and success providing TA for one or more of the entity types eligible to receive TA via the CalAIM PATH TA Marketplace
- Maintain business licensing or accreditation that meets industry standards, if required
- Maintain a physical presence in California or are capable of effectively providing services virtually
- Demonstrated cultural competency and non-discriminatory practices



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- Commitment to participate in any contractually required activities, such as training or onboarding, as required by the TPA
- Capability to comply with all reporting and oversight requirements
- Customer references

Upon the approval of TA vendors, the TPA will begin developing contractual agreements with the selected entities. Initial contract terms will be for a period of twelve months, with the option for one-year renewals thereafter. Being approved as a vendor on the TA Marketplace does not guarantee an ongoing contract to serve in this role. TA vendor contracts may be terminated with cause as determined by DHCS. TA vendors will be responsible for developing and submitting scope of work (SOW) for TA projects and submitting progress reports to the TPA.

## Registration Process and Approach

Applicants seeking technical assistance must first fill out a standardized electronic registration form available on the TA Marketplace webpage and submit it to the TPA for review. This form will establish an electronic account for each Applicant interested in receiving TA on the TA marketplace. Once the Applicant has filled out the registration form, they will be able to browse the website for TA resources, select a vendor or off-the-shelf resource of interest, and apply for a TA project.

The Applicant seeking technical assistance will either access one of the “off the shelf” resources available on the TA Marketplace or identify a marketplace vendor that can provide customized TA services (e.g., a customized hands-on consulting project) to the Applicant. After Applicants have completed the TA registration process they will be able to fill out a standardized electronic TA project application available on the Marketplace website and submit it to the TPA for review. The TA project application form will collect the following information, at a minimum:

- Applicant type;
- Contact information;
- Information about the TA request and other funding sources the Applicant is accessing;
- Justification for why the TA resource is needed and the goals for the requested TA resource;
- Attestation that resources received via the TA Marketplace will not duplicate or supplant other funding sources that have been allocated to the Applicant or that the Applicant has or received for the same purposes requested under this initiative;



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- Copy of at least one, executed contract in the State of California for activities related to the provision of ECM / Community Supports or a copy of a signed letter from an MCP, county, delegated provider or other entity authorized to contract with the Applicant, stating the intent to contract with the Applicant in a timely manner for activities related to the provision of ECM / Community Supports. Applicants will be required to include this executed contract as part of the SOW or as an interim project milestone, as appropriate.

The TPA will review TA project applications according to criteria developed by DHCS, and provide a recommendation to DHCS that the application be accepted or rejected. DHCS will make the final decision on whether to approve, request additional information, or reject the application. The TPA will support entities in accessing TA services/vendors that will best meet their needs. The TPA will also ensure non-duplication with other initiatives that provide TA services (e.g., through review of relevant Incentive Payment Program (IPP) MCP Needs Assessment and Gap Filling Plans and other PATH funded initiatives).<sup>1</sup>

Upon approval by DHCS, the Applicant seeking technical assistance will work with the selected Marketplace vendor to develop a SOW that describes the project and corresponding deliverables and milestones. Approved Applicants will be required to include an executed contract for the provision of ECM / Community Supports at SOW development or as an interim milestone, as appropriate. The TPA will issue payments to the vendor upon completion and verification of the deliverables and milestones articulated in the SOW. For “off the shelf” resources, the TPA will pay the vendor directly based on an agreed rate / fee schedule.

## Technical Assistance Domains

Preliminary priority TA domains will be determined by DHCS with input from stakeholders and the TPA. TA domains may be updated and revised throughout the lifetime of the PATH TA Marketplace. Preliminary priority TA domains include:

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<sup>1</sup> Other Federal, state or local funding sources and programs that are complementary to or enhance PATH funds will not be considered supplanted by PATH funds or duplicate reimbursement. If applicable, applicants must describe how similar or related services and activities supported by other Federal, state or local funding sources are complemented or enhanced by efforts funded by PATH. For example, if other funding 1) does not fully reimburse activities, 2) may allow additional/different populations to be served or 3) may allow additional/different services to be provided beyond those funded by PATH. To the extent otherwise allowable PATH activities are reimbursed by other Federal, state or local programs, PATH funding must not duplicate such reimbursement. All PATH operational and monitoring protocols are subject to federal approvals.



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- Building Data Capacity | Data Collection, Management, Sharing, and Use
- Community Supports | Strengthening Services that Address the Social Drivers of Health
- Engaging in CalAIM through Medi-Cal Managed Care
- Enhanced Care Management (ECM) | Strengthening Care for ECM “Populations of Focus”
- Promoting Health Equity
- Supporting Cross-Sector Partnerships
- Workforce
- Others as approved by DHCS

Cross Cutting Competency—Rural Communities: All TA Domains include TA Vendors with expertise in and hands-on experience with addressing the unique challenges experienced by providers and partner agencies serving rural communities.

### Role of the Third-Party Administrator (TPA)

DHCS has engaged Public Consulting Group as the Third-Party Administrator (TPA) to launch and administer the TA Marketplace. The TPA will serve the following roles and responsibilities for this initiative:

- **Working with DHCS to implement the TA Marketplace.** The TPA will work with DHCS to provide eligible entities with the ability to search for TA resources and vendors by TA domain and register and apply for TA services through the TA Marketplace. The TPA will be responsible for connecting eligible entities with the vendors they have chosen through the Marketplace and ensuring they receive appropriate project-specific TA support from vendors.
- **Promoting the TA Marketplace.** The TPA will proactively promote the Marketplace to eligible entities that qualify for TA. The TPA will further be responsible for conducting additional outreach to under-resourced areas and underserved communities in the state including: rural and medically underserved communities; under-resourced providers; and providers that serve large segments of underrepresented populations to improve access to TA.
- **Provisioning standardized TA resources to support eligible entities.** The TPA will be responsible for contracting with other vendors that can design and provide standardized TA resources.
- **Reviewing and approving applications for vendors that provide TA.** The TPA will be responsible for establishing relationships with vendors and qualifying



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them for participation in the TA Marketplace. Specifically, the TPA will be responsible for:

- Establishing Marketplace terms and conditions that vendor participants will be obligated to meet through the execution of a standard agreement;
  - Establishing vendor qualifications and criteria for participation in the Marketplace;
  - Vetting vendors to ensure they meet qualifications and specified criteria in each domain where they have demonstrated experience; and,
  - Developing and administering contracts that vendors must sign in order to participate in the Marketplace, committing them to serve Marketplace customers, and meet specified Marketplace terms and conditions, including service level agreements and other requirements.
- **Providing registration services and reviewing registration information from entities seeking TA opportunities.** The TPA will be responsible for providing registration services, reviewing all registration information from eligible entities seeking TA resources, and tracking the specific performance metrics of entities receiving TA resources. The TPA will also validate the eligibility of all entities requesting TA resources through the Marketplace.
  - **Serving as the fiscal administrator.** The TPA will disburse funding to vendors that are participating in the TA Marketplace and have met specified milestones and deliverables. The TPA will validate and confirm TA deliverables have been met before payment to the vendor is issued.
  - **Reviewing contracts between eligible entities and TA Marketplace vendors.** The TPA will review draft SOWs developed by Marketplace vendors that describe how TA resources will be delivered to eligible entities. The TPA will collate these draft SOWs, assess each against criteria established by DHCS, and provide a summary to DHCS on a routine basis with their recommendations as to which SOWs should move forward and which may require attention or adjustments. The TPA will provide DHCS with written rationale stating why particular SOWs should not move forward or require attention from DHCS.
  - **Connecting TA Marketplace participants to other PATH initiatives as appropriate.** The TPA will help support TA Marketplace participants—including organizations receiving TA and TA Vendors—connect to and access resources from other PATH initiatives (e.g., Collaborative Planning and Implementation, CITED, Justice-Involved Capacity Building).
  - **Tracking and reporting funding.** The TPA will track and report funding on a routine basis to DHCS. The TPA will monitor payment amounts by region to help promote an equitable distribution of TA resources and identify gaps in regions or



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provider/entity types that might not be applying for or receiving TA. DHCS will determine specific reporting requirements prior to launch, including those that satisfy CMS progress reporting requirements. In addition, The TPA will be responsible for assessing target funding allocations within each region and in each year, and will proactively reach out to eligible entities in counties that are not on track to hit target funding allocations to encourage entities to apply. The TPA will support modifications to target allocations as needed in collaboration with DHCS.

- **Maintaining public-facing documentation and ensuring non-duplication.** The TPA will publicly document which entities are receiving TA services and the types of services they are receiving. The TPA will also develop guardrails to ensure non-duplication with other TA funding initiatives (e.g., through the performance incentive program and other PATH programs).
- **Managing risk.** The TPA will be responsible for troubleshooting issues as they arise, assessing their risk and elevating problems to DHCS as required. The TPA will also register any complaints and grievances and report them to DHCS in a timely manner.
- **Reporting on best practices and TA Marketplace utilization.** The TPA will be responsible for sharing best practices gleaned from the administration of the TA Marketplace and on the utilization of different TA resources, by domain and by Applicant type. DHCS will determine specific reporting requirements prior to launch, including those that must be met to satisfy CMS progress reporting requirements.
- **Submitting progress reports.** The TPA will be responsible for collecting progress reports from entities and submitting them to DHCS on a routine basis. Progress reports are expected to describe activities that have been carried out under the terms of the contracts and any required performance metrics or self-defined project milestones.
- **Curating and documenting promising practices.** The TPA will be responsible for gathering, documenting and working with the TPA vendors to gather and share promising practices and early lessons learned, through webinars and appropriate forums to be determined by DHCS.

### Allocation Methodology

DHCS will define soft target allocation amounts for each county. These soft targets will encourage an equitable distribution of PATH funding for Applicants across the state. Allocations will be based on a variety of factors assessed at the county level, including Medi-Cal enrollment, Medi-Cal managed care plan revenue, and measures of housing



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access. Non-WPC counties will receive an upward allocation adjustment to account for historical administrative and delivery system infrastructure funding provided to WPC Counties. The TPA will be responsible for monitoring the amount of funding administered to each county and will proactively support Applicants in counties that are not on track to hit target allocations.

In the event that funding requests in a county exceed target allocations, DHCS will meet with the TPA and will consider whether exceeding the target allocation is justified. If exceeding the target allocation is justified, then DHCS may choose to re-allocate funding from counties that are below their allocation targets to accommodate changes in demand and need. DHCS may also elect to pause funding to new applicants in the county exceeding target allocations until the next funding year. DHCS will work with the TPA to consider circumstances on a case-by case basis. Allocation targets will be reset and re-evaluated preceding each funding year, and DHCS may elect to adjust the underlying allocation strategy in each year (e.g., re-weighting measures or adding additional measures to calculate target allocations).

## Initiative Oversight

DHCS is committed to the robust oversight of all PATH programs and initiatives, including the TA Marketplace initiative, in accordance with federal requirements. Vendors providing TA resources will be responsible for submitting progress reports to the TPA in a frequency and manner specified by DHCS, detailing progress towards milestones/deliverables documented in SOWs for TA and including signed attestations from entities receiving TA. The PATH TPA may also field standardized satisfaction surveys among entities receiving TA to gauge the performance of TA vendors.

The TPA will also track and report funding on a routine basis to DHCS. The TPA will report the following performance measures to DHCS, including, at a minimum:

- Total funding dispersed to entities by county and by Applicant;
- Which Applicants have applied for Technical Assistance services;
- Which Applicants were funded to receive Technical Assistance services and how much funding was allocated to the Applicant;
- Which Applicants applied for Technical Assistance and were not funded and the reason(s) why funding was rejected;
- Utilization of different Technical Assistance resources by domain and by Applicant;
- Number of Applicants that met self-defined milestones during the performance period;



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- Number of Applicants that failed to meet self-defined milestones during the performance period;
- Description of outreach efforts to engage Applicants that are under-resourced, and/or serve historically underserved communities;<sup>2</sup>
- Description of outreach efforts to engage entities in counties that are not on track to hit target funding disbursements;
- Number of Applicants that are under-resourced, and/or serve historically underserved communities (as defined by the State);
- Summary of complaints/grievances; and,
- Other measures as defined by the State.

DHCS or the TPA, as appropriate, may perform spot check audits of funding disbursements across all PATH initiatives. DHCS and the TPA may utilize a standardized Corrective Action Plan process for Applicants who are not meeting progress reporting or other requirements for receipt of PATH funding.

**Next Steps**

DHCS is continuing to refine program design elements of the PATH TA Marketplace initiative. Updated design elements will be communicated in PATH All-Comer webinars and future guidance documents or released alongside application / registration templates. These documents will be publicly posted on the PATH portion of the DHCS CalAIM web page when available. Any future guidance will supersede guidance described in this document. If you have questions regarding the PATH TA Marketplace initiative then please email [ta-marketplace@ca-path.com](mailto:ta-marketplace@ca-path.com).

**Draft 2022 Timeline for PATH TA Marketplace Initiative**

Activity	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan (2023)
TA Marketplace guidance released				

<sup>2</sup> Examples of populations that have been historically underrepresented or underserved may be found in the White House “[Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)”, and include for example: Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.



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First open application period for TA Marketplace vendors				
Announcement of initial set of vendors for TA Marketplace				
Registration and application templates for entities to access TA Marketplace resources released				
TA Marketplace online				