

ARPA HCBS Technical Assistance Program Announcement: Phase 2

March 8, 2022

ADvancing States is excited to announce a **second phase** of short-term, intensive technical assistance to State Medicaid programs to facilitate and expedite state implementation of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) HCBS Funding Initiative, the largest federal investment in HCBS systems capacity in 40 years. In this second phase of technical assistance, three of the original supporters---[The SCAN Foundation](#), the [Milbank Memorial Fund](#), and [The John A. Hartford Foundation](#)---have been joined by [Arnold Ventures](#) – in supporting this effort. The second phase will begin on March 15, 2022 and end on June 13, 2022.

Background

The ARPA HCBS Funding Initiative was enacted under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The total amount of new state and Federal funding for the Initiative is projected to exceed \$30 billion over a three- year period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2024.

To access ARPA HCBS funding, states were required to submit HCBS Spending Plans to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) during the summer of 2021. After CMS review, most states were given partial approval to proceed with spending on Initiatives that met the requirements of the ARPA legislation but were asked to provide additional information on other Spending Initiatives. In the last few months, CMS has accelerated the approval process, and as of February 18, some 31 states have been awarded Conditional Approval to draw down funds on their HCBS Spending Plans.

The Technical Assistance Provided in Phase 2 will have Two Separate Tracks

The funding available to states under the ARPA HCBS Initiative is enormous, and states are faced with the challenge of spending their full ARPA HCBS allotments by March 31, 2024, as stipulated in the enabling legislation. To help states meet this challenge, the four foundations sponsoring this initiative are providing states with technical assistance to facilitate the expeditious implementation of state HCBS Spending Plans. The foundations are working with five organizations representing some of the nation’s leading experts in HCBS policy to assist states over a three-month period from March 15, 2022 to June 13, 2022. The five organizations and the HCBS policy experts who will provide this assistance are:

Organization

ADvancing States
NASDDDS
Ventech Solutions
Halperin Butera Consulting
Riverstone Health Advisors

HCBS Policy Expert(s)

Camille Dobson and Damon Terzaghi
Mary Sowers and Teja Stokes
Brian Burwell
Alissa Halperin
Anne Jacobs

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The structure of the technical assistance provided in the second phase of funding will be somewhat different from the first phase conducted in the fall of 2021. In this phase, the technical assistance effort will have **two tracks**.

Track 1

The first track will be very similar to the structure of Phase 1. Up to five states will be selected to develop a comprehensive **Project Management Plan** to lay out the sequence of discrete activities needed to achieve the objectives of some or all of the initiatives contained in the state's HCBS Spending Plan. The Project Management Plan will include every step that needs to be undertaken for the initiative to be completed, including the hiring of new staff, the submission of State Plan Amendments and/or waiver amendments to CMS, rate development and approvals, the procurement of outside vendors, IT system changes, regulatory processes, and so forth. States may choose whether the Project Management Plan will address all of their HCBS Spending Plan initiatives or whether it will instead focus on a subset of HCBS Spending Plan initiatives. In this manner, staff and consultant resources can be concentrated on the more complex and impactful initiatives instead of the entire HCBS Spending Plan. The Project Management Plan will be developed using a template created by the consultants in the first phase of the ARPA Technical Assistance project.

In addition to working one-on-one with a designated HCBS policy expert, states will have the opportunity to participate in at least three virtual meetings with the other four states selected for this track. States may also be asked to participate in at least one virtual meeting with representatives of the foundation sponsors.

Track 2

In the second track of this technical assistance effort, the project team will sponsor **two Affinity Groups** on topics of high policy and program interest to the ARPA HCBS initiative. Given the fixed resources available from funders, only two Affinity Groups can be conducted in this phase. The two topics addressed in this phase will be selected by the state applicants from among six choices:

- Career Paths for Direct Service Workers (DSWs)
- Implementing Wage Increases for DSWs
- Supports for Informal Caregivers
- Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to Improve Quality of and Access to HCBS Services
- Use of Enabling Technology to Expand Access to HCBS
- Assessing the Success of ARPA HCBS Initiatives

Each state selected for track 2 will participate in six virtual bi-weekly meetings of 90 minutes each between March 23 and June 8, 2022, essentially every two weeks. The project team will be responsible for organizing the agenda for each meeting and will serve as meeting facilitators. Each participating state may be asked to make a brief presentation on how the state is advancing the Affinity Group topic (e.g., Supporting Family Caregivers) in its HCBS Spending Plan and its progress in achieving program objectives. States may also be asked to serve as reactors to presentations made by other participants in the Affinity Group.

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How Can My State Apply for Technical Assistance?

States simply need to complete a brief online expression of interest application (<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6745504/ARPA-2nd-Round-HCBS-Technical-Assistance-Application>) by COB, Monday, March 14. States selected to participate in the project will be notified by Tuesday, March 15, and project work will begin immediately. The number of states selected for participation in the Affinity Groups will depend upon the number of states that apply, but we will try to accommodate every state that applies if feasible.

States may apply to **both** track 1 and track 2 but may only participate in one track. Applicants are asked to rank order potential Affinity Group topics, based on their state's interest in each topic. The two Affinity Group topics selected for track 2 will be those that are of greatest interest to applicant states.

If you have any questions about your state's participation in the project, please contact ARPATA@advancingstates.org.

