

## 2020-2021 Behavioral Health + Economics Network

### *Request for Applications*

#### **Introduction**

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing (National Council) is pleased to invite its state association members to apply for participation in the 2021-2022 Behavioral Health + Economics Network (BHECON) project. The goal of the project is to support state associations in their educational and advocacy efforts to improve the lives of people living with serious mental illness to strengthen states' behavioral health delivery systems. Each of the five (5) selected state association partners will receive a monetary stipend, communications support, training, and other technical assistance from the National Council, in addition to raising the profile of their organization within their state and nationally. Deadline for submission of proposals is October 8, 2021.

#### **About BHECON**

The [Behavioral Health + Economics Network](#) is a vehicle for uniting diverse stakeholders to strengthen state behavioral health delivery systems. Led by the National Council along with its state association partners, BHECON optimizes public visibility through state forums and educational advocacy events, and uniting diverse groups in data-driven dialogue around educational advocacy.

The National Council initiated BHECON in 2016 and has since engaged nine states in hosting several state forums and educational advocacy events. This year, BHECON is focusing its efforts on addressing the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice from a five-step approach: 1) Prevention from Entering the System, 2) Pre-Entry, 3) In the System, 4) Re-Entry, and 5) Prevention from Recidivism.

In 2021-2022, the National Council is continuing BHECON with five (5) states and is soliciting applications from its state association partners to participate in the next iteration of this initiative. BHECON activities will be generously supported this year by Alkermes and Johnson & Johnson.

#### **Program Expectations**

Each participating state association partner that is selected will agree to:

***Identify a Staff Lead:*** State association partners agree to assign a single staff lead who will serve as the main local contact and participate in regular planning calls with National Council staff.

***Host Forums:*** In cooperation with the National Council, selected state association partners agree to host at least one (1) statewide forum over a period of one year that will leverage state specific opportunities to improve the health and lives of individuals with serious mental illness, including cooccurring disorders.

\*NOTE: Due to funding restrictions, BHECON support is available for an examination of issues related to serious mental illness (including co-occurring substance use disorders). However, BHECON-funded activities cannot focus exclusively on the opioid epidemic or addiction only issues.

***Host Educational Advocacy Event:*** In cooperation with the National Council, selected state association partners agree to host one (1) educational advocacy event. This event is a strategic way to educate policymakers about the issues identified during the forums and to generate media attention about these issues. The event may take any type of form that gives participants ready access to educate legislators and advocate for important issues; this includes (but is not limited to) meetings with state legislators or organization Hill Days.

***Share State Advocacy Agenda with the National Council:*** State association partners agree to share the list of mental health-related priorities and advocacy agendas, which will help inform the focus and topics of the forums. The advocacy agenda may include both state and federal issues and should be the focal point of the educational advocacy event.

***Involve Diverse Stakeholders:*** In addition to providers of mental health services, state association partners agree to engage with stakeholders from a diverse array of fields. These stakeholders may include but are not limited to: representatives from the criminal justice system (e.g., judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys), law enforcement officials (e.g., sheriffs, police officers), substance abuse treatment providers, veterans and veteran's services organizations, children and adolescent services organizations, primary care providers, hospitals, medical associations, mental health consumers, key policymakers, and state administrators.

***Attend BHECON Forum Preceding the National Council's Annual Conference:*** State association partners agree to attend the pre-conference forum sponsored by BHECON on Sunday, April 10, 2021, in Washington DC. The forum will feature presentations and panel discussions on using research data to support advocacy, building strategic partnerships, and future trends and innovations in behavioral health.

## **Role of the National Council**

***Funding Support:*** The National Council will provide stipends of \$10,000 per state (split among state association partners where more than one partner is involved) to cover staff and travel costs related to forums, educational advocacy events, and other activities. Separately from the stipend, the National Council will cover costs associated with the forums/events, such as catering, event space rental, A/V charges, printing, and other associated expenses.

***Intensive Communications Support:*** With the guidance of state association partners, the National Council will provide communications support for the state as pertinent to the topics discussed at BHECON forums. This may include developing data-driven infographics, hosting live social media events such as "twitter chats," writing blogs highlighting success stories and advocacy needs from state association partners, and other activities to be determined in consultation with state association partners.

***Training and Other Technical Assistance:*** If desired by state association partners, budget permitting, the National Council will provide customized advocacy trainings. These trainings may include topics such as being a spokesperson for your cause and/or other specialized trainings for stakeholders (e.g., Mental Health First Aid training for law enforcement officers).

***BHECON Website:*** The National Council will maintain and update the [BHECON website](http://www.bhecon.org) with information showcasing state activities, important research, or user-friendly data summaries to support states' advocacy efforts. Resources may include fact sheets, social media posts, shareable infographics, advocacy toolkits, and/or other types of communications to support public education and state advocacy efforts of BHECON participants.

## How to Apply

Applications may be submitted online and are due no later than **8:00pm EDT on October 8, 2021**. The application questionnaire can be found on pages 4-5 of this document. Applications should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. To submit your online application, please go to:

<https://forms.office.com/r/cbVm5SXXcv>.

**Questions about this program or the application process? Contact Malka Berro at [MalkaB@thenationalcouncil.org](mailto:MalkaB@thenationalcouncil.org).**

## 2021-2022 Behavioral Health + Economics Network Application Questions

Submit final application online at:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/cbVm5SXXcv>

### **Section I. Background Information**

Organizational Information	
Applicant Organization Name*	
Applicant Organization Mailing Address	
Co-Applicant Organization Name* (optional)	
How many, if any, CCBHCs are members of your State Association?	
Is your organization a <a href="#">National Council member</a> ?	Y/N
If your organization is NOT a National Council member, please identify a co-applicant organization on this effort who is a National Council member.*	

*\*NOTE: Eligible applicant organizations are [National Council state association members](#) OR non-members applying in partnership with a National Council state association member.*

Applicant & Team Member Information	
Applicant First & Last Name	
Applicant Title	
Applicant Email Address	
Staff Lead First & Last Name	
Staff Lead Title	
Staff Lead Email Address	
Name(s) & Title(s)/Role(s) of Additional Team Members (who will be participating in BHECON)	

## **Section II. Short Answer**

1. Why does your organization/state want to participate in BHECON? What is your state association's advocacy priorities? (250 word limit)
2. Have you previously worked with the criminal justice system, including law enforcement and the courts, in addressing issues such as diversion and re-entry of people with serious mental illness into community-based treatment? If yes, please provide examples. (250 word limit)
3. As identified above, this year BHECON is focusing its efforts on addressing the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice from a five-step approach: 1) Prevention from Entering the System, 2) Pre-Entry, 3) In the System, 4) Re-Entry, and 5) Prevention from Recidivism. Can you speak to some of your interests that intersect with at least three of these steps? (500 word limit)

## **Section III. BHECON Participation Checklist & Applicant Confirmation**

<p><b>By checking the boxes below, I affirm that my organization will fulfill these program requirements and have held any associated dates on team calendars, as needed.</b></p>	<p><b>Program Requirements.</b> I affirm that my organization will complete the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Identify a Staff Lead.</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Participate in one (1) kick-off call with the National Council:</b> Specific date/time TBD, weeks of November 8 or November 15.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Participate in forum planning calls, as needed.</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Host at least one (1) forum within a period of one (1) year following the kick-off call.</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Host one (1) educational advocacy event.</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Attend BHECON Forum preceding the National Council's Annual Conference:</b> Sunday, April 10, 2021, Washington DC.</li></ul>
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