

# Massachusetts Strategy for Supporting Home and Community Based Services using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

28 May 2021



On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan. Section 9817 provides additional support for Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) and certain behavioral health services during the COVID-19 emergency through a one-year 10% increase in federal matching funds. This one-year increase in federal matching funds would result in new, time-limited dollars that can be invested in HCBS and behavioral health services through March 2024. This is an exciting opportunity to further strengthen HCBS and certain behavioral health services. The Commonwealth will access as much federal funding as possible.

On April 16, 2021, the Commonwealth issued a Request for Information (RFI) to gather feedback from organizations and individuals on strategic areas where the enhanced funding could be focused. States must use these funds to supplement rather than supplant existing spending. Responses were due May 7, 2021. The Commonwealth received 206 proposals in response to the RFI. Summaries of the responses are posted online [here](#).

On May 12, 2021, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued additional [guidance](#) and detail on eligible services, program requirements, allowable activities, required reporting and claiming. This additional guidance clarified that although **the funding is time limited, the funding may be spent through March 2024.**

## Key points you should know:

- The funding from the one-year 10% increase can be spent until March 31, 2024.
- The Commonwealth is calculating the estimated amount of increased funding based on the latest CMS guidance.
- The Commonwealth will access as much funding as possible.
- While CMS requires states to submit an **Initial** Spending Plan by June 12, 2021, these plans are expected to be high-level and provide a general framework for how states are approaching the funding; the required **Quarterly** Spending Plans will provide ongoing opportunities to refine and implement detailed plans that include greater stakeholder input.

## What to expect next:

- On Friday, May 28, 2021, the Commonwealth posted a [summary](#) of RFI submissions.
- Tuesday June 8, 2021, the Commonwealth will hold a call with stakeholders, advocates and the broader community to provide a summary of the RFI submissions, provide an overview of CMS guidance released on May 12, and

outline how the Commonwealth will continue to engage and solicit feedback over the next several months. Details regarding the webinar are forthcoming.

- The Commonwealth will use feedback and ideas gathered from the RFI and the additional guidance provided by CMS to develop the Initial and Quarterly Spending Plans and Narratives
- The **Initial Spending Plan and Narrative** due June 12, 2021 will focus on immediate relief through rate and wage enhancements for certain HCBS and behavioral health providers aimed at strengthening and stabilizing the HCBS and behavioral health workforce. The Initial Spending Plan and updates will be posted.
- Through the summer and fall, the Commonwealth will develop detailed **Quarterly Spending Plans** that focus on one-time and time-limited investments that would have long-term, structural impact on HCBS and behavioral services. Investments will be inclusive of feedback received through the RFI process and stakeholder input over the next three months. Quarterly Spending Plans will also be posted.