

# Medicaid Infrastructure Grants: Basic and Comprehensive

## Background

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIIA) created Medicaid Infrastructure Grants (MIGs) for states interested in improving employment supports for people with disabilities. MIGs are authorized until the end of federal fiscal year 2011 and do not require matching state funds. To qualify for MIGs, a state's Medicaid program must provide personal attendant services (PAS) sufficient to support individuals with disabilities in employment.

## Basic MIG Grants

Basic MIG grants are intended to assist states develop Medicaid programs for individuals with disabilities. These programs can include a Medicaid Buy-in for workers with disabilities, PAS (beyond the required levels that qualify a state for a MIG), case management, transportation, and other services that support individuals with disabilities in employment. Basic MIG funding can also be used to train Medicaid workers and the community on existing programs, to evaluate the effectiveness of Medicaid employment supports, and to create promotional and outreach material on the Buy-in.

Basic MIG grant awards are for a minimum of \$500,000 up to a maximum of \$750,000, based on Buy-in expenditures.<sup>1</sup>

## Comprehensive Employment System MIG Grants

Comprehensive Employment Systems (CES) grants require the state to meet PAS requirements and to have implemented a Buy-in that covers workers with disabilities who earn at least 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). CES grants are intended to create a comprehensive approach to providing employment supports by creating links between Medicaid services and other programs that can promote the employment of individuals with disabilities. Examples of these programs might include: Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Agencies, Department of Transportation, Social Security, and Housing and Urban Development. CES states can also use their funds for activities approved under basic MIG grants.

CES MIG grants require a high level of collaboration with and input from other agencies, consumers and advocates. CES grants are required to be led by a leadership council, comprised of high-level decision makers from a variety of agencies and service providers throughout the state, as well as consumers representing a broad range of disabilities. CES grants are also required to spend the majority of their first year generating a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the grant's activities and the interaction with other stakeholders in the state.

<sup>1</sup> The Buy-in expenditures are calculated as state and federal funds spent on service costs to Buy-in participants. The expenditures do not include the Medicare "Clawback" for dual eligible recipients.

CES grant awards are for a minimum of \$500,000 up to a maximum of 10 percent of the Buy-in expenditures.

### **Which MIG is the right fit?**

If a state's Medicaid program authorizes PAS sufficient to qualify for a MIG and the state has a Buy-in that covers up to 200 percent of FPL, it can apply for either a basic or a CES MIG grant. Each grant has specific requirements, and the state should examine its own goals and resources when determining which path to choose. Some key issues to consider are:

- **What are some of the projects the MIG is currently working on and are there additional projects the MIG is interested in pursuing?**

CES grants are expected to have a higher involvement of external partners in MIG activities. If the state is not currently involving other programs within MIG projects, the program should consider what other initiatives the state would begin with a CES grant. However, the state does *NOT* need to apply for a CES grant to begin creating new partnerships and collaborations with other agencies.

- **What degree of involvement do other agencies currently have in the MIG?**

Because of the highly collaborative nature of CES grants, the state should examine current partnerships when deciding which grant to apply for. CES grants offer an opportunity to create new partnerships and strengthen existing ones, but the state should examine the level of investment that other agencies have in the initiative prior to application.

- **Does my state have the capacity to generate a strategic plan?**

The strategic planning process required by CES grants is an extensive, time consuming

venture. States should consider if existing staffing levels, resources, and/or partnerships will be able to perform a wide-ranging examination of the current system as well as to create an overall vision and action plan for employment of individuals with disabilities.

- **What are the current Buy-in expenditures of the state?**

Basic and CES grants have the same minimum award amount (\$500,000). When considering applying for a CES or basic grant, states should examine the current Buy-in expenditures to determine the amount of money that the state might be eligible for. States are eligible for up to 10 percent of Buy-in expenditures, but the basic grant caps the amount at \$750,000. CES grants have no upper limit, and some states receive awards of several million dollars a year. All funding above \$500,000 is contingent upon CMS approval and is subject to higher evaluative standards than minimum allotment grants.

- **What are other potential benefits of applying as a CES?**

Even if a state does not qualify for an award of more than \$750,000, there might be other advantages from a CES grant. The increased level of collaboration inherent in a CES might enable MIG states to develop partnerships that did not exist under a basic grant. The CES grants can also foster innovation in service delivery, program developments and coordinated funding. The CES state may also use the strategic planning year to create a statewide action plan for employment, rather than just a MIG work plan. MIGs should consider current employment initiatives within their state and evaluate the potential for a CES to succeed in improving or coordinating those efforts.