

UTAH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLANNING AND ADVISORY COUNCIL (UBHPAC)

June 29th, 2026

Jules Martinez, Council Co-Chair

Becks Logan, Council Co-Chair

The Utah Office of Substance Use and Mental Health

288 N 1460 W

Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Re: Utah Block Grant Application (DUNS #878593383)

Please allow this letter to serve as comments by the Utah Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Council (UBHPAC, "the Council") on the Utah 2027 Combined MHBG/SUPTRS Application Behavioral Health Assessment and Plan ("the Application") according to section 22 of the Application.

The Council supports the Application by the Utah Office of Substance Use and Mental Health (SUMH) for funding from the Federal Block Grant for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder ("the Block Grant") services for the State of Utah. These funds are critical for providing needed behavioral health services for vulnerable individuals with serious mental illness or severe emotional disturbance throughout the State of Utah, and especially those individuals who are uninsured or underinsured. .

The Council was given the opportunity to review the Application for FY2026/27. The Council members were alerted that the Application was available for their review and public comment, and all were asked to review it and give input or ask questions. The full Council met to review the Application in greater detail, get answers to questions, and vote in support of the Application. The Council generated this letter to be submitted with the Application. The letter was reviewed and approved on 7/2/26.

In addition to reviewing the Application, the Council worked closely with the Utah SUMH staff this past year. Information and Training from SUMH this year has included the following.

1. SUMH provided updates about the block grant application process, the state system of mental health and substance use services, and changes in state level policy and legislation that affect state spending and service provision.
2. SUMH staff gave several presentations about the state and federal budget, including both State and Federal funding, broken down into mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) categories (including set aside requirements and with a distributions breakdown).
3. SUMH staff coordinated a series of presentations from several organizations who had received funding from the block grant in the last year to the Council.
4. SUMH staff presented on their work with respect to recommendations from this council, including goals they were able to achieve, those in progress, and those goals that have not

yet been addressed.

The Council appreciates the SUMH's consistency in requesting community feedback and in their efforts to integrate community feedback, including through the UBHPAC. The Council has worked to compile recommendations for the Utah SUMH in three main areas. These include Process: working together with the Council, Infrastructure, and Direct Services.

1. Process: Working Together With the Council

- a. The Council members appreciate all of the information and training provided by the Utah SUMH to the UBHPAC and request that they continue to provide ongoing training and engage in dialogue at each UBHPAC meeting about their work, especially in regard to recommendations from this council.
- b. The Council strives to work together with SUMH to support the work of Utah's new Behavioral Health Commission. The Council recommends that a review of the Commission's goals, objectives and progress, SUMH's efforts to support the Commission and UBHPAC, and participation by Council members on the Commission's subcommittees and workgroups be provided at each UBHPAC meeting. The Council further requests the opportunity to provide formal feedback to the Commission at least twice annually.
- c. The Council requests more information from SUMH regarding the quality of services provided in the state. This might include quantitative or qualitative research or formal reports as well as participant interviews or site visits. Outcomes based performance indicators would be an additional helpful tool in this regard.

2. Infrastructure

- a. The Council appreciates that the Utah SUMH has worked with community-based organizations as partners in ongoing efforts to create a more effective system. The council recommends that the SUMH sustain and expand the training and capacity building in community based organizations.
- b. The Council is grateful for the accessible trainings coordinated by the SUMH to service providers across Utah.
- c. The Council recommends that the Utah SUMH invest in a more connected and organized infrastructure, especially for peer support services and recovery community organizations. This might include technical and financial assistance to support the development and maintenance of a centralized system for data collection, grants reporting, payroll, insurance, and other systems that could connect peer agencies state wide.
- d. The Council appreciates the Utah SUMH efforts to collect, store and share more detailed, specific and accurate data about outcomes related to the behavioral health care system in Utah. The Council hopes that SUMH sustains and expands these efforts, including by finding more ways to enable community based agencies to participate and benefit from these processes.
- e. The Council recommends that SUMH increase efforts to make services and resources known, especially pertaining to the block grant, both to uninsured and underinsured individuals as well as providers serving those communities.

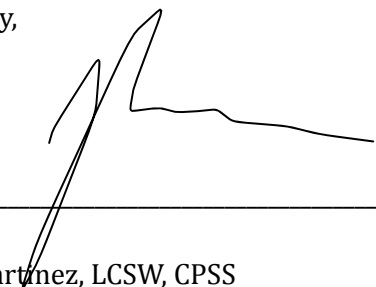
3. Direct Services

- a. The council appreciates the efforts that the Utah SUMH has made to expand services to individuals most in need. This includes through the state wide expansion of mobile crisis outreach, peer-to-peer services through increased funding for community based recovery organizations, and increased funding for youth and prevention including in schools and for the prevention of alcohol and tobacco use. The Council appreciates the additional focus on Forensic Peer Support training and services. We encourage the SUMH to continue to provide Block Grant funds for these services and that they continue to expand prevention and recovery supports in particular, especially for uninsured and underinsured individuals.
- b. The Council recommends that the Utah SUMH further support the expanding workforce, and especially the peer support workforce including expansion wherever needed, such as peer supervision, integrated healthcare, youth peer support certification, collegiate recovery programs, and others.
- c. The Council recommends increased focus on services for individuals most in need as evidenced by data. This should include specialized services for youth, the elderly, and rural populations. The Council recommends that, when possible, these options to obtain these services include Recovery Community Organizations and other community based agencies and that Local Authorities are encouraged to partner and work together with community based agencies who may offer more specialized services.

The Council appreciates the support from SUMH staff and leadership, who have made strides in educating Council members and have created several opportunities and venues for the Council to give input to SUMH in the past year. The Council looks forward to expanding our collaboration with SUMH as we seek to continue to increase Council participation in the planning, development, and implementation of the Block Grant. In the upcoming year, we will continue to refine our process for working together with the Executive Council and SUMH staff to plan, develop, and write the forthcoming SAMHSA Mental Health Block Grant application proposal.

We continue to look for ways to improve our collaboration and participation, impact, and value in improving consumer input of the Utah public health system. The Council is dedicated to being part of the process to elevate the behavioral health system and advocate for positive changes that will ultimately improve the lives of individuals and families in our communities.

Sincerely,



Jules Martinez, LCSW, CPSS
Council Co-Chair



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