



# Person-Centered Options Counseling Network Expansion Grant Opportunity

## Program Guidance and Application

### 1 Executive Summary

The Office of Healthy Aging is part of the multi-year, interagency, No Wrong Door Initiative team led by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). The No Wrong Door Initiatives focuses on redesigning the State's system of long-term services and support (LTSS) to improve consumer access and choice. One of the centerpieces of this initiative has been the launch of a pilot program to provide Person-Centered Options Counseling (PCOC), which is a new form of decision support for consumers in need of or at risk for Medicaid LTSS. To expand access to this service, the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging (OHA), in collaboration with EOHHS, is issuing notice of a grant opportunity using \$200,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to encourage and support up to three (3) community organizations interested in joining a growing network of PCOC providers.

The target population for PCOC is older adults and individuals with disabilities. PCOC is a unique form of counseling in that it focuses on a consumer's goals and preferences in addition to their care needs. PCOC is offered when consumers make first contact with the LTSS system. Those seeking information about LTSS are invited to take a brief needs assessment and then participate in a discussion with a trained MyOptions Advisor about the aspects of their lives that are most important to them in relation to their hopes for the future. The information exchanged in this portion of PCOC becomes the basis for a conversation about the LTSS options available that are most likely to assist the consumer in achieving their goals and addressing their care needs. The MyOptions Advisor works with the consumer to create a written "Plan of Action" for the consumer that summarizes the options discussed, and information for "next steps" such as referrals, contact information, and relevant written materials. A follow-up with the consumer typically occurs within two weeks. As we generally do not engage consumers in conversations about what they "want", MyOptions Advisors must have excellent customer relationship skills and be knowledgeable about LTSS options.

The guiding principles of the PCOC processes are:

- The focus is on the consumer at risk for or in need of LTSS, not on an LTSS provider, an agency or the services the agency provides, or the preferences or convenience of family members. The right of a consumer to control and make choices about their own lives is honored and respected as well as their need for privacy
- The relationship and, thus, the conversation between the consumer and the MyOptions Advisor are built on trust and an appreciation of each person's unique preferences and needs
- PCOC is the interactive process that may occur over several sessions and involve other people who are important to the consumer rather than a single event

PCOC is currently administered by EOHHS under the MyOptionsRI umbrella, which is the gateway to LTSS developed in conjunction with the NWD redesign effort and includes a website with a self-assessment tool. At present, State agencies that have MyOptions Advisors participating in the PCOC network on a limited basis are the Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Behavioral Healthcare, Hospitals, and Developmental Disabilities (BHDDH). The Point is also providing PCOC in its capacity as the State's Aging and Disability Resource Center administered by the OHA. Access to PCOC will expand gradually across populations as the State brings on new providers into the network and begins a coordinated outreach plan. PCOC is most helpful for consumers who contemplate future planning for LTSS or



are experiencing a major life changing event, regardless of payer source. PCOC typically happens “pre-eligibility”, or before a Medicaid application is submitted.

## **2 Network Expansion Grant Opportunity Overview**

### **2.1 Description**

**The Person-Centered Options Counseling Opportunity Grant will fund up to three (3) community partners to become part of a PCOC network.** OHA, in collaboration with EOHHS, will select up to three (3) community partners to receive equal award from the total of \$200,000 that will be devoted to this project. The award period is twelve (12) months. The 12-month period for providing PCOC may begin at the time the awardee has met the readiness criteria to initiate services. The determination of readiness will depend on completion of all required EOHHS trainings for PCOC as well as implementation of the necessary software. The Executive Office and Health and Human Services (EOHHS) will provide all necessary training to grant recipients and cover the cost of licensing fees for the required software.

Grant funds may be used to cover any startup costs that are not otherwise covered by Medicaid for MyOptions Advisor staffer(s), PCOC supplies and equipment and any outreach activities to increase awareness of PCOC and LTSS options in the community.

Interested organizations will submit a proposal detailing their ability to reach out to diverse populations in their communities to provide PCOC, including proven engagement with target populations, experience offering support navigating benefits, and the capacity to provide face to face or virtual interviews. Successful applicants will need to demonstrate organizational and leadership readiness, community engagement, and a commitment to create a PCOC offering.

The final allocation of grant funding will depend upon the number and qualified applications received. This document is intended to provide an overview of the goals of the program, the application process and eligibility and evaluation criteria.

### **2.2 Funding Distribution Methodology**

The methodology outlined below is intended to define a fair means of allocating funds to qualified community organizations who demonstrate the ability and intention to establish and expand PCOC offerings statewide.

- OHA, in collaboration with EOHHS, intends to award up to three (3) grants to receive equal award from the total of \$200,000.
- **MATCHING SHARE:** OHA will fund not more than 85% of each grantee’s project’s total costs pursuant to this grant Opportunity for each of the initial contract period and any renewal period(s). Each grantee agency selected by this Grant Opportunity will be required to provide a matching share for each of the initial contract period and any renewal period(s) equal to 15% of total costs from sources other than federal funds. In other words, for every \$85 received in funding from OHA pursuant to this grant opportunity . OHA will provide a document detailing acceptable ways to meet the required matching share.
- Payments under this agreement are contingent upon the submission of the appropriate documentation and reports by the Contractor.



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- Payments are to be requested by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month that expenses were incurred. OHA must receive the Payment Request Form and all required reports listed herein prior to processing payments.
- Failure to provide reporting or documentation from **any** OHA Agreement may result in a delay of payments.
- OHA reserves the right to modify the above payment schedule at any time upon notice to the Contractor.
- The final payment request shall be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the grant period.
- The selected vendor may request up-front funding for start up costs, if necessary and must be submitted per payment request in Section 3.2.

### 2.3 EOHHS Partnership Commitments

The PCOC Community Outreach Grant Program is structured as a partnership between OHA, EOHHS and participating community organizations. As such, OHA and EOHHS are making the following partnership commitments:

- (1) **Facilitate a Learning Collaborative** – OHA and EOHHS intend to support successful applicants/participants with monthly learning collaborative meetings, providing an opportunity to share learnings, experiences, challenges and opportunities across participating organizations
- (2) **Provide Training and State Resources** – OHA and EOHHS will provide training on PCOC to all grant recipients. EOHHS and OHA will also make state resources available to support participating organizations throughout the grant period and work to streamline/eliminate any state/local barriers to implementation of PCOC
- (3) **Provide Systems Access and Support** – OHA and EOHHS will provide access and licenses to grant recipients to the web based WellSky platform to track PCOC engagement and referrals
- (4) **Develop Sustainability Plans** – OHA and EOHHS are committed to working with participating organizations to understand reimbursement options and/or regulations that may be necessary to sustain the community provision of the PCOC Network over the long term
- (5) **Advancing Equity and Cultural Supports and Services Commitment** – OHA and EOHHS strongly encourage and welcome proposals from minority-run organizations serving communities of color and those serving persons with disabilities within Rhode Island

## 3 Program Details

### 3.1 Funding and Application Dates

Key dates for the PCOC Community Outreach grant program are as follows:

- **April 22, 2022:** Deadline to submit questions about the application to [OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov](mailto:OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov)
- **April 29, 2022:** Applications to be sent to [OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov](mailto:OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov)



### 3.2 Eligible Applicants

Grant funding through the PCOC Community Outreach Program is restricted to community organizations that meet the following base criteria:

1. **Non-profit** with 501c3 status in good standing in accordance with state and federal requirements
2. Must be able to receive payments from the State (submit W-2 through A&C) Request for Payment
  - i. The Contractor may request payment for reimbursement as expenses are incurred. The Request for Payment shall be in such form as shall be required by OHA.
  - ii. The Request for Payment shall be mailed to: Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging, 25 Howard Ave, 2nd floor, Cranston, RI 02920.
3. Community based organizations with documented experience in assisting consumers with understanding services and accessing resources in person, electronically or via telephone
4. Longevity of experience servicing as community-based organizations
5. Interest in becoming a long-term member of the PCOC network subsequent to the grant period as successful implementation will be the basis for determining continuing participation

Only organizations that are determined as meeting the above base criteria will be eligible to participate in this program and receive grant funding.

### 3.3 Grant Application Requirements

In order to receive funding from this program, eligible community organizations must submit a completed application to the State. The application will require agreement to a section of attestations and the submission of the application found in Appendix A.

The attestations that applicants must agree to are listed below:

1. **Learning Collaborative** – Applicants must agree to participate in monthly calls with OHA and EOHHS to share best practices and learnings from the program
2. **Complete PCOC Training** – Applicants must require individuals who deliver PCOC to participate and successfully complete PCOC training as determined by EOHHS (initial training is 30 hours with ongoing trainings yearly and/or as needed)
3. **Meet Advisor requirements** – Individuals who deliver PCOC must meet the requirements listed in Appendix B: MyOptions Advisor requirements
4. **Conflict of Interest:** Applicants must attest that they have no financial interest in the provision of direct care services that may be recommended via PCOC
5. **Implement Financial Controls:** Applicants must agree to retain and track funds and expenditures consistent with sound grant management practices; provide periodic status and financial reports in a format approved by OHA and DOA and respond to state auditing requests as needed



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**The application can be found in Appendix A of this document.** The application consists of the following main sections:

1. Applicant information
2. Qualifications and Experience
3. Organizational Capability and Commitment
4. Implementation Workplan and Timeline

All questions regarding this program should be directed to: [OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov](mailto:OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov)

### **3.4 Grant Evaluation Criteria**

A PCOC Grant Opportunity Evaluation Committee shall be established by the OHA and will be composed of members of the NWD interagency redesign team and designees of the LTSS Steering Committee, which is made up of EOHHS and OHA Directors. The committee will review applications in order to determine whether submitting organizations meet the eligibility criteria set forth in this document, evaluate each application according to a set of criteria, and make recommendations as to OHA for awardees of the grant. Upon reviewing the recommendations, OHA will refer them to the Secretary of EOHHS for final approval and announcement of the awards.

**Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:**

1. **Experience working with target populations** including adults aged sixty (60) and older, adults with disabilities over age nineteen (19), and persons with disabilities transitioning from the children's system of care entering as an adult age 19 or older. (25%)
2. **Capacity to provide PCOC**, or detailed plans to develop capacity, such as space to conduct in person interviews, technology to conduct virtual interviews, trained staffing available to deliver PCOC, ability to conduct interviews in languages prevalent in the communities served (25%)
3. **Demonstrated success at outreach** in the communities served, as evidenced by level of engagement with target populations in the community and experience in developing outreach materials and programs (20%)
4. **Organizational readiness and commitment**, including leadership commitment, financial stability, technology infrastructure, etc. (20%)
5. **A clear, organized, and well-structured workplan**, including tasks, timelines and responsible parties (10%)

The review committee will look favorably on applications with the following elements:

- Experienced staffing already on board
- Successful track record engaging with target populations
- Focus on underserved communities and non-English speaking populations
- Commitment to diversity and equity demonstrated by a board that reflects the demographics of the population served
- Evidence of ability to reach and engage with underserved populations
- Demonstration of structural capacity
- Security and privacy protection mechanisms



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The review committee will also take into account geographic diversity in selecting grant recipients, so that grant funding will be spread throughout the state of Rhode Island.

### **3.5 Required Deliverables**

Grant funds will be paid out based on grant recipients meeting the following deliverables in accordance with the timelines below.

- **Deliverable #1: Monthly Reporting**

Grant recipients shall produce a monthly report, to OHA detailing the activities conducted during the previous month. The monthly reporting format will be determined by OHA.

- Deadline: reports must be received within ten (10) days of the end of the month during the duration of the grant program

- **Deliverable #2: Active Participation in Program**

Grant recipients shall send their designated PCOC staffer(s) to the monthly learning collaborative meetings, any additional trainings, and track their PCOC activities in the State's web based WellSky platform.

- Deadline: Ongoing during the duration of the grant program

### **3.6 Funds**

Funding shall be used for the following eligible expenses:

- Outreach expenses to publicize PCOC availability to the community, including design, printing and distribution of materials, development of online information, and purchases of media
- Staffing expenses - not otherwise reimbursed by Medicaid - to fund personnel to deliver PCOC
- Remote meeting technologies when required to service the community and to connect to the state
- Phone system accommodations for direct reach regarding the program
- Multi-language voicemail optioning
- Overall multi-language translation services

Providers are instructed to keep financial records demonstrating that funds received are spent in accordance with award requirements, as recipients of these funds will be subject to reporting and audit requirements. In the event of an audit, if the awardee is found to have used funds for ineligible expenses, the award will be considered in violation of the grant agreement at which point OHA may begin the process of recouping all or a portion of the funds awarded by reducing future payments to the awardee. If the awardee is currently a vendor under contract with the OHA, EOHHS or any other State entity to provide Medicaid or Older Americans Act reimbursed counseling or benefit services, advice, or information and referral, the awardee shall ensure that PCOC tasks are tracked separately from other funding streams and maintain a separate account for these award funds and be able to provide records, upon request, establishing that they have not submitted claims for PCOC services during the duration of the grant. The awardee must continue to be financially viable and retain the required structural capacity to provide PCOC throughout the grant period. If deemed appropriate by EOHHS, the awardee will be required to provide quarterly attestations evidencing ongoing financial viability and structural capacity.



## 4 In Closing

The objective of this grant funding is to expand Person-Centered Options Counseling access to Rhode Islanders, which has been proven to improve overall consumer satisfaction with long term care services. The State of Rhode Island looks forward to working with critically important community organizations to establish the partnership and carry out the national and state goals of PCOC.

# Appendix A: PCOC Network Expansion Grant Opportunities Application

### **Application Instructions:**

To apply for grant funding, please submit an application with the information as outlined below.

Submit your application to OHA by emailing as a Word or PDF document to [OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov](mailto:OHHS.LTSSResiliency@ohhs.ri.gov) with “Application for PCOC Network Expansion Grant Opportunities” and applicant name in the subject line.

**Application due date: April 29, 2022**

The application should include the following sections, not to exceed ten (10) pages. Attachments may be included outside the page limit.

### **SECTION ONE: APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Please list the following information:

Name of Organization / Entity  
Main Contact

Name and Title  
Contact Phone  
Contact Email

Designated Staffer(s) for Learning Collaborative Meetings:

Name and Title  
Contact Phone  
Contact Email

Name and Title  
Contact Phone  
Contact Email

### **SECTION TWO: APPLICANT EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS**

This section should describe your organization’s experience in and qualifications for providing outreach and PCOC services.



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Include information on the following topics:

- Describe the makeup and size of the community your organization can reach and the extent of your engagement with target populations for PCOC.
- Describe your efforts to reach underserved populations and to promote equity and community integration.
- Describe the experience of selected staffer(s) who will be trained to conduct PCOC.
- Describe the success you have had in making a difference in the community you serve.
- Describe how the outreach approach will be person-centered and culturally competent.

### **SECTION THREE: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY AND COMMITMENT**

This section should include a description of leadership commitment, mission and goals of the organization, governance and ownership structure, and other supporting evidence of ability to undertake this program.

Include information on the following:

- Evidence of current financial status and projected ability to remain stable and perform grant related tasks during the grant period. Note whether grant funds will be used to increase staffing and the timeline for doing so
- Description of space and IT infrastructure sufficient to provide PCOC. The expectation is that the awardee will have the capacity to provide PCOC via telephone and possibly in person. The awardee must have the computer hardware necessary to support the web-based solution used for PCOC as well
- Indicate whether any new personnel or equipment required to fulfill the terms of the grant will be in place and operational within forty-five (45) days of the award
- Provide an organizational chart which show how the PCOC program will be managed
- Provide information about your organization's board and how it reflects the diversity of the community you serve

### **SECTION FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION WORKPLAN AND TIMELINE**

This section should include tasks and timelines to establish a PCOC offering, including plans for outreach to the community. The workplan should include identification of responsible parties to lead the work and their qualifications.

### **SECTION FIVE: BUDGET AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY (EXHIBIT B)**

1. The completion of an OHA Excel budget form for the twelve (12) month performance period, (**Exhibit B**)
2. A budget narrative (**not to exceed three (3) pages**) which explains, in reasonable detail, the budget for the proposed project. The budget narrative should also disclose all other sources of funding. Including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Current year operating budget including revenue sources and expenses;
  - If applicable, copy of 501(c)(3) tax exempt IRS Letter, or that of the fiscal sponsor; and
  - If applicable, documentation of the applicant's federally approved indirect cost rate.



## Appendix B: MyOptions Advisor Requirements

Individuals delivering PCOC are referred to as MyOptions Advisors. Therefore, organization/agency staffers will operate in the role of MyOptions Advisors.

### **Conflict of Interest**

To avoid any conflict of interest, MyOptions Advisors can not provide direct care services to consumers or offer any service in which he/she has a financial interest. MyOptions Advisors' only commitment should only be toward helping the consumer build a life that makes sense for them. As the MyOptions Advisors help identify supports to help make that happen, they must be free of any biases and be guided only by the consumer and their identified goals and support needs.

### **Skills/Abilities**

Individuals who deliver PCOC shall have training in the statewide PCOC curriculum and be able to:

- Understand consumers' unique preferences, values, needs, and circumstances regardless of payee.
- Understand and educate consumers about public and private sector resources.
- Facilitate knowledge of informal supports and self-direction.
- Encourage future orientation and goal setting.
- Follow-up after PCOC is complete.
- Communicate with sufficient skill and clarity, using the consumer's preferred mode of communication, so that consumers will be able to make informed choices.

### **Credentials**

Individuals who deliver PCOC shall have the following minimum qualifications:

- Associate degree, or equivalent experience as determined by the hiring organization/agency.
- At least one (1) year of experience working directly with older adults and/or individuals with disabilities
- Knowledge about long term supports and funding systems.
- Knowledge about the issues confronting older adults, individuals with disabilities, and youth in transition.
- Good listening, interviewing, and communication skills.
- Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for providing decision support for individuals with physical and/or cognitive disabilities.
- Knowledge of strength-based and person-centered supervision and practice principles.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

MyOptions Advisors assist consumers in exploring their LTSS options to achieve their goals and preferences. Key activities include:

- Establishing a record and making contact (if a referral is received).
- Completing intake and screening (if applicable).
- Providing basic LTSS information.



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- Offering decision-support.
- Identifying resource options.
- Developing an Action Plan.
- Providing the Action Plan and related materials to the consumer.
- Offering referral assistance (i.e., helping the consumer with action steps included in the Action Plan).
- Following-up.

### **Training**

MyOptions Advisors are required to complete trainings as defined by EOHHS.

### **Monitoring and Quality Assurance**

Agencies providing PCOC shall implement ongoing monitoring and quality assurance to ensure that:

- PCOC is delivered in accordance with standards defined by EOHHS.
- All PCOC activities and outcomes are tracked in the web based WellSky platform used to support PCOC delivery).
- All PCOC staffer(s) involved in the program are supervised by the organization/agency.