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Frequently Asked Questions

What is BHbusiness?

BHbusiness: Mastering Essential Business Operations is a training and technical assistance project for behavioral health providers. Focusing on five essential business operations, the project will help behavioral health providers improve their capacity to serve vast new numbers of Americans seeking treatment for mental health and substance use disorders.

Why should I participate?

When an estimated 30 million people are newly eligible for coverage for mental health and substance use disorder treatment, you want to be prepared to be able to accept more patients and get paid for the services you provide. Participation in this project will position providers to compete in a new business environment.

Does it cost anything to take part in BHbusiness?

No, there is no cost to participate. The project is fully funded by SAMHSA. However, two of the courses: *Strategic Business Planning* and *Third-Party Billing and Compliance*, will include a required, one-day, in-person training session; providers will be responsible for paying any associated travel and lodging costs (all meeting costs will be paid for by the project). All other courses are presented via the web and will not incur any additional costs.

When does the project begin? End?

Courses will be delivered in two sessions, two six-month courses and three four-month courses:

1. The *Strategic and business planning* course and the *Third-party billing and compliance* course will be 6-month courses beginning March 15, 2013, and concluding August 31, 2013.
2. The *Eligibility and enrollment*, *Third party contract negotiation*, and *Meaningful use of HIT* will be 4-month courses beginning May 1, 2013, and concluding August 31, 2013

What is a BHbusiness learning network?

Thirty BHbusiness networks of 30 provider organizations will participate in a range of educational activities, including in-person meetings (*Strategic Business Planning* and *Third Party Billing* courses only), small group/individual consultation, coaching, and online courses taught by expert faculty. All applicants must have Internet access to participate in the web-based curriculum.



What are the benefits of participation in a learning network?

Adult learning theory says that people often learn best from their peers—other people who have similar experiences, challenges, and goals. Convening peers so that they can share best practices and lessons learned—a learning community or learning network—is an effective way to ensure that technical assistance “sticks” and to promote successful implementation of best practices. Peer-based learning networks are especially effective when individuals seek to implement new practices, since they often face unanticipated issues, obstacles, and questions in the process. Through participation in learning networks focusing on critical business operations, providers will expand the skills needed to thrive in a healthcare environment driven by changes in funding and regulations.

Who is eligible to be in the network?

BHbusiness targets behavioral health treatment providers, peer recovery support and recovery community organizations, Access to Recovery (ATR) providers, and providers involved in the SAMHSA-funded National Network to Eliminate Disparities in Behavioral Health (NNED). The courses in this project are designed for organizations that are seeking to:

- Enhance their limited capacity to develop strategic, business, and marketing plans,
- Increase their ability to determine eligibility and enroll individuals in appropriate health coverage,
- Accurately and effectively bill and comply with the requirements of commercial health plans, and
- Meet the behavioral health needs of the Medicaid expansion population.

Applicants are encouraged to form and apply as pre-convened learning networks of up to but not more than 30 providers. If a pre-convened network has fewer than 30 providers, the network application should still be submitted. Individual organizations may also apply and will be placed in an existing network corresponding to the organization’s core competency needs (as indicated in the application).

Who from my agency should participate in the learning network? How many people can I include in the project?

The CEO or Executive is the only required participant. Other *recommended* participants include your chief operating officer, clinical administrator, chief financial officer, Board chair, or other leader/decision maker from the organization. Participants should be those individuals who are responsible for and capable of making significant transformative decisions as a result of participation in this project. Involving leadership also confirms the organizations commitment to being an active and engaged participant in this effort.

Other members of your staff, including clinical supervisors, and staff from accounting, billing, registration, and IT can take part in the training, coaching sessions, etc. as **additional** participants. All project material will be publicly available so as you implement change efforts across your organization, you can educate all of your staff on these important business competencies.

What business operations have been identified as essential to the changing healthcare environment?

The learning networks will help participating behavioral health providers master core business operations and related competencies. Training and TA will be delivered in two sessions: two six-month courses and three four-month courses:

Six-month courses (March 15 – August 31, 2013)

- Strategic Business Planning will address new reimbursement methods, changing eligibility rules, Accountable Care Organizations (ACO), redesigned systems of care, and other aspects of the changing health system. Participants will develop a business plan that incorporates knowledge gained in market and organizational assessments.
- Practice Management & Billing will help providers develop the skills necessary to implement third-party billing systems or improve existing systems, and identify compliance measures and design systems that reduce risk.

Four-month courses (May 1 – August 31, 2013)

- Third-Party Contract Negotiations will educate providers about customer value propositions and articulating their value to payers, helping them to negotiate contracts and agreements from positions of strength and value. Additionally this course will discuss marketing methods and strategies for attracting new payers, developing new relationships, and expanding their role in the healthcare marketplace.
- Eligibility and Enrollment will train providers how to enhance enrollment efforts, improve access to care, and increase potential revenue. Organizations will develop processes for assessing patient eligibility and enrolling patients in health insurance plans.
- Meaningful Use of Health Information Technology will present information on Health Information Technology (HIT), including how HIT and Electronic Health Record systems can help improve patient care and business management.

Can I apply for all 5 course areas?

We recommend taking part in only one course at a time. In order to fully engage in the learning process, it is important to focus on the one core competency with which your organization needs the most assistance. If you are applying as an individual organization, you will be asked to rank order your areas of preference one through five. When your application is reviewed, we will attempt to place you into a network that is focused on your first choice. *If you feel you need help in all areas and are not sure where to begin, we recommend beginning with the Strategic and Business Planning course.*

Organizations that are applying as a network will focus on the one core competency area selected and agreed upon by the entire network.

How much individual TA will I receive as a participating site?

Each Learning Network has a total of 15 days of coaching support.

Will participants receive a certificate or other proof of completion?

Participants will receive a certificate of completion and NAADAC CEUs.

What is the time commitment for Learning Network participants?

We estimate approximate 3 hours per week.

What is a convener?

A convener is any organization willing to be responsible for recruiting organizations to become a learning network. Convening organizations can be statewide or regional provider associations, national

organizations with local or regional affiliates, state or county agencies, or other similar organizations. Groups of providers may also designate one member to serve as the convener.

Convening organizations must complete a Convening Organization Information Sheet as part of the complete network application. This form is available at <http://bhbusiness.org/home.aspx>

What are the expectations for the role of network convener?

Convener organizations will be responsible for ensuring accurate submission of all network applications. Ongoing responsibilities include facilitating continued network communication and working with the learning network administrator, coaches and expert faculty to address questions or concerns of network participants. The convening organization will also work closely with the coach and course facilitator to identify dates and locations for the in-person meeting and ongoing learning network calls. There will be no cost to the convening organization.

If I am interested convening a network, what should I be doing now to prepare for this project?

The application will be made available January 3, 2013. However, before that time you can begin to identify the providers that are interested in being a part of your network. You will need to bring together 30 organizations and come to an agreement on which business operations competency your network wants to focus on.

You should also begin to work with the single state agency (or encourage the providers in your network to work with their SSAs) to secure the letters of support. A template letter of support will be made available at <http://bhbusiness.org/home.aspx>.

If I'm a network convener and one of my sites drops out midway through, can I add another?

If you lose a member between application and course start up, you may replace the drop-out. Once the course work has begun, you may not replace a member who drops out.

What does the application and selection process consist of?

Application Process

For organizations applying as a pre-formed network, a complete application consists of:

- An Organizational Profile (available online after January 3, 2013) for each network member (submitted to the convening organization to be submitted as a network);
- A Convening Organization Information Sheet completed by the network convener; and
- **A letter of support from your Single State Agency for Substance Abuse Services or State Mental Health Agency.**

For organizations applying as an individual organization interested in being placed in a network, a complete application consists of:

- An Organizational Profile (available online after January 3, 2013) for each network member; and
- **A letter of support from your Single State Agency for Substance Abuse Services or State Mental Health Agency.**

Selection Process

Once the application is completed online, it will be reviewed by a team of experts. Selection for participation will be based on:

- Identified need for assistance with business capacity to engage in public and/or third party managed care contracts,
- Organizational readiness to implement change

When can I apply?

The BHbusiness application will be released on January 3, 2013. Applications will be due on or before February 4, 2013.

How do I apply?

The application will be available on <http://bhbusiness.org/home.aspx>. All applications will be submitted electronically.

If applying as a network, do we need to be in the same state?

Learning networks are designed to create a collaborative and supportive environment. The Strategic Business Planning and Third Party Billing and Compliance will include an in-person meeting that is a requirement for participation in a network. Providers that are located in close geographic proximity may find it easier to participate in the in-person meeting. However, geographic disbursement will not preclude a pre-established network from participating as long as all network participants can attend the kick-off meeting.

Some courses, such as third-party billing, eligibility and enrollment, and third-party contract negotiation may be better for those networks from the same state because they include state-specific content but it is not required for members to be from the same state.

When will I be notified if I have been selected to take part?

All applicants will be notified via email on/or before February 22, 2013.