

# AFSCME Facts

## COVID-19 Relief Funding for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Assistance COVID-19 Relief January 15, 2021

The lame duck legislative deal in Congress, known as the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), 2021, increases substance abuse and mental health services assistance funding through COVID-19 relief. Those increases are in addition to the regular FY 2021 appropriations increases that also were included in the CAA. This fact sheet provides an overview of these increases in funding.

### How much COVID-19 relief funding is provided for mental health and substance abuse services, programs and providers?

The CAA provides \$4.25 billion for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to distribute to specified programs. SAMHSA has not yet announced any details about how this money will be allocated, such as by state.

Program	Appropriation*	Notes
Community Mental Health Services Block Grant	\$1.65 billion	
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant	\$1.65 billion	
Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) Expansion Grant Program	\$600 million	Not all states have CCBHCs. Also, these grants may not be available statewide in CCBHC states.
Suicide Prevention Programs	\$50 million	
Emergency-Response Grants	\$240 million	For states that can target support where it is most needed, e.g., outreach to people experiencing homelessness.
Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education)	\$50 million	This funding supports school-based mental health for children.
National Child Traumatic Stress Network	\$10 million	

\*The legislation requires that at least \$125 million of the appropriations go to tribal organizations, urban Indian health organizations, or providers of health services to tribes.

**Is there other COVID-19 health care relief funding that could affect providers of mental health and substance abuse services?**

The CAA provides an additional \$3 billion for the Provider Relief Fund (for a total of \$178 billion) to help health care providers cover healthcare-related expenses and lost revenue attributable to COVID-19. It also postpones certain Medicare provider cuts and provides for a one-year 3.75% increase in doctors’ Medicare reimbursement rates. See AFSCME’s [Provider Relief Fund and Relief for Medicare Providers fact sheet](#) for more information about those changes.

**How does the COVID-19 relief law affect access to mental telehealth services?**

The legislation requires individuals receiving mental telehealth services from a Medicare provider after the end of the Public Health Emergency to have had a prior relationship with the provider during the previous six-month period — limiting access to telehealth services for people with mental illness.

**How do the CAA’s FY 2021 appropriations affect mental health and substance abuse programs?**

The CAA also includes the Department of Health & Human Services’ regular FY 2021 budget appropriation, with funding increases that affect mental health and substance abuse programs and providers funded by them. Not counting the separate COVID-19 relief funding described above, Congress increased SAMHSA’s budget by 2.3% (\$133 million). Following are the funding levels by program:

<b>Program</b>	<b>FY 2021 Appropriation</b>	<b>Change from FY 2020</b>
<b>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)</b>	<b>\$6.015 billion</b>	<b>+\$133 million</b>
Community Mental Health Services Block Grant	\$757.5 million	+\$35 million
Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers	\$250 million	+\$50 million
Zero Suicide Initiative	\$21 million	+\$5 million
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	\$24 million	+\$5 million
Children’s Mental Health Services	\$125 million	Flat from FY 2020
Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness	\$64.6 million	Flat from FY 2020
Project AWARE (Wellness and Resiliency in Education)	\$107 million	Flat from FY 2020

**How long does the CAA extend the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic program?**

The legislation extends the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic program for three fiscal years, through September 30, 2023. Getting this extension has been a long-standing priority of AFSCME's United We Heal campaign.

**How will the CAA's additional support in COVID-19 relief and FY 2021 appropriations affect behavioral health and substance abuse services in my state?**

To learn more about SAMHSA behavioral health and substance abuse funding in your state, go to the agency's [SAMHSA Grant Awards By State](#) website. Note that SAMHSA is in the process of updating information for FYI 2021. Therefore, not all information may be available at this time.