

The Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund supports training programs that address workforce skill needs identified by health care providers as they work to improve patient care and reduce costs. Commonwealth Corporation administers this fund on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

The Gandara Center is a \$46 million, multi-service provider whose mission is to promote the well-being of Hispanic, African American and other diverse populations through culturally competent behavioral health, prevention and education services. Established in 1977, it serves more than 10,000 people from all backgrounds per year at 45 locations across the state.



Workforce Challenge:

In order to provide patient-centered behavioral health care, clinicians from Gandara and its network of partners need to tailor interventions to address the cultural values, beliefs, traditions, and needs of culturally and racially diverse families. While bilingual and racially-diverse clinicians are in high demand, peers or community health workers trained in pediatric behavioral health can help alleviate the shortage and become valuable team members. These individuals are hired for their life experience and ability to communicate within the culture and language of the clients. They often have not had formal training in effective practices and without additional on-the-job training they require a high level of coaching and supervision. This results in reduced productivity and high turnover within the first year of employment.

“ I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to take this course. For me, it has been a fantastic experience. I am learning things that I didn't know before which is helping me with both my role as a Family Partner and in my personal life. I understand more about how mental health works and can deliver information to families that helps them understand their child.”

- Family Partner, Gandara

Training Strategy and Expected Outcomes:

Gandara's three-pronged strategic approach included designing and delivering a 9-credit, college-level Children's Behavioral Health Worker Certificate Program that would create a pipeline of new workers with racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and would upgrade the skills of current staff. They also provided training to 54 clinical supervisors who oversee in-home family therapy workers in racially and ethnically diverse cities in the region. In addition, they piloted an integrated, intensive care coordination and behavioral health site within the pediatric practice of a community health center. Through their efforts, they have:

- Added 21 multicultural behavioral health workers to staff of local behavioral health organizations, reducing the time of ramping up a new worker to full productivity and improving their retention by 25%. (Turnover costs an average of \$8,500/employee and \$16,000/employee if they leave within the first year.)
- Reduced the time spent by incumbent workers on documentation correction by 25%. Documentation errors cost Gandara an average of \$30,000/year.
- Increased supervisory capacity. 94.5% of supervisors reported making changes to their supervisory practice and 97% made changes to the training/coaching of their supervisees as a result of the course.