

*Medicaid Pathways Program*
2025-2026 Request for Applications

**Application Deadline:
July 25, 2025**



Support for this project is provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

# Important Information

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| Purpose | The *Medicaid Pathways Program* (MPP) is a nine-month professional development program designed to strengthen the leadership capacity of senior Medicaid leaders, particularly in times of significant change. The program is designed for a diverse cohort of senior leaders who are new to their Medicaid leadership role or interested in advancing to a more senior role. MPP is led by the Center for Health Care Strategies with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.  |
| RFA Release | June 25, 2025 |
| Informational Calls for Potential Applicants  | Tuesday, July 1, 2025, 2 – 3 pm ETMonday, July 21, 2025, 3 – 4 pm ETTo participate by phone, **877-853-5247**; meeting ID **263 399 9923****For video, use this link:** <https://chcs.zoom.us/j/2633999923>*(Participation on an informational call is optional but strongly encouraged.)* |
| Applications Due | July 25, 2025, 11:59 pm ET |
| Selection Notification | Applicants will be notified of their status in September2025. |
| Program Period | September 2025 – May 2026 |
| Virtual Kickoff Meeting | September 29, 2025, 2 – 3:30 pm ET |
| Eligibility | Senior leaders in Medicaid agencies from all states, commonwealths, and territories are eligible to apply. Senior leader refers to deputy- and executive-team level positions (e.g., deputy director, chief financial officer, chief medical officer) and current or rising senior managers (e.g., bureau/section/unit chiefs, policy directors). The program is open to leaders representing all identities, including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, and people of color; people with disabilities; LGBTQ+ individuals; veterans; and individuals with lived experience with Medicaid or another publicly financed program (such as SNAP or TANF). |
| CHCS Contacts | Lauren Moran, Director, Leadership and Capacity Building, lmoran@chcs.org  |

# Purpose

The [*Medicaid Pathways Program*](https://www.chcs.org/project/medicaid-pathways-programs/) (MPP) supports senior Medicaid leaders in strengthening the necessary leadership skills to successfully oversee a complex organization like Medicaid and advance strategic initiatives that improve health and foster greater community engagement particularly during times of significant change. MPP is designed for senior leaders who are new to their leadership role and/or are interested in advancing to a more senior role in the future. The program is led by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

# Background

Medicaid provides free or low-cost health coverage to nearly one quarter of individuals living in the United States, serving as the financial underpinning for many health and human services at the state, territory, and local levels. The program plays an essential role in efforts to expand access to care, improve health outcomes, and reduce health disparities.

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| *Meeting colleagues who understand the unique challenges of being an emerging leader in Medicaid has been extraordinarily valuable.*  *- Recent MPP participant* |

Medicaid leaders — responsible for maintaining core programmatic operations while advancing ambitious health care policy innovations — are key to unlocking the program’s potential as a vehicle for change. These health care stewards make critical decisions about policy and resource allocation that influence health care delivery for millions of people across the United States. As they navigate an environment of budgetary, operational, and political pressures, they also have significant influence over who gets invited to participate in decision making and whose voices are heard.

Despite the significant role that senior Medicaid officials play in providing long-term continuity for their agencies and serving as the talent pool for future Medicaid directors, few opportunities exist to support their [[leadership development.](https://www.chcs.org/resource/identifying-opportunities-to-support-a-diverse-pipeline-of-rising-medicaid-leaders/)](https://www.chcs.org/resource/identifying-opportunities-to-support-a-diverse-pipeline-of-rising-medicaid-leaders/) Increased investment in all Medicaid leaders, including individuals with diverse identities, background, and experiences, can help states and territories enhance their organizational capacity to improve health outcomes.

Since 2021, MPP has supported 80 participants — representing 31 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico — in strengthening their leadership skills. MPP grew out of the [*Medicaid Leadership Institute*](https://www.chcs.org/project/medicaid-leadership-institute/) (MLI), a program established by CHCS in 2009 that supports the leadership development of Medicaid directors. With RWJF support, 83 competitively selected Medicaid directors and their senior leadership teams from 47 states, commonwealths, and territories across the political spectrum have participated in MLI since its inception.

# Program Description

MPP is a nine-month leadership development program for a cohort of up to 20 competitively selected Medicaid leaders. Building off the [Framework for Public Sector Leadership](https://www.chcs.org/resource/an-introduction-to-the-framework-for-public-sector-leadership/), MPP is designed to strengthen the leadership capacity of senior Medicaid officials, including, but not limited to, individuals with diverse identities, backgrounds, and perspectives, who are new to their leadership role and/or are interested in advancing to a more senior role in the future.

MPP is designed to: (1) strengthen participants’ skills so they can more effectively thrive in complex leadership roles; (2) facilitate the advancement of senior Medicaid leaders, including creating opportunities for staff to better understand and support the communities served by Medicaid; and (3) build peer relationships and foster a network of Medicaid leaders for idea-sharing, problem-solving, and support. These objectives are achieved through a strategically designed program curriculum, outlined below.

## Program Eligibility

Senior leaders in Medicaid programs from all states, commonwealths, and territories are eligible to apply. Senior leader refers to deputy- and executive-team level positions (e.g., deputy director, chief financial officer, chief medical officer) and current or rising senior managers (e.g., bureau/section/unit chiefs, policy directors). We also welcome individuals who are new to their senior leadership position and/or aspire to move into more senior levels of Medicaid leadership to apply.

MPP is a non-partisan program with a history of supporting individuals who represent a range of state- and territory-level political and geographic contexts. Multiple applications from the same state will be considered; however, the number of applicants from the same state/territory selected to participate will be limited. Medicaid directors are encouraged to support all interested senior leaders in applying for the program.

Individuals who have previously applied are welcome to reapply. Returning applicants are asked to highlight how they have grown since their last application and reflect on their personal and professional development in their new submission.

Supporting the leadership development of senior Medicaid staff is critical to building a strong pipeline of future leaders who reflect and understand the strengths, needs, and challenges of the communities Medicaid serves. As such, MPP seeks to convene a cohort of up to 20 participants who bring a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. We welcome a pool of applicants who reflect the broad diversity of Medicaid members regarding but not limited to:

* **Social Identity:** Individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or other people of color; individuals with disabilities; individuals who are members of the LGBTQ+ community; veterans; individuals representing a range of socioeconomic classes; among others.
* **Lived Experience with Public Programs:** Individuals with lived experience with Medicaid or another publicly financed program (such as SNAP and TANF).
* **Cross-Cultural and Community Experience:** Individuals who have worked with or lived among communities different from their own, individuals who have served local communities through volunteerism, learning a second language, or serving diverse populations in the U.S.

Please email Lauren Moran at lmoran@chcs.org, with any questions regarding eligibility.

## Program Curriculum

The program curriculum is designed to be relevant to participants’ interests and to the current Medicaid policy context. MPP includes three core program components:

1. **A competency-based leadership model.** Participants will receive expert training through a curriculum grounded in a [competency-based core leadership framework](https://www.chcs.org/resource/an-introduction-to-the-framework-for-public-sector-leadership/) designed jointly by CHCS, the Milbank Memorial Fund, and the National Association for Medicaid Directors. This framework will guide core leadership topics, including developing personal leadership and self-management skills; setting and managing strategic direction; engaging and motivating people; practicing good public administration; and driving and delivering results. The program curriculum incorporates strategies to deepen awareness of self and others through cultural awareness and curiosity; facilitate effective and shared decision-making; and develop and empower teams.
2. **Individualized leadership coaching.** Each participant will be assigned a leadership coach who is available throughout the program. Participants receive coaching through 1:1 virtual sessions. Coaches work with participants to craft an individualized leadership development plan, which includes personal leadership development goals and activities to practice skills.
3. **Application of leadership curriculum.** Each participant will identify specific opportunities within their daily work where they can apply and practice the program content in ways that foster their development.MPP faculty and leadership coaches work with participants to identify an area within the participant’s sphere of influence that offers substantial opportunities to practice newly developed skills.

## Program Activities

The program includes virtual and in-person components. Participants will:

1. **Attend monthly virtual all-participant meetings.** During each of these sessions, participants receive group training in the MPP curriculum and converse with leadership experts. All-participant sessions will occur once per month (see *Timeline and Schedule*, next page). Each meeting is three hours long.
2. **Attend virtual key leadership topic seminars.** Participants will attend one-hour virtual key topic seminars. These seminars will explore leadership topics prioritized by the participants and provide an opportunity to connect with peers and faculty. Participants have the flexibility to choose the sessions that align most closely with their interests and professional needs.
3. **Attend two in*-*person all-participant meetings.** Participants will attend two in-person meetings, each lasting two to three days, in a to-be-determined location. CHCS will cover all allowable program costs for participants. Relevant travel guidelines will be shared with participants in advance of in-person meetings.
4. **Participate in virtual leadership coaching.** Participants will be paired with a leadership coach throughout the nine-month program. Coaching will help the participants translate leadership competencies into their daily work. The total time commitment for 1:1 leadership coaching is approximately seven hours over the nine-month program.
5. **Network with peers.** After selection, CHCS will group participants into *accountability pairs*, based on several factors, including but not limited to their current Medicaid leadership position, tenure, and location. Accountability pairs are encouraged to meet at least four times during the program year to share resources, navigate challenges, and celebrate successes. Participants will also be connected with an MPP alumnus and are encouraged to meet with them at least twice during the program year. These conversations can be used to discuss the application of leadership principles to participants’ daily work, foster shared learning and accountability to leadership goals, and develop peer relationships and ongoing support networks that participants can draw on throughout the program and beyond.

All MPP support outlined above, including travel costs (e.g., airfare, accommodations) will be provided at no cost to the participants. Relevant travel guidelines will be shared with participants in advance of in-person meetings.

# Timeline and Schedule

Following is a tentative schedule for the 2025 MPP Class:

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| Date | Event |
| July 1, 2025, 2:00 pm ET | First informational call for potential applicants To participate by phone, **877-853-5247**; meeting ID **263 399 9923**. **For video, use this link:** <https://chcs.zoom.us/j/2633999923>*(Participation is encouraged but not required. Interested applicants only need to attend one of the informational calls.)* |
| July 21, 2025, 3:00 pm ET | Second informational call for potential applicantsTo participate by phone, **877-853-5247**; meeting ID **263 399 9923**. **For video, use this link:** <https://chcs.zoom.us/j/2633999923> |
| July 25, 2025, 11:59 pm ET | Applications due via online submission |
| September 2025 | Participant selection notification |
| September 23 – 26, 2025  | Virtual introductory calls with participants  |
| September 29, 2025, 2 – 3:30 pm ET | Virtual program kickoff meeting  |
| November 5 – 7, 2025 | In-person all participants meeting  |
| November 2025 | Virtual 1:1 coaching begins *(scheduling will be coordinated between coaches and participants)* |
| December 4, 2025, 2:00 – 5:00 pm ET | Virtual all-participants meeting  |
| January 8, 2026, 2:00 – 5:00 pm ET | Virtual all-participants meeting  |
| February 5, 2026, 2:00 – 5:00 pm ET | Virtual all-participants meeting  |
| March 5, 2026, 2:00 – 5:00 pm ET | Virtual all-participants meeting  |
| April 2, 2026, 2:00 – 5:00 pm ET | Virtual all-participants meeting  |
| April – May 2026  | Key Leadership Topic Seminars  |
| May 18 – 20, 2026 | In-person all-participants meeting  |
| Ongoing | Individualized leadership coaching and peer networking |

# Selection Criteria and Process

Selection decisions will be based on the review of information provided in applications *(see page 10)* related to:

1. ***Statement of personal interest*** *(up to 300 words).* Applicants should provide a statement explaining their interest in participating in MPP. This should describe individual leadership challenges and opportunities they currently face as a senior Medicaid leader and how they believe participating in MPP may:
* Maximize their leadership potential and overcome challenges; and
* Support their long-term success as a Medicaid leader.
1. ***Organizational impact*** *(up to 300 words)****.*** Applicants should describe how their participation in MPP can:
* Enhance their ability to advance key organizational initiatives; and
* Benefit their Medicaid agency and/or the communities served by it.
1. ***Culture of inclusive leadership*** *(up to 300 words).*Applicants should provide a brief explanation of how MPP can support them in promoting environments where staff are valued, supported, and inspired at work. Applicants should describe:
* What it means to be a leader who builds meaningful relationships across differences and empowers others;
* A vision – within their sphere of influence – for fostering shared decision making and engaging all voices in their organizations and communities served; and
* How MPP can help them achieve this vision.

Applicants are welcome to share any relevant information about their identity, lived experiences, and/or perspective that shape their leadership approach and help them better support those served by Medicaid.

# Required Application Content

Applications *(see page 10)* should include:

* **Bio** (up to 100 words). Applicants should include a brief professional bio. Please include name, degree(s), job title, department, a brief description of your responsibilities, and one sentence about your previous role(s). We also welcome you to share anything about yourself that is important to you, your work, and/or your identity. See examples of [MPP participants’ bios](https://www.chcs.org/medicaid-pathways-program-participants/).
* **Resume.** Applicants should include a recent resume.
* **Letter of support from Medicaid director.** Applicants must obtain a letter of support for participation from their Medicaid director. The letter should indicate the willingness of the Medicaid director to support the applicant in meeting MPP’s time requirements, including participation in virtual and in-person meetings, coaching, and other program activities. The letter should not exceed one page.
* **Application narrative** (up to 900 words). Applicants must submit a narrative that addresses the three selection criteria (statement of interest, organizational impact, and fostering a culture of inclusive leadership).

# Submission Information and Deadline

All applications must be received by **July 25, 2025 at 11:59 pm ET**. To submit your application, please follow the steps below:

1. Access the [JotForm application link](https://form.jotform.com/251383805061150) and respond to all required questions
2. Combine your professional bio and responses to the application narrative into one PDF, name the file: **MPP Application\_First Name\_Last Name**, and upload it to the *Brief Bio and Responses to Narrative Questions* field.
3. Upload your resume (in PDF format) to the *Resume* field.
4. Upload your letter of support (in PDF format) to the *Letter of Support* field. Please note that letters of support can be submitted after the application deadline. If you need an extension, please inform Lauren Moran (lmoran@chcs.org) and email the letter to her when it is available. The letter of support is required for program selection.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Lauren Moran at lmoran@chcs.org.

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| About the Center for Health Care StrategiesThe Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is a policy design and implementation partner devoted to improving outcomes for people enrolled in Medicaid. CHCS works across sectors and disciplinesto make more effective, efficient, and equitable care possible for the millions of people in the U.S. who face serious barriers to well-being, like poverty and complex health and social needs. For 30 years, CHCS has collaborated with Medicaid and related health and human services agencies in states across the country to shape how health care services are designed, financed, and delivered. Through its leadership and capacity-building work, CHCS works to ensure that health and human services leaders and safety-net providers have the expertise required to effectively manage U.S. health care safety net programs and related services. Learn more at [**www.chcs.org**](http://www.chcs.org). **About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**RWJF is a leading national philanthropy dedicated to taking bold leaps to transform health in our lifetime. Through funding, convening, advocacy, and evidence-building, we work side-by-side with communities, practitioners, and institutions to get to health equity faster and pave the way together to a future where health is no longer a privilege, but a right. Learn more at [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).  |

*Medicaid Pathways Program*, Class of 2026

Application Template

# Professional Bio

Applicants should include a brief professional bio (*up to 100 words)*.

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# Application Narrative

## 1. Statement of Personal Interest

Provide a statement explaining your interest in participating in MPP. This should describe current individual leadership challenges, opportunities you face as a senior Medicaid leader, and how you believe participating in MPP may:

* Maximize leadership opportunities and overcome challenges; and
* Support your long-term success as a Medicaid leader.

If you previously applied to MPP and were not selected, please reflect on how you have grown personally and professionally since your last application. Highlight any new experiences, perspectives, or skills that have strengthened your readiness for this program.

*Response should be no more than 300 words.*

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## 2. Organizational Impact

Describe how your participation in MPP can:

* Enhance your ability to advance key organizational initiatives; and
* Benefit your Medicaid agency and/or the communities served.

*Response should be no more than 300 words.*

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## 3. Culture of Inclusive Leadership

Provide a brief explanation of how your participation in MPP can support you in promoting environments where staff are valued, supported, and inspired at work. Applicants should describe:

* What it means to be a leader who builds meaningful relationships across differences and empowers others;
* A vision – within your sphere of influence – for fostering shared decision making and engaging all voices in your organizations and communities served by Medicaid; and
* How MPP can help you achieve your vision.

*Response should be no more than 300 words.*

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# Frequently Asked Questions

#### Q: I work for a county or local government agency, managed care organization, health care system, or community-based organization and partner with public sector health and human leaders from states, commonwealths, and territories to advance policy initiatives. Am I eligible?

**A:** Only senior leaders in Medicaid agencies from states, commonwealths, and territories are eligible to apply. Senior leader refers to deputy- and executive-team level positions (e.g., deputy director, chief financial officer, chief medical officer) and current or rising senior managers (e.g., bureau/section/unit chiefs, policy directors).

#### Q: My position is appointed, and an administration change may impact whether I stay in my role. Should I still apply?

**A:** Yes, you should apply even if your role could be impacted due to an administration change. If your position changes or you leave your role, CHCS will work with you to determine your participation for the remainder of the program year.

#### Q: Do I need to attend the informational calls to apply to the program?

**A:** No, you do not need to attend the informational calls to apply to the program, but we do encourage you to participate. These sessions are optional and a great way to meet the CHCS team and other potential applicants and get your questions answered.

#### Q: I am interested in the program, but I cannot obtain a letter of support for participation from my Medicaid director before the deadline. Should I still apply?

**A:** Yes, the letter of support can be submitted after the application deadline with prior approval from CHCS but is required for program selection. Please submit your application by the deadline and let CHCS know when to expect the letter of support. You can find more details about the letter of support in the [**Required Application Content**](#_Required_Application_Content) section.

**Q: Can more than one person from the same Medicaid agency apply?**

**A:** Yes, multiple applicants from the same Medicaid agency are welcome to apply. However, it is unlikely that more than two participants from the same state/territory will be selected for the program in any given year to ensure geographic diversity. In previous years, we’ve also had applicants from the same reporting structure (manager/direct report) apply. Minimizing power dynamics within the cohort is important; therefore, we will not accept applicants from the same direct reporting structure in the cohort.

**Q: I have applied to the program before but was not selected for participation. Can I reapply?**

**A:** We welcome applications from individuals who have previously applied. We encourage repeat applicants to highlight how they have grown since their last application and reflect on their personal and professional development in their new submission.

#### Q: There are some virtual or in-person meetings that I cannot attend due to other commitments. Should I still apply?

**A:** MPP has a robust curriculum with an array of program components to make the opportunity valuable and fulfilling for all participants. To maximize your learning and take full advantage of what the program has to offer, we expect participants to attend all events. When you apply, please hold the dates on your calendar for all meetings noted in the [**Timeline and Schedule**](#_Timeline_and_Schedule). Applicants must confirm their attendance for all scheduled in-person and virtual engagements when submitting their application. We recognize that situations may arise that are out of your control, and CHCS will work with participants on a case-by-case basis.

#### Q: Do I have to pay any out-of-pocket costs to participate in this program?

**A:** No,CHCS covers costs of travel to in-person meetings, hotel accommodations, and meals, thanks to the generous support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. CHCS reimburses eligible expenses incurred during travel, such as rideshares, taxis, and meals. Participants must submit a reimbursement form to CHCS within 10 days of the meeting to receive payment and are encouraged to review expense reimbursement guidelines in advance.

#### Q: I have a question that is not answered in this document. Who should I contact?

**A:** Lauren Moran at lmoran@chcs.org  if you have additional questions.