

# Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners

## 2017-2018 Project Narrative

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### **Description of the Community(ies) or Group(s) the Grantee Expects to Serve:**

#### Target Population:

As originally proposed, Pinellas County, through its Human Services Department (HS), will continue to serve all individuals and families within the County's geographic service area. The County intends to target areas of the County with higher concentrations of uninsured or underinsured residents, Medically Underserved Populations (MUP) areas, and communities with a high concentration of the population living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

#### Reaching the Target Population:

While Navigators will assist any individual with their (re)enrollment needs, HS intends to strategically locate staff in communities with the greatest need and utilize a robust marketing and community outreach plan to reach the target population.

Based on locations most easily accessible by consumers from the previous years, consumers will be assisted at thirteen (13) sites throughout the County. Eight (8) full-time sites will be located at the HS offices and Pinellas County Department of Health locations. Five (5) additional sites include neighborhood/community centers in these targeted low-income communities that will be utilized for direct assistance during open enrollment periods and by appointment the rest of the year. While these sites are not geographically distant from our existing full time sites, supporting them part time allows us to reach a broader demographic.

For the upcoming project period, the County developed a pro-active outreach and marketing plan that 1) raises awareness about navigational services and where interested consumers can receive assistance; 2) specifically reaches out to community organizations, schools, colleges, nonprofit agencies, business groups, and other stakeholders in the targeted areas.

#### County's Ability to Serve Target Population:

Pinellas County has over 50 years' experience in serving the uninsured, underserved, vulnerable, and special needs population. Over the past three years, Navigators have become very familiar with the issues and barriers that this population faces.

The County provides a robust and comprehensive diversity training program for its Navigators. All Navigators received cultural and linguistic training that focuses on best practices for sensitivity, diversity and language barrier access. We will be holding a refresher of the "Bridges Out of Poverty" training that was originally given in 2015. This training makes staff aware of and sensitive to the myriad of factors that affect a consumer's needs and the way in which they

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may conceptualize health and healthcare. In all cases, the Pinellas County Navigators have been taught to listen to every consumer's individual needs regarding healthcare before assisting them in understanding their plan options.

The County adheres to CLAS standards for printed educational materials as well as the contracting of bilingual Navigators from diverse cultural backgrounds. Current Pinellas County Navigators are fluent in all of the predominant languages in our community including: Spanish, Haitian Creole and French. The County intends to renew contracts with these Navigators. We employ a total of 11 navigators, including the Program Coordinator and Program Analyst, five of whom are bilingual, four Spanish and one Haitian Creole/French. In addition, the Navigators are trained to assist consumers with access to translators through Healthcare.gov.

The geographical placement of our Navigator staff was strategically assigned to gain the highest value relative to language skills for our consumers throughout the community and is reviewed quarterly.

### **Scope of Activities for the 2017-2018 Budget Period**

#### **Plan for Carrying Out Navigator Duties:**

Pinellas County Human Services has established a structure and plan for overseeing implementation of the Cooperative Agreement in compliance with the Navigators duties identified in 45 CFR 155.210 and 45 CFR 155.215 and summarized as follows and detailed further in the narrative below:

- Maintaining a physical presence in the Marketplace Service Area
- Conducting public education and outreach activities to raise awareness about the Marketplace
- Fostering 1:1 interactions with consumers
- Facilitating the selection of a Qualified Health Plan
- Providing information in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the population served by the Marketplace, including individuals with limited English Proficiency and that is accessible to individuals with disabilities
- Complying with applicable training and conflict of interest standards
- Obtaining authorization of applicants for coverage prior to accessing their PII

HS will provide a Project Manager to oversee all aspects of the program. The Project Manager's responsibilities include managing the Cooperative Agreement and handling any associated requirements, facilitating meetings with stakeholders for strategic planning, developing the work plan and timeline, hiring staff, ensuring that certification and training is completed by all

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navigators and volunteers, implementing marketing and outreach strategies, and ongoing monitoring of and reporting for the Cooperative Agreement.

### **Servicing the target area & maintaining a physical presence:**

Pinellas County proposes to serve all individuals and families within the County's geographic service area. HS has identified several communities with a higher concentration of uninsured or underinsured residents. While Navigators will assist any individual with their enrollment needs, HS intends to strategically locate staff in communities with the greatest need.

Pinellas County, through its previous recent Cooperative Agreements with CMS, has identified 13 sites throughout the county where the locations are most easily accessible by consumers and consumers can receive in-person, face-to-face assistance. Eight full-time sites will be located at the HS offices and Pinellas County Department of Health locations. Five additional sites including neighborhood/community centers in our identified at-risk zones will be utilized for outreach and education events and for navigational services by appointment.

### **Raising awareness through public education and outreach activities:**

All Navigators will be expected to create opportunities for individuals to enroll, and to sponsor and participate in outreach activities. All Navigators will be retrained to conduct public outreach and education presentations raising Marketplace awareness. For the current project period, the County developed a communications and marketing plan that 1) raises awareness about navigational services provided by the County and where interested consumers can receive assistance; 2) proactively reaches out to community organizations, schools, colleges, nonprofit agencies, business groups, and other stakeholders about the Marketplace and Navigator services.

In preparation for the shorter enrollment period for plan year 2018 we plan on starting our increased marketing push earlier in the program year. Navigators will participate in several outreach activities in September and October to increase community awareness of the new open enrollment timeframe and to encourage the scheduling of appointments for November. We will use the Connector scheduling tool to reach back out to consumers who have been assisted in previous open enrollments and encourage their active enrollment.

As a part of the enrollment process we give consumers a blue folder with our contact information along with their account information. We include the Coverage to Care documents and information regarding reporting life changes. The information about life changes includes a list of the types of supporting documentation needed for the Marketplace requirements. We encourage consumers to follow up with us throughout the year with any questions or changes in their situation. During our educational events outside of Open Enrollment we heavily emphasize Special Enrollment Periods and the Coverage to Care materials. As we did in the second budget year, we plan on holding more events leading up to the tax filing season in partnership with Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs throughout the County. We always

encourage consumers to schedule an appointment if they think that they might be eligible for a SEP so that we can assist them in obtaining an eligibility determination from the Marketplace. Part of this process includes helping the consumers gather and upload all of the necessary documentation required to verify their eligibility.

### Communications & Marketing Plan

HS will continue to utilize a variety of marketing channels to distribute its message including all the County's communication resources and social media. The marketing campaign will begin in September 2017 and run throughout the project period with varying levels of intensity based on the open enrollment period and levels of enrollment. HS will advertise more heavily in the initial months of the budget year to increase the visibility of the Navigator program and awareness of the new, shorter Open Enrollment period, building on the known presence in the community.

A year round marketing presence will start at the beginning of the grant year with a greater emphasis six weeks prior to the beginning and continuing through the end of Open Enrollment. In previous years we have begun our increased marketing only two weeks prior to open enrollment, but we plan to start earlier to ensure that all of our consumers are aware of the new Open Enrollment time frame. During our annual push we will have 30 second Public Service Announcements in English and Spanish air on local cable networks. Through Charter Communications we will have English ads on Animal Planet, ESPN2, ID Investigation Discovery, MTV, Bay News 9, CMT, VHI, and BET. Through Univision/Unimas we will have Spanish ads on WVEA, WFTT, and EVEA. We will also use Entravision's Pulpo Digital Media platform to reach a larger Spanish language audience.

We will run English language print ads in the Tampa Bay Times newspapers. We will be running additional English and Spanish language print ads in the Tampa Bay Newspapers, a variety of community level papers throughout the County. We will also run a series of PSAs on local popular radio during open enrollment.

We will utilize the County social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to reach our target audiences quickly and extend our reach. Social media posts will be made year round, with heavier promotion during Open Enrollment. These posts will allow us to advertise specific events and activities as well as the overall program and available services. Boosted Twitter posts will be purchased targeting specific events, geographic locations and languages.

The County acknowledges that not all citizens, especially those living in poverty, may have access to cable television and/or social media. Traditional marketing tools including posters and brochures will be updated, printed and distributed in publicly accessible locations, including libraries, schools, health centers, and community partner locations throughout the county. We will utilize our existing relationships with the Pinellas County Library system, Pinellas County

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School Board, and Neighborhood Family Centers to display program posters in the community with our service locations and contact information.

### Description of Existing Relationships including and Employer/Employee Relationships

HS has strong relationships with various organizations, employers and employees. County staff proactively participates in numerous health coalitions, business groups, churches and community groups in the region that provide homeless and housing services, mental health and substance abuse treatment, legal assistance, nutrition, education, employment and job training services.

In 2015-2017, the County worked extensively with the County Library System for outreach events and distribution of marketing materials. Neighborhood Family Centers throughout the County were instrumental in distribution of materials and communicating with local residents about the available services of Navigators.

The County also worked cooperatively with Covering Tampa Bay, a coalition of Navigator grantees, Certified Application Counselor Organizations and In-Person Assisters in the broader Tampa Bay region. The County plans to continue to build on these relationships in the upcoming grant period.

On a national scale, the County has worked with the local Enroll America outreach team. In this budget year, the County plans on renewing the contract with Enroll America to continue participating in their “Get Covered Connector” outreach and scheduling tool which increases access and ease of making appointments. With Enroll America phasing out of enrollment assistance we will continue to use the Connector as it transitions to maintenance through Young Invincibles. These relationships and the materials developed and provided by these organizations help build the health literacy of individuals with a lack of knowledge of health insurance coverage and cost.

Efforts to establish ongoing linkages throughout the County to sustain outreach and enrollment activities will be addressed through participation in strategic planning meetings with stakeholders that include but are not limited to municipalities, community agencies, colleges, neighborhood associations.

### Facilitate the selection of a Qualified Health Plan (QHP)

The County’s Navigators will assess the consumer’s needs and level of understanding. They then will assist the consumer with the application process to receive an eligibility determination through the Marketplace, explain to consumers the health plans and differences between options they are eligible for, and aid participants in fully understanding their health care choices. Navigators or volunteers will explain how Advance Premium Tax Credits and Cost Sharing work if the consumer is eligible and assist clients with resolving any issues or disputes, choosing a Qualified Health Plan, and with activating the eligible coverage. We acknowledge that

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Navigators may need additional time to walk through the enrollment process and post enrollment “Coverage to Care” roadmap more thoroughly with individuals living in poverty in the zones. We know that fostering these 1:1 interactions with consumers facilitates their enrollment in health insurance. These 1:1 interactions also allow for assistance with increasing consumers’ health insurance literacy ensuring that they maintain coverage and access their health services.

The County, upon award, will assist approximately 5,500 individuals in the third budget year.

### Provide culturally-competent and linguistically appropriate information

Pinellas County provides a robust and comprehensive diversity training program for its Navigators. This training focuses on best practices for sensitivity, diversity and language barrier awareness. We will be refreshing the “Bridges Out of Poverty” training with the Navigator staff. This training makes them aware of and sensitive to the myriad of factors that affect a consumer’s needs and the way in which they may conceptualize health and healthcare. In all cases, the Pinellas County Navigators have been taught to listen to every consumer’s individual needs regarding healthcare before assisting them in understanding their plan options.

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### Working with individuals - limited English proficiency, disabilities, underserved

County Navigators assist individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and underserved and vulnerable populations through a variety of programs and services. During the second budget year through May 4th, several bilingual Navigators were contracted with and have assisted 736 individuals whose primary language is one other than English.

### Access by persons with disabilities

The County and project partners have made services available and accessible to individuals with disabilities throughout the County. All service centers are ADA compliant and accessible to individuals with physical disabilities. Every navigator location in Pinellas County provides handicapped parking, is wheelchair accessible, and has areas for curb-side drop-offs.

Navigator staff will make every effort to provide any additional reasonable accommodations when possible to support individuals with disabilities. Accommodations may include reconfiguration of the office space, different seating options, assistance using the computer, and/or more time for an appointment as needed and requested by the individual. The County anticipates increasing its targeted, grassroots marketing efforts to reach individuals facing extensive poverty and disabilities.

### Conflict of Interest Standards

Persons serving as Pinellas County Health Care Navigators are required to comply with county guidelines and standards adopting the Florida Statutes Section 112 (entitled, Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees). State of Florida law also sets guidance for navigators in the Florida Statutes Section 626.995 (entitled, Navigators) et. seq. A copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy is provided to all Navigators upon employment.

### Training Standards

Navigators and volunteers will maintain expertise in eligibility, enrollment, and program specifications through a variety of training and compliance monitoring standards. Navigators will attend required trainings including the annual 20 hour HHS training, any training requirements set forth by the State, as well as County identified training in the areas of sensitivity, diversity, and the specific “Bridges Out of Poverty” training. Navigators will be required to participate in continuing education trainings provided and to undergo a period of shadowing/mentorship with an experienced navigator from the lead agency before providing assistance independently.