



**SECTION BY SECTION:
Leveraging Integrated Networks in Communities (LINC)
to Address Social Needs Act**

SECTION 1 – SHORT TITLE

- Leveraging Integrated Networks in Communities (LINC) to Address Social Needs Act of 2021

SECTION 2 – PROGRAM TO SUPPORT ESTABLISHMENT OR ENHANCEMENT OF STATE COMMUNITY INTEGRATION NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Grant Program** – The Secretary of HHS will award grants on a competitive basis to States to support such States, through public-private partnerships, to establish new or enhance existing community integration network infrastructure through authorized activities.
- **Authorized Activities** – A State can use a grant to carry out activities and services to establish new or enhance existing community integration network infrastructure, on a statewide basis through direct network operations or collaborations among multiple associated entities, which may include such entities that operate regionally. Such activities and services include:
 - Establishing a new or enhancing an existing technology platform that:
 - Enables the coordination of public and private providers and payors of services for individuals in the State;
 - Prioritizes connectivity with, incorporation of, and partnership with any appropriate existing technology platforms developed by public or private organizations in the State; and
 - Ensures that reasonable measures are taken to promote connectivity among associated entities and appropriate privacy, security, protections are in place, in accordance with applicable Federal and State privacy laws.
 - Connecting associated entities for purposes of communication, service coordination and consumer assistance, referral and capacity management, outcome tracking, and related services;
 - Providing technical assistance and supporting associated entities in connecting and participating in the community integration network infrastructure;
 - Planning for and implementing actions designed to create sustainable funding models to support long-term access to community integration network infrastructure;
 - Designing and implementing a financial structure to make the community integration network infrastructure financially self-sustaining no later than three years after receiving funds; and
 - Evaluating the use of any funds provided.
- **Award of Grants** – A grant under this Act will be awarded under terms and conditions as the Secretary prescribes. The Secretary shall seek to minimize the administrative burden of such terms and conditions and ensure programmatic flexibility for unique State needs. The Secretary shall consult relevant stakeholders regarding basic functionalities, technical capacities, and data standards needed for community integration network infrastructure and, based on such consultations, establish guidelines for awarding grants under this section, including application requirements.



- **Application** - A State desiring a grant should:
 - o Enter into a public-private partnership with one or more private, nonprofit, or philanthropic organizations or any Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, or urban Indian organizations within the State; and
 - o Submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require, including:
 - Description of the agency or department in the State government that will coordinate with and oversee the partnership;
 - A plan for the establishment or enhancement of a community integration network infrastructure, including: the proposed transparent and competitive process for selecting any new operational components of the community integration network infrastructure; the planned governance structure (including representation of different types of associated entities) within the community integration network infrastructure; proposed associated entities and services to be included; and a plan for accessing and linking relevant data to create community integration network infrastructure, including a description of intended sources of data;
 - Assurances that the funds awarded will be used solely to carry out authorized activities and other related activities;
 - Potential options, including public-private partnerships in addition to the partnership described in paragraph (1), for making the community integration network infrastructure financially self-sustaining within three years of receiving funds; and
 - A description of the objectives and outcome goals of developing the community integration network infrastructure, including one or more health outcomes, one or more important social outcomes, improved access to health care or social services, and how progress toward outcomes will be measured through internal performance metrics.

- **Separate Tribal Infrastructure** – This Act will not preclude Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, or urban Indian organizations from establishing a community integration network infrastructure that is separate from any other public-private partnership receiving funds.

- **Authorization of Appropriations** – This Act authorizes \$150 million in funding for fiscal year 2022, of which up to \$5 million may be used for administrative expenses. Amounts appropriated for this grant will remain available until five years after the date of enactment of this Act.

- **Definitions** –
 - o **Associated Entities** – Any community-based organization that accepts referrals from health care organizations and provides certain services, public, or non-profit or for-profit, private health care provider organization, public or private funded payor of health care services, health or social service agency, state public housing authority or finance agency, public health information exchange or public health information network as defined by HHS, or other similar entity, as designated by the State.
 - o **Community Integration Network Infrastructure** – Infrastructure, existing on a statewide basis with direct network operations or through collaborations among multiple associated entities, used to enable the coordination, alignment, and connection of



associated entities in a State, including such entities that operate regionally, for purposes of communication, service coordination, and referral management of services, which can include nutritional assistance, housing, health care, transportation, job training, child development or care, caregiving and respite care, disability assistance, and other entities, as designated by the State.

- **Indian Tribe and Tribal Organization** – As defined by terms “Indian Tribe” and “Tribal Organization” in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.
- **Secretary** – Secretary of Health and Human Services.
- **State** – A state, territory, or the District of Columbia.
- **Urban Indian Organization** – As defined in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

SECTION 3 – EVALUATION, REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Evaluation** – The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an evaluation that:
 - Measures the overall impact of the community integration network infrastructure established or enhanced using funds received, with respect to:
 - Changes in individual and population health outcomes;
 - Changes in access to health care or social services;
 - The degree of data sharing using the community integration network infrastructure;
 - The effectiveness of service coordination;
 - The cost-effectiveness of the provision of services;
 - Any results or anticipated results on overall health and social services spending;
 - Patient and consumer satisfaction with service coordination process and services received; and
 - Any other relevant factors.
 - Describes how the funds were used.

- **Report and Recommendations** – No later than four years after the date the first grant under this Act is awarded, the Comptroller General of the United States must submit a report on the evaluation conducted to Congress and make the report publicly available. Based on the evaluation, the Comptroller General will make recommendations to States and Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, or urban Indian organizations on how to improve and sustain the community integration network infrastructure established or enhanced using funds received.