

Provider Accessibility Initiative (PAI) and Barrier Removal Fund (BRF) General Overview/Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT is the PAI?

Buckeye Health Plan is committed to providing equal access to quality health care and services that are physically and programmatically accessible for our members with disabilities and their companions. “Physical access,” also referred to as “architectural access,” refers to a person with a disability’s ability to access buildings, structures, and the environment. “Programmatic access” refers to a person with a disability’s ability to access goods, services, activities and equipment. The goal of the PAI is to increase the percentage of Buckeye Health Plan providers that meet minimum federal and state disability access standards by:

1. Improving the accuracy, completeness, and transparency of provider self-reported disability access data in all products/all markets nationwide by integrating “minimum accessibility” standards into the provider application/credentialing and directory processes; and
2. Providing participating providers in three pilot states with shared access to grant dollars through a Barrier Removal Fund (BRF). Providers that apply and are chosen for BRF awards will receive an on-site disability accessibility review completed by a local Center for Independent Living (CIL) and funding to remediate priority disability access barriers.

WHERE/WHEN: In 2018, the BRF will be administered in three pilot States: Illinois, Texas, and Ohio. Buckeye Health Plan is Centene Corporation’s health plan affiliate in Ohio.

WHO is responsible for administering the BRF?

- Buckeye Health Plan is proud to partner with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) on the administration of the BRF.
- NCIL is the longest-running national cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for people with disabilities. Founded in 1982, NCIL represents thousands of organizations and individuals including: individuals with disabilities, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), and other organizations that advocate for the human and civil rights of people with disabilities throughout the United States.
- NCIL will provide technical assistance to Buckeye Health Plan and help them coordinate a local BRF Committee that will select BRF awardees.
- NCIL will also coordinate with local Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to conduct the on-site accessibility reviews of BRF applicants, provide training, and distribute grants to BRF awardees to remediate priority disability access barriers identified by the local BRF Committee.

WHY are the PAI and BRF important?

- It's the right thing to do. Studies have shown that Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries with disabilities receive less preventive care due to inaccessible exam rooms and/or diagnostic equipment;ⁱ The PAI and BRF demonstrate Buckeye Health Plan's position as a pioneer in partnering with our providers and disability advocates to solve a vital problem and key social determinants of health for our members with disabilities and their companions.
- In addition, federal laws and regulations require that MCO providers have disability access and that MCO provider directories include a complete and accurate description of provider disability access.ⁱⁱ
- Buckeye Health Plan believes we have a responsibility and an obligation to support the participating providers in our network in becoming more accessible through a designated corporate funding source designed to address one of the primary barriers to disability compliance, namely a lack of financial resources, so that our members with disabilities and their companions will have better access and quality of care.
- The PAI, a recommendation of the Centene National Disability Advisory Council, demonstrates that Buckeye Health Plan is actively working toward a health care delivery system that is fully usable by, and accessible to, our members with disabilities and their companions; a health care system based on the aspirational principle of "universal access for all."

ⁱ <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/Downloads/Issue-Brief-Physical-AccessibilityBrief.pdf>

ⁱⁱ The 2016 Medicaid/CHIP Managed Care Final Rule states that: 1. MCO providers must provide physical access, accommodations, and accessible equipment for consumers with physical or mental disabilities by July 1, 2018 (42 CFR Section 438.206(c)(3)); 2. Provider directories must indicate the following for all physicians, hospitals, pharmacies, behavioral health providers, and LTSS providers: linguistic capabilities, completion of cultural competence training, and whether the provider's offices, exam rooms, and equipment accommodate individuals with physical disabilities by July 1, 2017 (42 CFR Section 438.10(1)); and 3. State network adequacy standards must consider the ability of MCO network providers to ensure physical access, reasonable accommodations, culturally competent communications, and accessible equipment for Medicaid enrollees with physical or mental disabilities by July 1, 2018 (42 CFR Section 438.68(c)(1)).

Provider Accessibility Initiative Barrier Removal Fund FAQ:

- Question: How do I submit a BRF RFP?
 - Answer: Please visit the National Council on Independent Living website at www.ncil.org/ohiobrf and complete the application provided as well as the self-reported Buckeye Health Plan Accessibility Form.
Submissions are due before **5:00 pm (EST) on Friday, September 28, 2018.**

- Question: Who is eligible to submit a RFP for Barrier Removal Funds?
 - Answer:
Participating providers that meet all of the following criteria are eligible to apply:
 - In the counties: Allen, Ashland, Ashtabula, Auglaize, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Cuyahoga, Defiance, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Fulton, Geauga, Hamilton, Hancock, Henry, Hocking, Holmes, Lake, Logan, Lorain, Lucas, Medina, Mercer, Montgomery, Paulding, Portage, Preble, Putnam, Richland, Ross, Sandusky, Seneca, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Van Wert, Wayne, and Wood Service Delivery Area; and
 - See BHP members at a physical location; and
 - Are accepting new Buckeye Health Plan members; and
 - Are in the Buckeye Health Plan provider directory; andCompletion and submission of the self-reported Buckeye Health Plan Accessibility Form
Non-participating providers with single case agreements or other contracts, and providers (par and non-par) located in hospitals and institutional settings are not eligible.

- Question: What is the deadline to submit the BRF RFP? Can it be extended for any reason?
 - Answer: 9/28/2018, 5:00 PM EST. Buckeye Health Plan reserves the right to extend the deadline.

- Question: Do I have to complete the Buckeye Health Plan Accessibility Form?
 - Answer: Yes, you must complete both the RFP and the Buckeye Health Plan Accessibility Form in order to be eligible for the funds.

- Question: Will there be another RFP in the future?
 - Answer: We do not have information regarding future RFPs surrounding accessibility improvements at this time.

- Question: What if I miss the deadline for submitting my RFP?
 - Answer: Unfortunately, we cannot accept additional RFPs beyond the deadline.

- Question: Can I change my BRF RFP response after I have submitted it?
 - Answer: Changes/edits can be made through the final submission date of 9/28/2018, 5:00 P.M. EST.

- Question: How will I know if my RFP was received?
 - Answer: You can contact Call Tim Fuchs at NCIL at 202-207-0334 or toll-free at 844-778-7961 or email Tim@NCIL.org. You will also be informed if you are not an award recipient.

- Question: If I have a question about the BRF RFP, who should I contact?
 - Answer: Call Tim Fuchs at NCIL at 202-207-0334 or toll-free at 844-778-7961 or email Tim@NCIL.org.

- Question: How much will this award fund per RFP?
 - Answer: Award amounts will vary based on the specific number of BRF grants awarded and amount of each grant will depend on the total number of applications received, the impact applications will have on Buckeye Health Plan disability access network adequacy, and the number of Buckeye Health Plan members with disabilities impacted.

- Question: Are there costs for which my organization is responsible?
 - Answer: Buckeye Health Plan will cover the cost of the accessibility site review, technical assistance, and approved modification(s). Any additional costs are your responsibility.

- Question: Can I include multiple pieces of equipment/modifications?
 - Answer: Yes, include all items for which you are seeking funding.

- Question: I have multiple sites, do I need to submit a BRF RFP for each site?
 - Answer: Yes, please submit separate RFPs for each site where you serve members.

- Question: How soon can I expect award funding to arrive?
 - Answer: We anticipate fund disbursement within 30 days after notification of RFP award. Provider contracts will need to be signed prior to receipt of funds.

- Question: Will you grant dollars outside of my state, given that you have a national presence?
 - Answer: BRF dollars granted by the Buckeye Health Plan BRF Committee are for the participating providers in Ohio only.

- Question: What happens if I choose to term with Buckeye Health Plan?
 - Answer: You must remain in the network (and in good standing) for 1 year following grant funding or full re-payment will be required. If you leave the network after 18 months, you will repay 50%. After 2 years, fully-funded, no repayment will be due.

- Question: What if the accessibility improvements cannot be completed by the timeline listed in the RFP, due to reasons I cannot control (i.e. the part is on backorder or the contractor is not able to start the work within the timeline)?
 - *Answer: Please contact Tim Fuchs at Tim@ncil.org to further discuss your concerns.*

- Question: What happens if the accessibility improvement costs change after the contractor begins work?
 - *Answer: The initial decisions are final. The provider is responsible for any additional costs.*

- Question: My question isn't listed. Who can I contact?
 - *Answer: Call Tim Fuchs at NCIL at 202-207-0334 or toll-free at 844-778-7961 or email Tim@NCIL.org.*