

1 AN ACT concerning health.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Mental Health and Developmental  
5 Disabilities Administrative Act is amended by adding Section  
6 18.9 as follows:

7 (20 ILCS 1705/18.9 new)

8 Sec. 18.9. Cultural Empowerment Program.

9 (a) Subject to appropriation, the Department shall create  
10 the Cultural Empowerment Program, which shall make  
11 grants-in-aid to one or more community providers to provide  
12 outreach, engagement, training, and support to faith-based  
13 organizations serving communities that are underserved by  
14 mental and behavioral health resources. The Department shall  
15 provide a list of ZIP codes identifying the targeted  
16 communities.

17 (b) Grantees under the program shall utilize all available  
18 resources to provide initial relationship building within  
19 community areas by delivering training to faith-based  
20 leadership and providing connection through personal stories  
21 from persons with lived expertise to the leadership of faith  
22 communities or their congregations. Grantees shall provide  
23 information about the Certified Recovery Support Specialist

1 (CRSS) credential to interested individuals.

2 (c) Grantees shall build relationships with local  
3 community mental health centers (CMHCs) and other behavioral  
4 health providers to help facilitate linkage to mental health  
5 services for people in targeted communities. Grantees shall  
6 ensure that consumers in the program experience a warm handoff  
7 between the grantee and the CMHC or other service provider,  
8 and to the greatest possible extent, shall assist consumers in  
9 navigating or bypassing wait lists and other barriers to  
10 accessing care. Grantees shall use their relationships with  
11 CMHCs and service providers to support expansion of services  
12 when needed and where possible.

13 (d) Grantees under the program shall utilize their  
14 expertise to build relationships with faith-based communities  
15 in the targeted communities and ensure that those  
16 organizations are aware of the behavioral health resources  
17 available. Grantees shall support faith-based communities in  
18 advocating for community members who are affected by  
19 behavioral health conditions to access mental health treatment  
20 and recovery services that shall assist them in living healthy  
21 and productive lives.

22 (e) The Department shall prioritize organizations that are  
23 existing trusted messengers within targeted communities in  
24 awarding funding under the program.

25 (f) The Cultural Empowerment Program established by this  
26 Section shall begin operations no later than July 1, 2024.