

Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH)

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Agenda

1. BHBH Program Background
2. County Behavioral Health Agency (BHA) Request for Applications (RFA) Overview
3. More Information/Questions

BHBH Program Background



BHBH Program Background

In 2022, California had an estimated 171,521 individuals experiencing homelessness. (Housing and Urban Development Continuum of Care Point-In-Time [Report](#))

60,905 were individuals experiencing chronic homelessness

39,721 were severely mentally ill

36,096 reported chronic substance use

BHBH Program Background

The BHBH Program was signed into law in September 2022 under Assembly Bill 179 (Ting, Chapter 249, Statutes of 2022), and provides funding through the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for county behavioral health agencies and tribal entities through June 30, 2027.

The primary focus of the BHBH Program is to help people experiencing homelessness who have serious behavioral health conditions that prevent them from accessing help and moving out of homelessness.

The BHBH Program provides funding for operational and supportive services, not covered under Medi-Cal or other funding sources, to expand bridge housing implementation.

BHBH Program Purpose and Priorities

- » The BHBH program is identified to meaningfully contribute to the implementation of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness' [Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California](#).
- » BHBH is identified to be implemented in alignment with the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Program, which prioritizes BHBH program resources for CARE Program participants.
- » BHBH will provide data on the individuals and families served into the local Homeless Management Information System, as required by AB 977 (Gabriel, Chapter 397, Statutes of 2021).
- » BHBH settings will be established and provided based on community needs and Housing First principles and will include voluntary supportive services for individuals experiencing both homelessness and serious behavioral health conditions.

BHBH Program Purpose and Priorities

- » The following priorities drive the implementation of the BHBH Program:
 - The need is critical, and the focus is on immediate solutions.
 - Collaboration will complement ongoing state, county, and tribal efforts to address homelessness.
 - BHBH Program settings will provide supportive services and housing navigation to assist people who have serious behavioral health conditions and are experiencing homelessness.

County BHA RFA Overview



County BHA RFA Overview

- » **Opportunity and Focus:** This initial round of BHBH Program funding is providing \$907,936,000 to county BHAs for use in the planning and implementation of bridge housing settings for Californians experiencing homelessness who have serious behavioral health conditions (a serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder).
- » **Eligible Entities:** California county BHAs
- » **Application Timeline:** Applications were accepted from February 22, 2023 through April 28, 2023
- » **Award Announcements:** Updated [here](#)
- » **Funding must be expended by:** June 30, 2027

County BHA RFA Overview

- » **County BHAs Funding Designations:** County funding designations were determined based on a methodology reflecting the Behavioral Health Sub-Account percentages and the Point-in-Time Homelessness Counts.
 - The Behavioral Health Sub-Account methodology information can be found in [Behavioral Health Information Notice \(BHIN\) 21-006](#).
 - The Continuum of Care Point-in-Time homelessness counts can be found in this Housing and Urban Development [report](#).

Key BHBH Program Definitions

- » **“Bridge Housing”** is defined as short- and mid-term residential settings with a goal of connecting people to long-term housing stability.
- » **“Housing Navigators”** work with individuals to help them find, move in to, and retain affordable housing. They also develop relationships with community partners, other service providers, agencies offering housing subsidies, and property owners and managers.
- » **“Serious Behavioral Health Condition”** is identified as either a serious mental illness, and/or a substance use disorder. The eligibility criteria are adapted from the Specialty Mental Health Services access criteria ([BHIN 21-073](#)) and the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System/Drug Medi-Cal access criteria ([BHIN 21-071](#); [BHIN 23-001](#)).

Key BHBH Program Definitions

- » **“Short-Term and Mid-Term”**: “Short-term” is defined as less than 90 days and “mid-term” is a period between 90 days and 2 years, with the possibility of a 1-year extension, keeping in mind the BHBH Program funding expires on June 30, 2027.
- » **“Supportive Services”** are those services necessary to help program participants obtain and maintain housing, manage symptoms of serious behavioral health conditions, and support recovery and wellness. Examples include peer support, employment assistance, transportation assistance, and group and individual activities that promote a sense of purpose and community participation.

Key BHBH Program Requirements

» Eligible Use Requirements

- At least 75 percent of the BHBH Program funds must be used for the costs of operating bridge housing.
- Up to 25 percent of the BHBH Program funds can be used for identified flexible funding categories: Implementation, Outreach and Engagement, and Start-Up Infrastructure.
- County BHAs must maximize all other funding sources, including Medi-Cal, to the greatest extent possible and should add new bridge housing beds to the system of care. BHBH Program funds may not be used to pay for existing services or housing supports that are currently reimbursed, or eligible for reimbursement through other funding sources.

Key BHBH Program Requirements

» Administrative Requirements

- Identify a program lead, meet reporting, monitoring, & communications specifications, facilitate coordination requirements, develop program plan, etc.

» Start-Up Infrastructure Requirements

- Complete all bridge housing start-up infrastructure activities and make beds available within 1 year of contract execution.
- Bridge housing start-up infrastructure funding is limited to \$75,000 per bed.

Bridge Housing Settings

» Bridge Housing Operations – 75% of Budget

Shelter/Interim Housing:

- Housing individuals in shelter, transitional, bridge, or interim housing settings, recovery housing, shared housing, community-based diversion or reentry programs

Rental Assistance:

- Master leasing, short or mid-term rental assistance

Auxiliary Funding:

- Supplemental payments for board and care

Bridge Housing Settings

- » **Shelter/Interim Housing:** This could include tiny homes, emergency shelter, motel vouchers or motel-based sheltering efforts, navigation centers, peer respite, crisis housing, transitional housing, recovery housing, recuperative care models, and/or community-reentry and diversion housing programs.
- » **What this looks like:** Two large and one small county have plans for large, low barrier congregate settings that also include access to supportive services. One includes health care, another recuperative care. Numerous counties have plans for contracting and/or converting motels for interim housing.

Bridge Housing Settings

- » **Rental Assistance:** County BHAs may also offer short- or mid-term rental assistance or subsidies as part of an overall bridge housing strategy. Rental assistance must be combined with easy access to clinical and supportive behavioral health care.
- » **What this looks like:** Approximately half of the counties are proposing at least some rental assistance as part of their BHBH program. One of California's smallest counties in the North part of the state plans to provide 30 short-term and 15 long-term rental assistance subsidies per year. Another is looking at subsidies in master-leased units. Medium and larger size counties also include rental assistance, most often using scattered sites. Several counties have identified that rental assistance will be particularly helpful for CARE Process participants that may prefer alternatives to the interim housing options.

Bridge Housing Settings

- » **Auxiliary Funding in Assisted Living Settings:** Commonly referred to as “board and care patches”. This is funding to support the successful placement of people who have licensed care needs. The length of the funding may be determined by the BHA and may only be necessary until the client has stabilized and can be served in a lower level of care.
- » **What this looks like:** Several counties of varying size (very small/frontier to large) identified investing in projects related to the expansion, enhancement, or improvement efforts related to auxiliary funding for assisted living settings. Some counties are proposing the majority of funds in this category and/or use of start-up infrastructure to expand facilities. One larger southern California county provides significant data and articulates the unmet need for facilities for individuals who are in need assistance in daily living.

Start-Up Infrastructure

- » Start-up/limited support to enable current facilities to accommodate the needs of individuals with serious behavioral health conditions, or to expand bridge housing for individuals with serious behavioral health conditions.
 - Minor renovations
 - Contributions to Purchase
 - Renovations
 - Initial Furnishings, Equipment & Appliances
 - Other Costs

Start-Up Infrastructure

- » Tiny Home Villages
- » Motel Conversions
- » Peer Respite and Recovery Housing
- » Large Congregate Shelters
- » Navigation Center/Multi-Use Campus
- » Individual Housing Units & Multi-Use Dwellings

BHBH Technical Assistance

- » **CARE Program Coordination:** The cohort 1 counties (Glenn, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, San Francisco) and Los Angeles are being prioritized for implementation. Coordination and technical assistance is being facilitated through DHCS and Health Management Associates.
- » **HMIS Coordination:** Technical assistance will be facilitated for a county's integration with the Homeless Management Information System. Coordination is taking place with Cal ICH and their technical assistance provider, Abt. Associates.

More Information/Questions?

Email: BHBH@dhcs.ca.gov

Website: <https://bridgehousing.buildingcalhhs.com/>

