



California Department of Health Care Services

Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program

Round 3: County Behavioral Health Agencies — Strategic Enhancements

Request for Applications (RFA)

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I. Overview

Opportunity and Focus	This third round of Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program funding will provide \$265,000,000 to county behavioral health agencies (BHAs) for use in the expanded implementation of bridge housing services for Californians experiencing homelessness who have serious behavioral health conditions (a serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder). Counties may apply for Track 1: BHBH Program Operations or both Track 1 and Track 2: Start-Up Infrastructure awards.
Eligible Entities	California county BHAs with a BHBH Program contract executed under the first round of funding prior to April 10, 2024.
Application Timeline	Applications will be accepted until April 10, 2024, 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time (PT).
Application Form	Accessible on SurveyMonkey Apply starting February 2, 2024
Awards Announced	July 2024

II. Introduction and Background

Through the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) will provide \$1.5 billion in funding to operate bridge housing settings to address the immediate and sustainable housing needs of people experiencing homelessness who have serious behavioral health conditions, including a serious mental illness (SMI) and/or substance use disorder (SUD). The program, which was signed into law in September 2022 under [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 179](#) (Ting, Chapter 249, Statutes of 2022) and subsequently [Senate Bill \(SB\) 101](#) (Skinner, Chapter 12, Statutes of 2023), provides funding through June 30, 2027. All BHBH Program funding is subject to any adjustments in budget development.

California has provided significant capital funding to create housing and treatment settings in recent years, including through programs such as Homekey, the Community Care Expansion program, and the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program. The

BHBH Program is designed to complement these capital investments. In contrast to capital funding programs (listed above), the BHBH Program primarily provides operational and supportive services funding to expand bridge housing implementation.

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. County behavioral health agencies (BHAs) applying for funding will be expected to clearly demonstrate how they will reach the historically underserved client populations that are most in need of supportive services.

This Round 3 Request for Applications (RFA) provides county BHAs an opportunity to apply for strategic enhancement funds to further meet the goals of the BHBH Program as described in the BHBH Program Round 1: [County BHAs RFA](#) (Round 1 RFA). Program requirements and background are described in that RFA. Through this RFA, county BHAs with BHBH programs can apply for additional funds for strategic enhancements and to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness and serious behavioral health conditions.

DHCS has engaged Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. (AHP), a consulting and research firm focused on improving health and human services systems, to serve as administrative entity supporting the implementation of the BHBH Program and to provide general grant training and technical assistance (TTA) during the application process and throughout the life of the project. AHP has engaged with additional consultants to further support Program implementation.

III. Eligibility and Funding Distribution

BHBH Program funding is divided among multiple RFAs. This RFA is focused on the third round of funding, totaling \$265,000,000, and is available to county BHAs that have accepted funding in the first round. To be eligible for this Round 3 funding, a county BHA must have **an executed contract for BHBH Program funding for the first (noncompetitive) round prior to the April 10, 2024, Round 3 application due date**. Eligible county BHAs may receive bonus points for partnering with Tribal entities and/or serving people from non-funded BHBH counties to maximize the reach of this round of funding.

Available maximum funding will be awarded for two tracks based on county size, as outlined in Table 1, below, and in Attachment A. Eligible county BHAs may apply for funding through Track 1: BHBH Program Operations or both Track 1 and Track 2: Start-Up Infrastructure. To determine the funding caps in each track, DHCS assessed the project budgets proposed under the first round of funding, identifying an approximate project cost.

These funds may not supplant existing federal, state, or county funds used to provide housing or services, including through Medi-Cal (including Enhanced Care Management, Targeted Case Management, and Community Supports), programs funded under the Mental Health Services Act, federally funded programs, or other state or local programs.

County BHAs are encouraged to collaborate, where feasible, with neighboring counties' agencies, as well as with area Continuums of Care (CoCs) and other agencies that address homelessness. Counties may work directly with Tribal entities and with other county BHAs to create regional models.

Applicants are required to submit a budget as part of their application.

Table 1. Funding Distribution (See [Attachment A](#) for a list of counties by size.)

Allowable Expenditures	Total Funds Available	Project Funding Cap by County Size
Track 1: Shelter, interim housing, rental assistance programs and/or auxiliary funding for assisted living, and housing navigation. Up to 5 percent may be spent on outreach and engagement.	\$212,000,000	Small: up to \$1.5 million Medium: up to \$5 million Large: up to \$10 million Los Angeles: up to \$55 million
Track 2: The purchase and renovation of existing structures. Must include a Track 1 application to support operations.	\$53,000,000	Small: up to \$1.5 million Medium: up to \$2 million Large: up to \$5 million Los Angeles: up to \$14 million
Total	\$265,000,000	
Note: County BHAs that apply for Track 2 funding must submit a corresponding Track 1 application to support the operations of the Track 2 project.		

IV. Program Description

BHBH Program Goals and Objectives

The BHBH Program builds on the California Health and Human Services Agency’s (CalHHS’s) [Guiding Principles & Strategic Priorities](#) and enables DHCS and its grantees to meaningfully contribute to the implementation of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness’s [Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California](#).

The following priorities drive the implementation of the BHBH Program:

- This is a critical need, and the focus is on immediate and sustainable 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.

Populations Served

County BHAs must serve individuals with serious behavioral health conditions, including SMI and/or SUD, who are experiencing homelessness. (See [Attachment B](#) for definitions of “[serious behavioral health condition](#)” and “[homeless](#).”) Counties are encouraged to consider the specific needs of populations that are historically more impacted by housing discrimination and homelessness.

The passage of [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1338](#) (Umberg, Chapter 319, Statutes of 2022), which established the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Program, adds Section 5982(b) to the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) to stipulate that CARE Program participants be prioritized for any appropriate bridge housing funded by the BHBH Program. BHBH Program design and implementation efforts will be coordinated with CalHHS and DHCS CARE Program planning efforts to ensure counties prioritize BHBH Program funding at the local level for this population.

Program Requirements

All of the minimum Administration Requirements; Bridge Housing Eligible Uses and Requirements; Bridge Housing Start-Up and Infrastructure Requirements; and Reporting, Monitoring, and Communications Requirements outlined in the BHBH Program [Round 1: County BHAs RFA](#) (pages 5-7) and BHBH Program contract are required for BHBH Program Round 3 strategic enhancements. Additionally, please review carefully the BHBH Program requirements for each track, below.

Tracks Overview

DHCS has identified two tracks for BHBH Program funding:

- **Track 1: BHBH Program Operations**
 - Bridge Housing Outreach and Engagement
 - Bridge Housing
 - Shelter
 - Interim housing
 - Rental assistance
 - Auxiliary funding in assisted living settings
 - Housing Navigation (required for all BHBH participants)
- **Track 2: Bridge Housing Start-Up Infrastructure**

The selection of the best methods for the strategic enhancements of the BHBH Program will depend on the unique needs and resources of each county, but all county BHAs must meet the program requirements as described below and in [Attachment C](#). More detailed information about the types of housing, activities, and costs BHBH Program funds can support in both tracks is included in [Attachment C](#).

Track 1: BHBH Program Operations and Requirements

BHBH Program Track 1 funds will be spent on the costs of operating bridge housing that serves people with serious behavioral health conditions who are also experiencing [homelessness](#), using best practices in the delivery of [bridge housing](#).

The BHBH Program Track 1 supports bridge housing settings, including necessary housing operation costs (e.g., facility rent, utilities, Wi-Fi, insurance, onsite staffing, repairs, food, hygiene products), as well as the costs for additional services to support participants' housing stability and retention and wellness. Bridge housing settings may be leased or owned by the county or by contracted partners.

See [Attachment C, Round 1: County BHAs RFA](#), and BHBH Program contracts including Attachment F – Special Real Estate Requirements for additional BHBH Program operations requirements, all of which also apply to and are required for Round 3: Strategic Enhancements funds.

Track 2: Start-Up Infrastructure and Requirements

County BHAs applying for start-up infrastructure funding must demonstrate that they will be able to support the corresponding operations. Therefore, those counties must also meet the requirements outlined under Track 1: BHBH Program Operations, above, in addition to the following:

- Complete all bridge housing start-up infrastructure activities and make beds available within 1 year of contract execution.
- Limit costs to a maximum of \$75,000 per bed.

Applicants that need less than \$25,000 for minor renovations or applications may request these funds as a Track 1 direct cost (see page 23). See [Attachment C, Round 1: County BHAs RFA](#), and BHBH Program contracts for additional start-up infrastructure requirements, all of which also apply to and are required for Round 3: Strategic Enhancements funds.

Application Process

The application and attachments, along with instructions for submitting the completed application, can be found [online](#). Applications will be accepted electronically beginning on February 2, 2024. Applications may not be hand delivered or mailed. The deadline for all applications is April 10, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. PT. DHCS will not accept any funding applications after the due date.

*Table 2. Round 3 Timeline**

Event	Date
Round 3: County BHAs — Strategic Enhancements RFA released	January 16, 2024
Informational webinar—please register here	February 15, 2024, 10:00 a.m. PT
Application open	February 2, 2024
County BHA applications due [†]	On or before April 10, 2024, 4:00 p.m. PT
County BHA conditional awards announced	July 2024
Contracts/contract modifications executed	Within 60 days of county BHA’s receipt of initial contract/contract modification language

*Timeline subject to change at DHCS’s discretion.

[†]DHCS will not accept any funding applications after the due date.

County BHAs may submit a project proposal for Track 1 or for both Tracks 1 and 2 combined. *Note: proposals for Track 2: Start-Up Infrastructure only will not be accepted.* Each application will be evaluated uniquely for award as identified in Table 1. Reviewing applications at a program level will allow for more funding flexibility for statewide distribution.

Information provided by the applicant can be made available for public review, unless otherwise exempted by law (Inspection of Public Records, Chapter 3.5, Division 7, Government Code).

Application Instructions

The BHBH Program is designed to allow county BHAs to implement the most appropriate strategies for their communities while adhering to responsive best practices and using funds appropriately, as intended by law, and within the parameters of DHCS guidance. These are competitive funds and county BHAs must respond to all questions, address the minimum program requirements, and describe their proposed plan and budget in detail. Program proposals must clearly describe the rationale for the selection of the chosen intervention(s). **The BHBH Program application uses a fillable form on an online application portal hosted by SurveyMonkey Apply, accessible [here](#).** Before beginning the application, please review the application questions in [Attachment D](#). To complete the required budget, please follow the budget instructions in [Attachment E](#). Use the Excel template available [online](#) and upload the budget and budget narrative to the application portal. Within 24 hours of submission, you will receive an email confirming receipt of the complete application. If you do not receive the email confirmation, return to the application and make sure that you have fully submitted it.

Informational Webinar

A webinar on February 15, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. PT will provide further information about the Round 3: Strategic Enhancements RFA. [Registration](#) is required for those planning to attend. The webinar will be recorded and posted on the BHBH Program [website](#).

Questions

Please submit questions related to the RFA or the application instructions, including technical questions related to the online application portal, to the BHBH Program Round 3 [help desk](#).

Reasonable Accommodations

DHCS will provide assistive services such as reading or writing assistance and conversion of the RFA, questions and answers, RFA addenda, or other Administrative Notices to Braille, large print, audiocassette, or computer disk as needed. To request copies of written materials in an alternate format, please send an email to BHBHinfo@ahpnet.com or call (323) 545-6202.

Award Process

Successful applicants will be notified by email of a conditional award. AHP will schedule meetings with conditional awardees to discuss the contracting process, including development of the statement of work and payment schedule. The contracting process may entail either a contract modification to the existing BHBH Program contract or a new contract with AHP. All applicants must sign the contract or contract modification for final execution/approval within 60 days of receipt. The final agreement must be signed, returned, and fully executed with AHP before funding will be made available.

Appeals

Applicants submitting a response to this RFA may not protest or appeal the award. All award decisions are final.

State's Rights

1. If deemed necessary by DHCS, DHCS, directly or through AHP, may collect additional applicant documentation, signatures, missing items, or omitted

information during the application review process. DHCS will advise the applicant by email or in writing of any documentation that is required and the submission timeline. Failure to submit the required documentation in a manner DHCS deems responsive by the date and time indicated may lead DHCS to find the applicant nonresponsive and eliminate the application from further BHBH Program funding consideration.

2. The submission of a response to this RFA does not obligate DHCS to make a contract award.
3. DHCS reserves the right to deem incomplete responses as nonresponsive to the RFA requirements.
4. DHCS reserves the right to modify or cancel the RFA process at any time.
5. Any of the following may cause DHCS to reject a response from further consideration:
 - a. Failure to meet the state applicant requirements by the submission deadline.
 - b. Failure to comply with a request to submit additional documentation in a timely manner.
 - c. Failure to comply with all performance requirements, terms, conditions, and/or exhibits that are being prepared for the resulting contract.

V. Administrative Requirements

All administrative requirements outlined in the [Round 1: County BHAs RFA](#) and the BHBH Program contract are required for Round 3: Strategic Enhancements funding. This includes Annual Review and Program Modifications, Reporting Requirements, Participation in Monitoring and TTA, and Accessibility and Nondiscrimination as described in [Round 1: County BHAs RFA](#) (pages 11-14).

Attachment A: Maximum County Funding

The maximum amount of BHBH Program Round 3: Strategic Enhancements funding for any county is based on population size. For purposes of this RFA, DHCS is using the following county sizes, by population:

Size	Counties	Maximum Amount Track 1: BHBH Program Operations	Maximum Amount Track 2: Start-Up Infrastructure
Small	Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Inyo, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Benito, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yuba	Up to \$1.5 million	Up to \$1.5 million
Medium	Butte, Marin, Merced, Monterey, Placer, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tulare, Yolo	Up to \$5 million	Up to \$2 million
Large	Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Ventura	Up to \$10 million	Up to \$5 million
X-Large	Los Angeles	Up to \$55 million	Up to \$14 million

Attachment B: Definitions

Bridge Housing

For purposes of the BHBH Program, “bridge housing” is defined as short- and mid-term residential programs with a goal to connect individuals to long-term housing stability. The BHBH Program uses a broad definition of “bridge housing” that may include, and may not be limited to, emergency shelter, interim housing, rental assistance, and auxiliary funding in assisted living settings. See [Attachment C](#) for more details on bridge housing types. BHBH settings must offer supportive services that address the housing stability needs of participants. County BHBH programs are low barrier and use harm reduction strategies and Housing First principles. However, when indicated, funding may be used to support recovery residences and sober living environments for individuals with significant substance use disorder (SUD) needs. Bridge housing must meet the [ESG Minimum Habitability Standards](#) and, when possible and as applicable, should also meet [CoC Housing Quality Standards](#).

Family

“Family” includes, but is not limited to, regardless of marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identity, any group of persons presenting for assistance together with or without children and irrespective of age, relationship, or whether or not a member of the household has a disability. A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family. (Source: [HUD Continuum of Care Program FAQ](#))

Homeless

For purposes of the BHBH Program, the definition of “homeless” is based on the definition used in the Enhanced Care Management program ([ECM Policy Guide](#), September 2023, pages 11-12), as outlined below.

An individual or family experiencing homelessness is defined as meeting one or more of the following conditions:

- “Lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence;
- Having a primary residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
- Living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter, designed to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing);
- Exiting an institution into homelessness (regardless of length of stay in the institution);
- Will imminently lose housing in [the] next 30 days;
- Fleeing domestic violence, . . . sexual assault, stalking, and other dangerous, traumatic, or life-threatening conditions relating to such violence”

Housing First

Housing First is defined in WIC Section 8255 (11)(d)(1)-(2)(A) as “the evidence-based model that uses housing as a tool, rather than a reward, for recovery and that centers

on providing or connecting homeless people to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Housing First providers offer services as needed and requested on a voluntary basis and do not make housing contingent on participation in services. Housing First includes time-limited rental or services assistance, so long as the housing and service provider assists the recipient in accessing permanent housing and in securing longer-term rental assistance, income assistance, or employment.”

Consistent with the national Housing First model and WIC Section 8255, abstinence from alcohol or other substances cannot be a requirement or prerequisite for housing funded by the BHBH Program, nor can the use of alcohol or other substances in and of itself be grounds for eviction; services are informed by a harm reduction philosophy that recognizes drug and alcohol use and SUD as a part of tenants’ lives. Tenants are engaged in nonjudgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use, offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices, and connected to optional evidence-based treatment. However, when indicated, funding may be used to support recovery residences and sober living environments for individuals with significant SUD needs.

Housing Navigation

Housing navigation is an integral part of the process of assisting people in removing barriers to housing, identifying housing options, resources, and services. 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. Navigators help individuals eliminate or reduce the impact of personal housing barriers such as criminal records, poor credit, or prior housing judgments due to eviction. Navigators also assist with transportation needs, application fees, and/or utility payments. Additionally, housing navigators may assist in identification and reporting of instances of housing discrimination. They may link individuals with bridge housing and housing subsidy agencies and assist them in completing applications. They may also work with property owners and public housing authorities to facilitate approvals, assisting with documentation, timely inspections, and corrective action requests.

Mid-Term

See **Short-Term**.

Serious Behavioral Health Condition

The BHBH Program eligibility criteria are adapted from the Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) access criteria ([BHIN 21-073](#)) and the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System/Drug Medi-Cal access criteria ([BHIN 21-071](#); [BHIN 23-001](#)), including all CARE Program participants. There are no age restrictions on BHBH Program participants. To be eligible for a BHBH Program-funded project, an individual must meet one of the following criteria:

1. The individual has one or more of the following:
 - a. Significant impairment, where “impairment” is defined as distress, disability, or dysfunction in social, occupational, or other important activities, including education and family relationships
 - b. A reasonable probability of significant deterioration in an important area of life functioning
 - c. A need for SMHS, regardless of presence of impairment (for individuals under age 21)

AND

The individual's condition, as defined in a, b, and/or c, is due to either of the following:

- a. A diagnosed mental and/or substance-related or addictive disorder, according to the criteria of the current editions of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* and the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD)*
- b. A suspected mental and/or substance-related or addictive disorder that has not yet been diagnosed

OR

2. The individual has at least one of the following:
 - a. At least one diagnosis from the current edition of the *DSM* for Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders, with the exception of Tobacco-Related Disorders and Non-Substance-Related Disorders
 - b. At least one suspected diagnosis from the current edition of the *DSM* for Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders, with the exception of Tobacco-Related Disorders and Non-Substance-Related Disorders

OR

3. The individual is a CARE Program participant, regardless of whether they meet the criteria in paragraph (1) or (2), above.

Short-Term and Mid-Term

For purposes of the BHBH Program, "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. Because the BHBH Program sunsets on June 30, 2027, its funds cannot be used to support longer-term housing or rental assistance. County BHAs are encouraged to allow flexible lengths of stay in bridge housing settings to ensure housing navigation and placement services can take place and that individuals are exited to permanent housing to the greatest extent possible.

Supportive Services

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, culturally defined practices, transportation assistance, and group and individual activities that promote a sense of purpose and community participation. Services covered by Medi-Cal cannot be paid for with BHBH Program funding. BHBH funds cannot be used as a match for Medi-Cal services. Counties must leverage Medi-Cal to the greatest extent possible, through use of California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal programs including Enhanced Care Management and the housing-related Community Supports.

Attachment C: Allowable BHBH Program Activities

The goal of the BHBH Program is to expand the available bridge housing to support individuals with serious behavioral health conditions. The following activities are allowable uses of BHBH Program funds for meeting the program requirements as discussed in [sections IV and V](#). This list is not intended to be comprehensive. Any additions to this list must be preapproved by DHCS.

Track 1: Bridge Housing Operations

For purposes of the BHBH Program, “bridge housing” is defined as short- and mid-term residential options that serve as a bridge to longer-term housing (see [Attachment B](#)). Bridge housing must meet the [ESG Minimum Habitability Standards](#) and, when possible and as applicable, should also meet [CoC Housing Quality Standards \(HQS\)](#). All bridge housing settings must include supportive services for residents to use voluntarily.

County BHAs and their partners may provide bridge housing through any of several methods, including directly operating or contracting for shelter/interim housing beds, providing short- or mid-term rental assistance, or offering auxiliary funding in assisted living. Counties may work with homelessness service providers to expand capacity and/or provide necessary supports and accommodations so individuals with serious behavioral health conditions can succeed in programs originally designed for the broader population experiencing homelessness. BHBH programs must be developed in a manner that allows for choice, enables people to stay in their “home” communities, and provides for community integration in accordance with all applicable federal and state regulations.

When not covered by another funding source (due to the restrictions of non-supplantation), allowable costs for BHBH settings include necessary housing operation costs (e.g., facility rent, utilities, Wi-Fi, insurance, onsite manager, repairs, food, hygiene products) and the costs for supportive services to increase the likelihood of participants’ housing stability and retention. Funds may be used to support the development of partnerships and create a model to administer rental subsidies. Expenditures related to pet accommodations are allowable.

BHBH models or housing types should be selected based on community needs and gaps and may include shelter/interim housing, rental assistance coupled with supportive services, and/or auxiliary funding in assisted living settings. All must include housing navigation for individual sustainability.

BHBH is provided through the Shelter, Interim Housing, Rental Assistance, Auxiliary Funding in Assisted Living and Housing Navigation housing types described below; BHBH includes housing navigation as described below.

Shelter/Interim Housing. Shelter or interim housing is intended to be of short- or mid-term duration, for individuals preparing to move into longer-term housing options such as Permanent Supportive Housing or other stable living situations. For purposes of the BHBH Program, 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.

Bridge housing may include individual units, shared living (with private or smaller-occupancy rooms), individual rooms in homes, or tiny homes. Congregate environments (e.g., dorms with larger-occupancy rooms) may be considered, but only if they can be proven appropriate for the population.

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. Rental payments must be made to the landlord on behalf of the tenant in scattered-site or project-based housing. The duration of rental assistance is at the discretion of the county BHA but should take into consideration the funding end date. The county BHA should work to identify long-term housing sustainability solutions for the tenant, such as family reunification (including family financial housing supports such as reimbursing room rental for a family member), income supports (including public benefit or employment income), or other long-term rental or housing assistance. The settings must provide supportive services that address the housing stability needs of participants. BHBH programs are low barrier and use harm reduction strategies and Housing First principles, unless the most appropriate available option is a sober living/recovery residence that supports the individual client's needs. Bridge housing must meet the [ESG Minimum Habitability Standards](#) and, when possible and as applicable, should also meet [CoC HQS](#).

As part of housing navigation, BHBH Program funds may also be used for a Landlord Outreach and Mitigation Fund to support engagement of property owners, which may include offering property owners supports and incentives. This could include a mitigation fund to reimburse owners in the event that a BHBH Program participant damages a unit or to cover other unforeseen costs related to housing someone through the BHBH Program.

To receive BHBH Program rental assistance funds, the county BHA must submit for DHCS review and approval related policies and procedures that address the following:

- The calculation of rental assistance, which must be indicated and must use either Fair Market Rents or a rent reasonableness methodology to calculate allowable rental rates. Counties may offer either shallow subsidies up to a specific dollar amount or a formula in which the individual pays a portion of the rent based on income.
- Clear eligibility requirements for individuals and units for short-term and/or mid-term rental assistance. The requirements for both short- and mid-term assistance may be the same, or the county BHA may have fewer requirements for short-term assistance than for mid-term.
- Fraud prevention, along with regular audits and clear documentation of all payments.
- Requirements for payments to be made directly to property owners or managers.
- Requirements to provide supportive services and resources to individuals who are receiving rental assistance, to remove barriers and help them obtain longer-term rental assistance or other affordable housing.
- Requirements for participants to have access to onsite supportive services at the facility or through home visits.

Auxiliary Funding in Assisted Living Settings. This funding supports the successful placement of people who have licensed care needs. The length of the funding may be determined by the BHA and may be necessary only until the client has

stabilized and can be served in a lower level of care. Assisted living settings are licensed by the California Department of Social Services and include Adult Residential Facilities and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly, among others. There is not a restriction on the use of interim housing options; however, if a facility is required to have a license, it must have a current/valid license as a prerequisite to use BHBH funds.

Housing Navigation Services. Counties are required to provide housing navigation services to all BHBH Program participants. (See [Attachment B](#) for the definition of “housing navigation.”) Housing navigation services can be used to support people in identifying housing options, resources, and other services. In all of these housing types, a key to the success of the BHBH Program is housing navigation to assist individuals in moving away from homelessness to appropriate, affordable permanent housing and supports. Housing navigation includes assistance identifying and applying for appropriate housing subsidies, affordable housing programs, Participant Assistance Funds, Rental Assistance, and housing through either the BHBH Program or other funding sources. Housing navigation services may be offered either as part of the services at a specific BHBH Program, as a standalone service for clients of multiple BHBH sites, or by a housing navigation team that serves multiple housing programs. (Please note, housing navigation costs can be reimbursed for BHBH clients only.) For purposes of the BHBH Program, Participant Assistance Funds and Landlord Outreach and Mitigation Funds are available through the housing navigation supports.

Outreach and Engagement. Outreach and engagement should not be seen as standalone services in the BHBH Program. Instead, outreach and progressive engagement to offer and encourage an individual or family to enter BHBH may be carried out by staff of the BHBH site or services. BHBH Program funding should be the funding of last resort for the provision of these services. Other funding sources, such as Medi-Cal, must be used first. BHBH Program funding cannot supplant existing funding.

The following outreach and engagement activities are allowable through the BHBH Program:

- Outreach to individuals experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, including but not limited to street outreach, with a focus on engagement, building rapport, harm reduction, and linkage to behavioral health care and the BHBH Program, including but not limited to individuals not currently engaged in behavioral health services.
- Collaboration with institutions (e.g., jails, prisons, psychiatric hospitals, treatment centers) to enhance discharge planning, with a focus on preventing homelessness.

Track 2: Bridge Housing Start-Up Infrastructure (Maximum of \$75,000/Bed)

BHBH Program funding can be used for start-up costs and to make facilities more available to individuals with serious behavioral health conditions. Bridge housing start-up infrastructure funding is limited to \$75,000 per bed. All bridge housing start-up infrastructure activities must be complete and beds made available within 1 year of contract/contract modification execution.

BHBH Program funds are not intended to fully support the construction of new bridge housing facilities. County BHAs may use BHBH Program funds in conjunction with other funds as allowable. BHBH programs should use best practices, including addressing

people's needs for privacy, pets, possessions, parking, and the specialized accommodations that individuals with serious behavioral health conditions may need. Applicants that need less than \$25,000 for minor renovations or applications may request that funding as a Track 1 direct cost (see page 23), and do not need to submit a Track 2 application.

County BHAs are encouraged to explore innovative models using existing real estate that can be leased or quickly converted to new BHBH Program settings, including, but not limited to the following options:

- Tiny homes
- Master-leased units or buildings
- Office, school, or warehouse conversions (Warehouse conversion should be designed to support privacy, as dormitory-style housing is not recommended for the BHBH Program.)
- Hotels and motels
- Churches and other community settings
- Duplexes or large single-family homes
- Modular buildings
- Decommissioned skilled nursing facilities, assisted living, hospital conversions, etc.
- Scattered-site individual units

Examples of allowable start-up infrastructure costs include the purchase and placement of tiny homes and related utility hookups and supportive facilities; costs related to facility renovations, including allowable adaptive reuse; and bridge housing, so long as the county BHA anticipates the start-up will be completed and bridge housing made available within 1 year of contract/contract modification execution. All of these allowable expenditures must fit within the \$75,000-per-bed limit.

Expenditures that include contributing to the purchase of property will require "site control" and shall mean deeded ownership, an executed purchase and sale agreement, or other binding agreement to the satisfaction of AHP. This documentation must be submitted according to the requirements outlined in the contract. All contributions to purchases require preapproval by DHCS.

Track 2 funding applications are for specific county BHBH Program projects and require all of the information that is required in the BHBH Program Plan for start-up infrastructure funding. If proposing the purchase of a facility or rehabilitation/renovation project, counties must provide the following:

1. A schedule that shows the project can be completed within the allowable time frame.
2. A budget in alignment with the usual, reasonable, and customary costs for similar projects. (Each county BHA shall be solely responsible for any costs to complete the proposed bridge housing start-up infrastructure in excess of the award amount. Neither DHCS nor AHP will be responsible for any cost overruns.)

After a county has been notified of award, the county BHA will provide assurances that they and their subcontractors will:

1. Establish construction contracts with licensed, insured, and bondable contractor(s) based on a permitted set of construction plans with a licensed, insured, and bondable general contractor for an amount consistent with the costs in the approved project budget.

2. Obtain all required building, local use, and fire clearance or other required building permits or approvals.
3. Maintain and provide certificates of insurance for required insurance, including general liability insurance and builder's risk insurance, as described in the contract.
4. Certify that they, and their contractors, shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. These include, but may not be limited to:
 - a. Adherence to the accessibility requirements set forth in California Building Code Chapter 11A and Chapter 11B and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II.
 - b. Prevailing wage requirements for construction projects in the State of California (Lab. Code, Sec. 1720 et seq.). The county BHA shall provide a certification of compliance with California's prevailing wage law, as well as all applicable federal prevailing wage law. The certification shall (a) verify that prevailing wages have been or will be paid, (b) verify that labor records will be maintained and made available to any enforcement agency upon request, and (c) be signed by the general contractor(s) and the county BHA.
 - c. Compliance with [California Environmental Quality Act](#) requirements.
 - d. If a proposed project would result in the displacement of any current residents, the county BHA shall have a relocation plan completed in partnership with the displaced individual.

Attachment D: Application Questions

Note: Funding applicants must complete the BHBH Program application and submit it online through the SurveyMonkey Apply portal. This attachment lists the application questions, but they may appear in a different format in the portal. This attachment is for reference only.

Track 1: BHBH Program Operations Projects

A. Applicant Organization Information

- County
- Agency name
- Name, email address, and phone number of person submitting application
- Program lead name

B. Application Summary (up to 300 words)

Provide an executive summary (for public use) describing your county's planned use of BHBH Program strategic enhancement funding, including the number of beds to be created, people to be served, and key partners.

C. Experience

Describe accomplishments achieved through BHBH Program Round 1 funding to date.

1. Start-up activities and milestones (bulleted list) (400 words maximum)
2. Number of bed-nights that have been provided
 - a. Rental assistance
 - b. Shelter
 - c. Interim housing
 - d. Auxiliary funding in assisted living
3. Number of unduplicated people served
4. Start-up infrastructure project status (250 words maximum)

D. Proposed Strategic Enhancements: Track 1

1. Describe the goals and objectives for the strategic enhancements funding. (250 words maximum)
2. Which operations categories are you applying for? Describe proposed activities and service goals for each. [Dropdown menu] (250 words maximum per category)
3. What is the total number of bed-nights proposed as described in the Budget and Service Detail spreadsheet?
4. Are you expanding an existing BHBH Program Round 1 project, creating a new project, or both? Please describe. (250 words maximum)
5. Provide a detailed timeline with significant milestones for the bridge housing start-up and implementation of the BHBH Program. (Note: a table will be provided in the application.)
6. Describe your county's proposed outreach activities. For example, are you developing an outreach plan, creating outreach materials, conducting presentations, or undertaking other marketing efforts? Are you conducting direct participant outreach? (400 words maximum)

7. Identify how your county intends to deliver housing navigation services to *all* its BHBH Program participants. For example, how will housing navigation services be delivered? How will your county ensure that all program participants receive housing navigation? (400 words maximum)

E. BHBH Program Requirements

1. Describe how the county's BHBH program is being informed by people with lived experience of homelessness and SMI and/or SUD, specifying the roles these individuals will play in the development, implementation, and ongoing oversight of your county's BHBH program, as well as the frequency and method of engagement. How did people with lived experience inform this Round 3: Strategic Enhancements proposal? (200 words maximum)
2. County BHBH programs 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. Describe what you are doing to meet the Housing First principles across your county's BHBH program. (200 words maximum)
3. County BHBH programs must prioritize and ensure that eligible CARE Program participants receive BHBH Program services. What steps are you taking to ensure that CARE Program participants receive services under the BHBH Program? (200 words maximum)
4. As noted previously, County BHBH programs must meet the [Emergency Solutions Grants \(ESG\) Minimum Habitability Standards](#) and, when possible and as applicable, should also meet [CoC Housing Quality Standards](#). Describe how you will ensure that all BHBH settings are meeting these standards. (200 words maximum)

F. Additional Questions

1. Would you consider further expansion of BHBH in your community if DHCS were to make additional funds available for that purpose? [Yes/ No]
2. If yes, approximately how much additional funding would your county need to successfully complete that expansion?
3. Do you anticipate needing additional funds to serve the CARE Program population? [Yes/ No]
4. If yes, explain why, including estimating the amount of additional funds you would need.

G. Budget

Using the instructions in [Attachment E](#), provide a detailed BHBH Program budget and a narrative budget justification. The budget must be submitted using the BHBH Program Excel budget template, available [online](#). The template includes information on the number of people who will be served. Once you have completed the budget template and the narrative budget justification, upload them with the application.

Bonus Points

In addition to the minimum criteria, the following items will be considered:

- Are you proposing to serve any of the following populations? If so, provide a statement of need for each population you are prioritizing and cite the references or data used to determine this need. (250 words maximum) Describe how the services will

be specifically tailored to meet the needs of each of the proposed populations. (250 words maximum)

- Individuals at risk of being in or exiting the criminal justice system.
 - Children and youth involved with either the juvenile justice system or the child welfare system.
 - Individuals with a primary diagnosis of SUD.
- Five counties did not receive BHBH Program Round 1 funding: Alpine, Mariposa, Mono, Plumas, and Sierra. Do you intend to provide services to people from one or more of these counties? If yes, outline how you are committing to serving the BHBH population of one or more of those counties, including how you will provide the services.
 - Are you planning to collaborate with a Federally Recognized Tribe or a Tribal entity? (California “Tribal entities” are defined as a federally recognized Indian Tribe, Tribal organization, or Urban Indian organization, or a health care program operated by an Indian Tribe, Tribal organization, or Urban Indian organization, as defined in Section 1603 of Title 25 of the United States Code and further defined in Section 5304.) If so, describe that collaboration, and include a Resolution.
 - *For Track 2: Start-Up Infrastructure applications:* The [Round 1: County BHAs RFA](#) (page 7) stated that grantees that made beds available within 90 to 180 days of contract execution would have a competitive advantage in future rounds of BHBH Program funding. Given that, how many beds will you have made available as of April 10, 2024?

Track 2: Start-Up Infrastructure Projects

Are you applying for start-up infrastructure funding as well? [Yes/No] (If yes, Track 2 application questions will appear.)

Proposed Start-Up Infrastructure Project(s) Plan

1. Briefly describe each proposed site, the proposed start-up infrastructure necessary, and any work completed to date.
2. When will these beds be made available?
3. Provide a BHBH Program Plan Section 3: County BHBH Program Start-Up Infrastructure Round 3 Supplement, including all project details.
4. If your operations application is selected for funding, but your start-up infrastructure application is not selected for funding, how would your county adapt its plans?

Certification

I certify that the information, statements, and attachments included in this application are, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true and correct.

Attachment E: Budget Instructions

Overview

Applicants must use the approved Excel budget template and upload the budget into the SurveyMonkey Apply form. The budget template also includes details for services to be provided through Round 3.

Track 1 and Track 2 use the same budget template. Applicants applying for Track 1 only must leave the Track 2 budget details and the Track 1 and 2 budget combined tabs of the Excel template blank. Track 2 Start-up Infrastructure applicants must complete both the Track 1 budget and service details and the Track 2 Start-up Infrastructure tab and Track 1 and 2 Combined Summary tab.

Any application submitted using an alternative budget template will be considered insufficient, and the applicant will be asked to resubmit the application with a revised budget, using the proper template. Track 2 applicants may submit budget details in addition to the BHBH Program template.

The Round 3 funding is for strategic enhancements to the BHBH Program, and the budget and service details should reflect only Round 3 funding and services. Do not include the Round 1 budget or service details in this budget. If your county behavioral health agency's (BHA's) program is awarded, these service details and funds will be in addition to those included in the Round 1 application, contract, and BHBH Program Plan.

Please submit all questions related to the budget or budget instructions [here](#).

Track 1: BHBH Program Operations

The budget instructions resource has been developed to support all applicants in their successful application process. The Track 1 BHBH Program Operations Budget uses the same spreadsheet tabs as the BHBH Program Plan, and the application has been separated into several eligible use categories based on scope similarities. These eligible use categories (listed below) will allow for a more seamless application and review process.

Applicants **must** fill out the tabs for each eligible use category for which they plan to request BHBH Program funds. The proposal program design and budget should align. A county BHA may have several activities or projects in a particular eligible use category. Please provide the totals in the budget and explain how the funds will be used in the accompanying narrative.

The submitted budget should include only funding requested for the BHBH Program, not other funding sources or programs for which the BHBH Program is serving as match. If an applicant wishes to include information on alternative funding sources, they may include such information in the comments section for that particular eligible use category.

All applicants must submit a budget narrative as a supplement to the budget spreadsheet. The budget narrative will discuss the funding plan for each of the costs in each budget section on the spreadsheet. Several specific words and phrases used throughout the budget template are defined below. For additional definitions, please see [Attachment B](#).

Term	Definition
Indirect Costs	Indirect costs consist of general management costs necessary for the general operation of the agency, such as accounting, budgeting, payroll preparation, personnel services, purchasing, legal fees, and centralized data processing.
Other Direct Costs	Direct costs are expenses incurred for activities linked directly to a specific project. Examples of direct costs may include printing, food, travel, stipends for advisors with lived experience, maintenance, or minor equipment. Expenses must be in compliance with the state reimbursement requirements, as applicable.
Personnel	The personnel section is the description of the individuals who will be supporting the various BHBH programs, as described in the application. Personnel includes space for each position, number of full-time equivalents (FTEs), salaries, and calculation of taxes and benefits.
Subcontractors	Applicants may choose to contract with providers or to partner with organizations for specific areas of expertise. Include each specific known subcontractor as its own row. For those that are not yet known, include the type of contractor (e.g., bridge housing provider).

Eligible Use Categories (see [Attachment C](#)):

- County BHA BHBH Program Implementation
- Bridge Housing—Outreach and Engagement
- Bridge Housing—Shelter/Interim Housing
- Bridge Housing—Rental Assistance
- Bridge Housing—Auxiliary Funding in Assisted Living Settings
- Bridge Housing – Housing Navigation

Indirect costs (up to 10 percent of modified direct costs) of each category can be found on each tab of the Excel budget template.

The following instructions relate to the specific tabs in the budget.

Track 1: Budget Overview Tab

The overview section is meant to summarize the applicant’s total BHBH Program funding. It includes the totals from each of the other tabs. The totals will auto-populate from their respective sections, but applicants should double-check them for accuracy.

Additionally, applicants must provide the total anticipated number of bed-nights for Round 3: Strategic Enhancements funding. The total should include an estimate for the entire program period. This will be used to calculate the average cost, which will be reviewed for reasonableness.

Program Detail Tabs

For each BHBH Program element (e.g., rental assistance) proposed, complete a detail tab. The detail tab totals will auto-populate the overview page tab. The following instructions refer to specific lines within the budget template.

Personnel

In each BHBH Program detail tab, list the county staff positions that will be involved in that service element and their FTE. If there are multiple staff members with the same title, include them on one row. List the position title, followed by the number in parentheses of staff members who have that title (e.g., “Staff Services Analyst (5)”), and provide the cost information for each fiscal year. If a staff member (e.g., the program director or lead, or a housing navigator) works on more than one service element, divide the FTE across the relevant service elements. Identify the total salaries, calculate benefits, and provide the total cost for personnel for each fiscal year. Provide a description of each position and contributions to the program design as a part of the budget narrative.

Stipends or salaries for the participation of individuals with lived experience of homelessness and SMI and/or SUD in planning and implementation efforts are allowable expenses.

Note that individual staff members/positions may work on multiple areas of a BHBH Program (e.g., outreach and shelter/interim housing) and therefore will appear on more than one tab.

Subcontractors

The subcontractor section should be broken down by contracted agency/organization. Each agency/organization or bridge housing site proposed for Round 3: Strategic Enhancements funding should have its own row. In the case of subcontractors, the budget narrative should briefly describe the subcontractor role and funding/expenses.

Applicants that do not yet know which specific organizations will be subcontractors should include a brief statement of the procurement process and anticipated amount to be awarded each fiscal year in the budget. Include a description of subcontractors being sought and the timeline in the budget narrative.

Other Direct Costs

Other direct costs that are necessary for the operations of bridge housing and related support services are allowable costs. Examples may include utilities, food, harm reduction supplies, program materials and supplies, minor equipment, travel, communications, training, staff recruitment, building maintenance, janitorial fees, household and office supplies, replacement furniture, transportation, and stipends for advisory committee participants or other individuals with lived experience providing expertise. Expenses must be in compliance with the state reimbursement requirements, as applicable.

Track 1: BHBH Program Operations applicants that are not applying for Track 2 may request up to \$25,000 for minor renovations of BHBH Program settings as a direct cost. It is not necessary to apply for Track 2 for minor renovations or initial furniture and appliances of less than \$25,000.

Indirect Costs

Each Track 1 tab includes a row for the indirect costs related to that program element. Indirect costs are limited to a maximum of 10 percent of modified direct costs. Modified direct costs may include all direct costs except rental assistance funds, program assistance funds, or Landlord Outreach and Mitigation Funds.

Number Served

On each tab related to BHBH Program bridge housing services, specialized questions address the total number of individuals served, bed-nights available, and/or encounters. These numbers must align with the program description in the proposal and will be used to inform the contract deliverable schedule. Only include those services being provided through BHBH Program Round 3; do not include service numbers from Round 1.

Participant Assistance Funds (BH - Housing Navigation Tab)

Participant Assistance Funds are used to remove barriers and support people with behavioral health conditions who are also experiencing homelessness in meeting their immediate housing needs (e.g., assistance getting IDs and other vital documents, transportation, food, and hygiene products); these are allowable costs. Funds may also be used to support individuals in completing housing applications or for costs associated with credit reports, security deposits, utility hookups, and moderate furnishings. County BHAs must have clear policies, procedures, and protocols for managing Participant Assistance Funds prior to drawing down these funds.

Rental Assistance (BH - Rental Assistance Tab)

Rental assistance payments for individuals to live in bridge housing are allowable costs. See [Attachment C](#) for program requirements. Applicants should add the total amount of funding for each sub-activity of this eligible use. In addition to program administration, the Rental Assistance program tab may include the costs of onsite (home-based) supportive services provided. Please note that supportive services for individuals receiving rental assistance services must not supplant existing funding sources, and that BHBH Program funds are meant to be the funding source of last resort. Prior to receiving funds for rental assistance, the county BHA must submit complete policies and procedures to AHP for the use of these funds.

Auxiliary Services for Assisted Living (BH - Aux in Assisted Living Tab)

Auxiliary funding in assisted living settings is an allowable cost. These supports help ensure an assisted living board-and-care setting is able to accept and/or continue to serve individuals with serious behavioral health conditions. Provide a description of the estimated number served and cost in the budget narrative.

Landlord Outreach and Mitigation Funds (BH - Housing Navigation Tab)

County BHAs may develop an active outreach and recruitment program to encourage property owners to consider renting to BHBH Program participants. Landlord/owner outreach may include the development of presentations, outreach materials, campaigns, incentives, and support to help properties meet the requirements of subsidizing agencies. Additionally, county BHAs may establish a mitigation fund to offset any damages caused by a BHBH Program participant and/or for use if an eviction should become necessary. Include the total amount of funding designated for owner incentive programs and owner loss mitigation programs combined, and the total for each in its respective row. Prior to receiving Landlord Outreach and Mitigation Funds, the county BHA must submit complete policies and procedures to AHP for the use of these funds.

Track 2: Bridge Housing Start-Up Infrastructure

Track 2 applicants must complete the Track 1 budget tabs and two additional tabs: Track 2 Start-up Infrastructure and Tracks 1 and 2 Combined Overview. Include the Track 2 budget narrative in the same document as the Track 1 budget narrative. Track 2 applicants may submit additional budgetary and background information on specific projects to support the application, but it is not required.

Note that if an applicant needs less than \$25,000 for minor renovations or appliances, this may be requested as a Track 1 direct cost (see page 23, above) and the applicant will not need to submit a Track 2 application.

Track 2: Start-Up Infrastructure Tab

Applicants should list each individual BHBH Program site for start-up infrastructure projects and provide estimated costs for the following categories:

- Predevelopment planning, permits, and fees
- Acquisition/contribution to purchase
- Renovations/installations
- Initial furnishings, equipment, and appliances
- Other project costs (e.g., relocation costs)
- Administrative costs and fees (maximum of 10 percent)

This tab requires information on total project cost in addition to the Track 2 requested funding. If the start-up infrastructure project is funded entirely through the BHBH Program, these numbers will be the same. If the BHBH Program is contributing to a larger effort, both the total cost of the project and the BHBH Program portion of the cost must be provided. Applicants should be sure to complete the table at the end regarding additional funding sources. Additionally, for each project, the applicant must include an estimated number of beds and costs per bed for that project.

The budget narrative must provide sufficient detail to clearly demonstrate that the start-up infrastructure project is viable; that it will comply with federal, state, and local laws; and that it will be operational within 1 year of contract/contract modification execution. Each county BHA shall be solely responsible for any costs to complete the proposed bridge housing start-up infrastructure in excess of the award amount. Neither DHCS nor AHP will be responsible for any cost overruns.

Tracks 1 and 2 Combined Overview Tab

Track 2 applicants must also complete the Tracks 1 and 2 Combined Overview tab, providing summary information and totals for the requested funding.