



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 23-1878, **Version:** 1

---

Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) recommending the Board:

- 1) Accept the grant award to HHS from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) in the amount of \$3,339,411, for the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program for a retroactive term beginning June 23, 2023, through June 30, 2027; and
- 2) Delegate authority to the HHS Director, or the HHS Chief Assistant Director, to execute the BHBH Funding-In Agreement 8168 with Advocates for Human Potential (AHP), the entity administering the funding, and any amendments that do not increase Net County Cost, contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management, and subsequent administrative documents or required fiscal or programmatic reports.

**FUNDING:** 100% State of California funding through the Department of Health Care Services for the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program. No match requirement.

**DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:**

Bridge Housing is specifically defined as a temporary housing program for individuals or families who have accepted and are enrolled in a permanent housing program but have not yet moved into a permanent unit. Bridge Housing is intended to assist homeless individuals and families by providing housing and case management with the goal of returning the individuals to the most independent living situation possible.

DHCS developed the BHBH Program to utilize \$1.5 billion in funding to county behavioral health agencies and Tribal entities to operate bridge housing 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 BHBH Program, which was signed into law in September 2022 under Assembly Bill 179 (Chapter 249, Statutes of 2022), provides funding through June 30, 2027, for operational and supportive services, not covered under other funding sources, to each Behavioral Health Agency (BHA) through a noncompetitive predetermined distribution.

The BHBH Program builds on the California Health and Human Services Agency's Guiding Principles and Strategic Priorities and enables DHCS through its county and tribal partners to meaningfully contribute to the implementation of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness's Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California. The BHBH Program will be implemented in alignment with the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Program, which prioritizes BHBH Program resources for CARE participants.

On February 24, 2023, DHCS released the BHBH Program Request for Applications for Round 1 to county BHAs. HHS's Behavioral Health Division applied by the April 28, 2023, deadline and was awarded \$3,339,411 in funding on June 23, 2023. On October 13, 2023, HHS received the Funding-In Agreement 8168 from AHP, the Administrative Entity for the BHBH Program, and immediately began processing it for Board review and acceptance.

Seventy-five percent of BHBH Program funding must be used for the costs of operating bridge housing, including shelter and interim housing, rental assistance, auxiliary funding for assisted living settings and housing navigation. Up to twenty-five percent may be used for program implementation, outreach and engagement, and/or bridge housing infrastructure start-up costs.

Within the first year of the funding, HHSA must develop and submit a BHBH Plan (Plan) to AHP for approval. In addition to plan development, implementation, and start-up costs, the plan will address immediate and sustainable housing needs of people experiencing homelessness by aiding clients with SMI and/or SUD, in coordination with their behavioral health treatment, to secure safe and stable housing. Various methods of aid will be utilized including the distribution of motel vouchers to provide safe and temporary housing until more stable housing can be found, the provision of rental assistance funding to secure a rental at fair-market rent, and auxiliary funding as a patch for persons who need board and care or other supervised living arrangements.

Many of the County's current homeless and housing services are operated by non-profit organizations or other HHSA programs. BHBH Program funding will expand HHSA's services to an increased number of clients who have not been able to be served with other limited resources.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Should the Board decline to approve this recommendation, HHSA will not receive funding for the BHBH Program and will be limited in the housing navigation services and assistance it can provide to its Behavioral Health clients in need.

**PRIOR BOARD ACTION:**

N/A

**OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

Approved by County Counsel and Risk Management.

**CAO RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve as recommended.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no Net County Cost associated with this Agenda item. Sufficient appropriations were included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget and will be included in future budgets for the term of the Agreement.

**CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

N/A

**STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:**

Healthy Communities

**CONTACT**

Olivia Byron-Cooper, MPH, Director, Health and Human Services Agency