



# **California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program**

## **Tribal Entities Request for Applications (RFA)**

Please visit the [Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program website](#) for links to this RFA and attachments, as well as information about all funding rounds, technical assistance, and additional resources.

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## I. Overview

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Eligible Entities*            | <p>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, a tribal organization, or Urban Indian organization, as defined in <a href="#">Section 1603</a> of Title 25 of the United States Code and further defined in <a href="#">Section 5304</a>.</p> <p>If you are unsure whether your organization is eligible for this round of funding, please send a written explanation to the BHBH Program <a href="#">Help Desk</a> of your understanding as to how you may meet the eligibility criteria so that we can assist you.</p> |
| Funding Opportunity and Focus | <p>This round of BHBH Program funding will make available up to \$50,000,000 total to California Tribal entities for use in the planning and implementation of bridge housing services for individuals in Tribal communities experiencing homelessness who have serious behavioral health conditions (serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder).</p>   |
| Tracks                        | <p>Applications may be submitted for Track 1: Planning Grants or Track 2: Implementation Grants. Tribal entities seeking funding for both planning and implementation should complete a Track 2 application. After reviewing this RFA, see Attachment A for Track 1: Planning Grants and Attachment B for Track 2: Implementation Grants.</p>  |
| Application Period            | <p>Applications will be accepted until September 15, 2023, 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time (PT).</p>  |
| Application Form              | <p>The application will be accessible starting on July 6, 2023, on <a href="#">SurveyMonkey Apply</a>.</p>   |

\*The specifications for eligible entities have been updated for clarity.

## II. Introduction and Background

Through this round of BHBH Program funding, DHCS is making available \$50 million exclusively to California Tribal entities to operate bridge housing settings to address the immediate housing needs of people experiencing homelessness who have serious behavioral health conditions, including serious mental illness (SMI) and/or substance use disorder (SUD). The BHBH Program was signed into law in September 2022 under [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 179](#) (Ting, Chapter 249, Statutes of 2022).

Capital funding has recently been made available through several other state programs including the Homekey Tribal Program; the Tribal Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program (Tribal HHAP); the Community Care Expansion (CCE) Program; and the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP). In contrast, BHBH Program

funding is primarily intended to support the operational costs of bridge housing that is provided in conjunction with supportive mental health and SUD services. A Tribal entity can implement bridge housing in a variety of settings that may be either directly leased/owned by the Tribal entity or a partnership in which the Tribal entity acts as the lead. All BHBH programs must meet BHBH Program requirements described in this RFA and attachments within the funding timeline.

The primary focus of the BHBH Program is to help people experiencing homelessness who have either SMI or SUD that prevents them from accessing help and moving out of homelessness. Applicants will be expected to clearly demonstrate how they will reach their populations that are most in need of the BHBH Program.

BHBH Program funding is being made available through three RFAs, of which this is the second. The first round of funding, released in winter 2022-23, was open to county behavioral health agencies (BHAs). The third funding round, which will provide \$500 million in competitive funding to eligible Tribal entities and county BHAs, will be released in winter 2023-24. Tribal entities that are awarded a grant through this current, Tribal entity-only second round will also be eligible to apply for funding in the third round.

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 the administrative entity supporting the implementation of the BHBH Program. AHP has engaged additional consultants with experience specific to serving the Native American and Tribal communities in California to support BHBH Program implementation and will provide general grant training and technical assistance (TTA) during the application process and throughout the life of the project.

### III. Eligible Tribal Entities

This RFA is making available up to \$50 million in funding exclusively to Tribal entities. 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, a 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](#). (See also [Attachment C](#): Definitions.)

**Only Tribal entities within the state of California are eligible to apply for this round of BHBH Program funding.** Any entity that meets the definition of “Tribal entity,” above, whether rural or urban, is invited to apply. Applicants are encouraged to form partnerships with other organizations if appropriate, as long as the primary applicant meets the eligibility criteria.

**Organizations that are unsure whether they are eligible as a Tribal entity for purposes of this round of funding should submit a written explanation to the BHBH Program [Help Desk](#) identifying their understanding of how they meet the eligibility criteria, so that assistance can be provided.**

Partnerships and collaboration are encouraged; however, each application must have one clear lead that will submit the application and sign the contract. A letter of intent or memorandum of understanding (MOU) is not required for subcontractors or other key partners during the application process.

## IV. Funding Opportunities

In this funding round, Tribal entities may apply for either Track 1, a Planning Grant of \$150,000, or Track 2, an Implementation Grant of any amount up to \$5 million. Those Tribal entities that would like to request funding for both planning and implementation activities should only apply for an Implementation Grant, whose funds may also encompass planning activities. Entities receiving an award for a Planning Grant should note that there is no guarantee of future BHBH Program funding rounds for implementation activities. If qualifying applications do not expend the funding available in this Tribal funding opportunity, the remaining funds may be redistributed within the BHBH Program.

### Track 1: Planning Grant

The Planning Grant is intended to facilitate engagement and community conversations about locally defined Tribal and/or Urban Indian housing resources, practices, and opportunities to meet the immediate housing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and serious behavioral health conditions, from the Indigenous worldview. Community-defined best practices can be explored by grantees conducting planning activities to best address the needs of members of their population who are experiencing homelessness and have serious behavioral health conditions including SMI and/or SUD. Planning grants may not be used for direct services. See [Attachment A](#) for additional details. Planning grants will be awarded in amounts of \$150,000. Planning activities may include relationship building, community engagement, and/or community assessments; identifying potential housing sites; action planning to expand access to housing and behavioral health care for individuals and families; building partnerships with Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs) and others; and subcontracting with consultants with expertise in areas related to bridge housing, homelessness, and/or behavioral health. Tribal entities looking for an opportunity to identify how they can best address their bridge housing needs are encouraged to apply.

### Track 2: Implementation Grant

As outlined in [Attachment B](#), this option is intended to support grantees to launch and operate a BHBH program to address the immediate housing needs of individuals in their communities experiencing homelessness and serious behavioral health conditions including SMI and/or SUD. Applicants must identify how they are in alignment with BHBH Program requirements, including the identified allowable uses, timelines, and services. Note that activities that are allowable under the Planning Grant are also allowable under the Implementation Grant. Applicants who are interested in both a Planning Grant and an Implementation Grant should only apply under Track 2: Implementation Grant. Applicants may request up to \$5 million in funding. Larger projects including BHBH start-up infrastructure are eligible; however, eligible entities that have small projects that focus on addressing the immediate housing needs of a few individuals are also encouraged to apply.

## V. Program Description

The BHBH Program builds on the California Health and Human Services Agency’s (CalHHS’s) [Guiding Principles & Strategic Priorities](#) and enables DHCS and grantees to meaningfully contribute to the implementation of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness’s [Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California](#). This RFA has been customized to reflect the needs and best practices of Tribal entities, as voiced by Tribal peoples, and has been informed by existing research and through stakeholder engagement.

The following priorities drive the implementation of the BHBH Program:

- There is a critical need for housing solutions within Tribal communities, and the focus is on access to immediate bridge housing.
- Collaboration will complement ongoing state, county, and Tribal efforts to address homelessness.
- BHBH Program settings will provide supportive behavioral health services and housing navigation to assist people who have serious behavioral health conditions and are experiencing homelessness.

For purposes of the BHBH Program, “bridge housing” is defined as short- and mid-term residential options and serves as a bridge to longer-term housing (see [Attachment C](#)). Bridge housing may include emergency shelter, interim housing, and short- or medium-term rental assistance, as well as housing navigation and supportive services to remove barriers and address longer-term housing needs. 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 programs must include voluntary supportive services and housing navigation.

## VI. Application Process

### A. Application Process

The application and attachments, along with instructions for submitting the completed application, can be found on the [BHBH Program website](#). Applications will be accepted through an application portal, beginning July 6, 2023. Applications may not be hand delivered or sent by email or mail. The deadline for all applications is September 15, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. PT. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

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).

| Event                      | Date   |
|----------------------------|--|
| Tribal entity RFA released | June 19, 2023  |
| Informational webinar      | July 10, 2023, 11:00 a.m. PT. <a href="#">Register online.</a> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Applications due                           | September 15, 2023, 4:00 p.m. PT                              |
| Tribal entity conditional awards announced | Fall 2023   |
| Contracts executed                         | Within 60 days of Tribal entity's receipt of initial contract |

## B. Application Instructions

This round of BHBH Program funding is intended to support Tribal entities in planning or implementation efforts that address the most appropriate and immediate bridge housing strategies for their communities while adhering to best practices and using funds as allowable.

**The BHBH Program application uses a fillable form on an online application portal hosted by [SurveyMonkey Apply](#).** Before beginning the application, please review this RFA and the additional information and application questions in [Attachment A](#) (Track 1: Planning Grant) or [Attachment B](#) (Track 2: Implementation Grant). To complete the required budget, please follow the budget instructions accompanying the application questions. Use the Excel template available on the [BHBH Program website](#) and upload the budget and budget narrative to the application portal.

You will be able to upload documents, including the required organizational chart, budget, budget narrative, and signed attestation, as well as any other necessary supporting documentation, to SurveyMonkey Apply. An email confirming receipt of the complete application will be sent within 24 hours of submission.

## C. Additional Specifications

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 an application 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 stated 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.

## D. Information Sessions

An informational webinar on July 10, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. PT will provide details about both the BHBH Program and this RFA and application process. Applicants for both planning and implementation grants are strongly encouraged to attend. [Registration](#) is required. The webinar will be recorded and posted on the [BHBH Program website](#).

In addition, during the RFA period, AHP will conduct a BHBH Program 101 webinar and provide two rounds of office hours open to all prospective applicants. Applicants may also request a consultation. More information will be available on the [BHBH Program website](#).

## E. Questions

To submit a question related to the RFA or the application instructions, or to submit a technical question related to the online application portal, please request a consultation through the [Help Desk](#).

## F. 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](mailto:BHBHinfo@ahpnet.com) or call (323) 545-6202.

## G. Proposal Review Criteria

Applicants must respond to all questions, address the minimum program requirements, and describe their proposed plan and budget in detail. Applications that do not identify how the BHBH Program minimum requirements will be met may not be considered for funding. See Attachments A and B for the scoring criteria for each track.

The following overarching criteria will be used to evaluate applications:

- Description of community and need for assistance.
- Ability and experience in addressing housing, homelessness, and serious behavioral health conditions in tribal communities.
- Projects meet the purpose of BHBH Program and program requirements for the track.
- Qualifying experience and capacity to undertake the BHBH Program and enact the designated planning and implementation activities.
- Management capacity and cost reasonableness of budget.

Proposal ranking and selection will consider a number of relevant factors, with the goal of ensuring equitable opportunity for applicants of all population sizes, experience, and needs. In addition, partial funding may be awarded if components of the application are deemed unallowable or do not support the BHBH Program objectives, or if the applicant does not provide sufficient follow-up information. Applicants for Implementation Grants that do not meet the



minimum requirements may be considered for a Planning Grant instead, at the discretion of DHCS.

## H. Award Process

Successful applicants will be notified by email of award decisions. AHP will schedule meetings with conditional awardees to discuss the contracting process, including development of the statement of work (SOW) and payment schedule.

## I. Appeals

Applicants submitting a response to this RFA may not protest or appeal the award. All award decisions are final. Applicants who do not receive funding in this round are welcome to apply in the third round of BHBH Program funding (see [Introduction](#)).

## J. Accessibility and Nondiscrimination

All BHBH Program-funded projects shall adhere to the accessibility requirements set forth in California Building Code Chapters 11A and 11B and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title II. In addition, developments shall adhere to either the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS, 24 CFR Part 8) or HUD's modified version of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (Alternative 2010 ADAS, HUD-2014-0042-0001, 79 FR 29671 [5/27/14], commonly referred to as "the Alternative Standards" or "HUD Deeming Memo"). Accessible units shall, to the maximum extent feasible and subject to reasonable health and safety requirements, be distributed throughout the project and be available in a sufficient range of sizes and amenities consistent with 24 CFR Part 8.26.

Grantees shall adopt a written nondiscrimination policy requiring that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, age, medical condition, genetic information, citizenship, primary language, immigration status (except where explicitly prohibited by federal law), justice system involvement (except where explicitly required by law), or arbitrary characteristics, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any project or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available pursuant to this RFA. Nor shall all other classes of individuals protected from discrimination under federal or state fair housing laws, individuals perceived to be a member of any of the preceding classes, or any individual or person associated with any of the preceding classes be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any project or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available pursuant to this RFA.

Grantees shall comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Fair Housing Amendments Act, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, the Unruh Civil Rights Act, Government Code Section 11135, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and all regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutes, including 24 CFR Part 100, 24 CFR Part 8, and 28 CFR Part 35.