

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS)

# Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Update: North Central Region



LIVE WELL  
SAN DIEGO

**BHS Communication & Engagement Unit**

*Daniel Romero, MA, Manager*

*February 11, 2026*

# Today's Meeting



- **BHSA Recap**

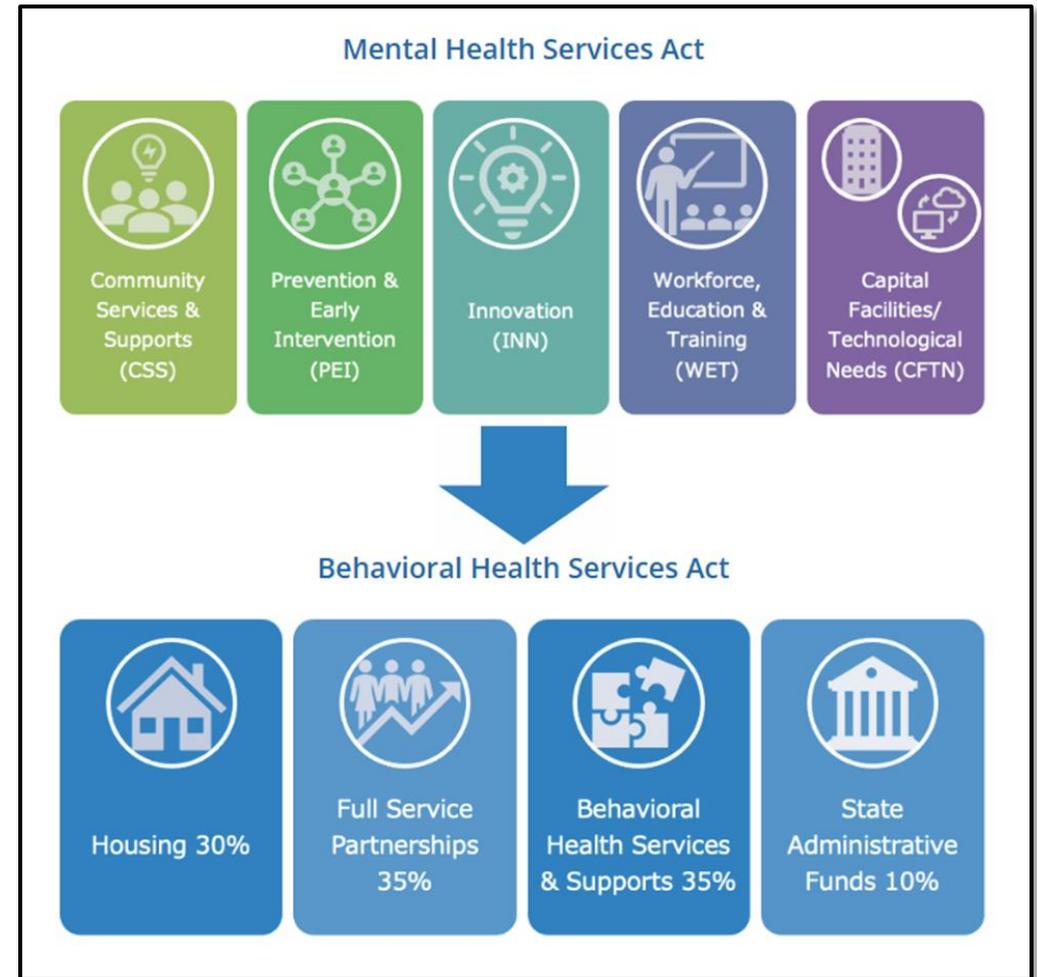
- What's changing?
- What did we accomplish?
- Why does this matter?

- **What We Heard**

- Key Learnings
- Audience Recommendations
- Key Themes

- **Next Steps**

- **How to Participate in Public Comment**



# CA Behavioral Health Landscape



Scan to Learn More:



# BHSA Recap



# Getting to Know BHSA



## IDENTIFYING KEY POINTS:

- Part of Proposition 1: Passed by CA voters in March 2024
- Modernizes the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) passed by CA voters in 2004
- Reforms how revenue is allocated from millionaires' 1% tax for counties across state for behavioral health programs/services
  - **No additional funding introduced, but brings new components, requirements, and restrictions**
- Takes effect July 1, 2026 & Lasts for 3 years (Integrated Plan = IP)

**Behavioral Health Services**

GET HELP NOW | I WANT TO FIND | MENTAL HEALTH | SUBSTANCE USE

### Behavioral Health Services Act

The Behavioral Health Services Act, also known as BHSA, is a state law passed by voters in March 2024. BHSA updates the [Mental Health Services Act \(MHSA\)](#) by:

- Expanding service access to include treatment for people with substance use disorders,
- Prioritizing care for people with the most serious mental illness,
- Providing ongoing resources for housing and workforce development, and
- Continuing investments in prevention, early intervention, and innovative behavioral health pilot programs.

BHSA aims to close service gaps and ensure equitable access to quality care across the state. New BHSA requirements will also enhance oversight, transparency, and accountability at the state and local levels. BHSA includes many changes that will impact contracted programs across San Diego County. For more information on changes to contracted programs, visit the [BHS Service Network Changes webpage](#).

[Learn More About BHSA](#)

### Community Planning

BHSA requires counties to look at their whole behavioral health system of care through a formal Community Planning Process (CPP). The CPP supports the County of San Diego's goal to involve communities in meaningful conversations and decision-making about local behavioral health services to ensure programs reflect their unique needs and voices.

**Subscribe for Updates**

By providing your information, you are signing up to receive key information about the BHSA and updates about opportunities to provide input to help inform the BHSA Integrated Plan for Fiscal Years 2026–2029.

**Online Input Form**

Access this online form to share insights and recommendations with BHS to help guide the development of San Diego County's first BHSA Integrated Plan for Fiscal Years 2026–2029.

**Upcoming/Recent Activities**

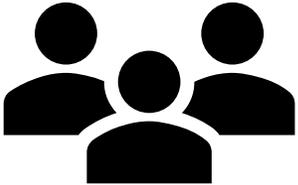
View upcoming and past engagement activities hosted by the department, including community workshops, town halls, and input opportunities to help inform the BHSA Integrated Plan for Fiscal Years 2026–2029.

# More About BHSA



- Broadens scope of funding to include standalone **substance use disorder** (SUD) treatment services and housing interventions
- Mandates data-driven reporting and population-level **outcome tracking**
  - Statewide Behavioral Health Goals<sup>NEW</sup>
  - Behavioral Health Outcomes, Accountability, and Transparency Report (BHOATR)<sup>NEW</sup>
- Expands expectations for **collaboration** with Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans (MCPs), schools, public safety, healthcare systems, and tribal and community partners
  - Increased stakeholder engagement (approx. three-fold increase)
- Elevates expectations for **health equity**, parity, access, and identification of community-defined needs, especially for priority populations

# BHSA Stakeholder Populations



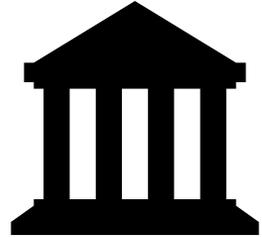
**Individuals with Lived Experience**



**Providers & Partners**



**Community -Based & Advocacy Organizations**



**Public Agencies**

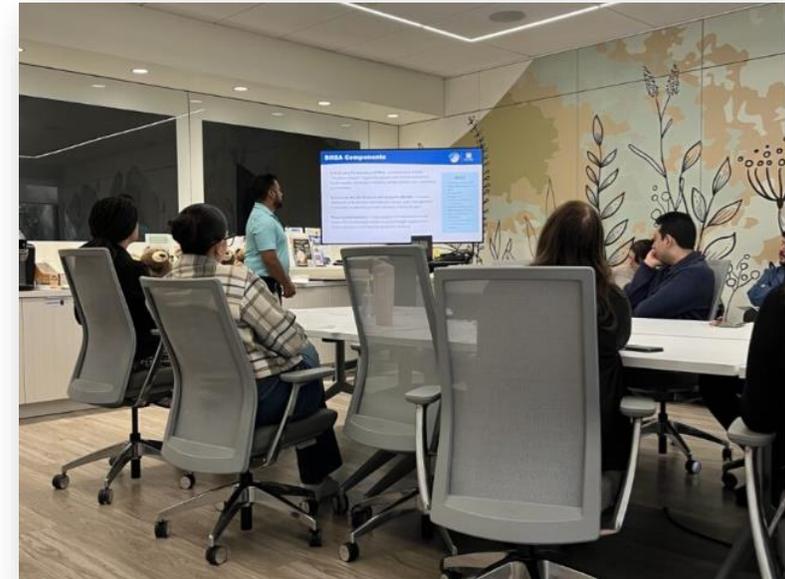


**29 Stakeholder Groups**

# Community Planning Process (CPP)



- BHS conducted engagement and education activities from Spring 2025 to Winter 2026
  - Activities included **input sessions, focus groups, interviews, tabling exchanges** at outreach events, as well as informational BHSA workshops and general presentations
  - Across **86 engagements**, over **1500 individuals** were reached representing all 29 stakeholder groups
  - Almost 300 unique organizations & programs
  - Contractor support included
  - Intention to come back on annual basis



# Use of Input from CPP Engagements



County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency – Behavioral Health Services

**BHS Housing Council Input Session Engagement Summary**

Overview: This report summarizes the Thursday, May 1, 2025, input session between the County of San Diego Housing Council, Behavioral Health Services (BHS), housing stakeholders, and community members, examining how the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) will shape housing policies.

Section	Details
Engagement Title	Housing Council Listening Session
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-Person <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid
Activity Details	Date: Thursday, May 1, 2025 Time: 10:30 AM-11:30 AM Location: County of San Diego Housing and Community Development Services (HCDS), 3989 Ruffin Rd, San Diego, CA, 92123 60-min discussion:
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nearly 40 attendees</li> <li>4 discussion questions</li> <li>200+ comments received:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>163 comments submitted through Mentimeter</li> <li>40 comments through open discussion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Summary of Engagement Activity**

On May 1, 2025, the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services (BHS), in collaboration with the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Health Partnership, hosted a listening session during the BHS Housing Council Retreat at the San Diego County Housing and Community Development Services (HCDS) building. The Housing Council provides guidance on the design, implementation, and evaluation of housing interventions to address the behavioral health needs of individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. This session was designed to gather early input to inform the development of the County's first Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Integrated Plan and input session questions were formulated based on prior input and work of the Council, including the 2022-2027 Strategic Housing Plan.

Approximately 40 participants attended the retreat, including the Council's 10 voting members and representatives from community-based organizations, housing developers, advocacy groups, and government and non-government agencies.

Participating organizations included:

- National CORE
- Alpha Project
- Vista Hill
- Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
- Legal Aid Society
- Jewish Family Services of San Diego
- Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) Exodus Recovery
- San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
- Clarvida
- Wakeland Housing and Development Corporation
- Housing Innovation Partners (HIP)

10/09/2025 1

- Input from CPP sessions will inform service priorities, investments, and recommendations included in the first BHSA Integrated Plan
  - Activity summaries of CPP sessions include an overview of participants and questions asked, as well as key learnings and recommendations
  - Will be used to inform Integrated Plan draft



# What We Heard: North Central Region



# What We Asked: Input Questions



## Community Engagement Activity Summary: Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA)



**Overview:** This report summarizes the October 1, 2025, collaborative planning session between the Live Well San Diego (LWSD) South Region Community Leadership Team, Behavioral Health Services (BHS), and community members, focusing on mental health and substance use data, key challenges, and program planning under the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA).

Section	Details
Engagement Title	BHS Data Presentation for LWSD South Region Community Leadership Team Meeting
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> In-person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Virtual <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid
Activity Details	<b>Date:</b> Wednesday, October 1, 2025 <b>Time:</b> 9:30 AM-10:30 AM <b>Location:</b> Microsoft Teams 60-minute Engagement:
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 33 community members and County staff</li><li>• 4 questions with facilitated open discussions</li><li>• Approximately 70 comments received<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Approximately 45 comments via Microsoft Whiteboard</li><li>◦ 25 comments through open discussion</li></ul></li></ul>

### Summary of Engagement Activity

On October 1, 2025, the Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Communication & Engagement (C&E) team and BHS Population Health Unit collaborated with the Live Well San Diego South Region Community Leadership Team's Behavioral & Mental Health Workgroup to engage community members in collaborative planning under the new Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), a California state initiative. This session was designed to gather early input and inform the development of the County's first BHSA Integrated Plan (IP) for the Fiscal Years 2026-2029.

Approximately 33 participants attended the session, including the South Region Community Leadership Teams members, representatives from community-based organizations, government and non-government agencies.

#### Participating organizations included:

- Harmonium
- PACEs Connection
- Parenting EQ
- Rotary
- BrightLife Kids
- Molina Healthcare of California
- San Diego County Library
- Department Of Rehabilitation
- Senior Tech Support
- Episcopal Community Services
- Independent Living Association (ILA)
- San Diego Community Health Improvement Partners (SD CHIP)

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1. What do you consider the biggest disparity or difference in health outcomes when it comes to mental health/substance use in this region, from the data shared today?
2. What factors do you feel contribute to these disparities/gaps? From your perspective, are there certain populations or communities more impacted than others? (What are barriers for people getting the support they need – consider access, cultural norms/traditions etc.)?
3. How can the County and community work together to address disparities or gaps to improve mental health and wellbeing? (Consider available resources, existing programs/services, accessible information, trusted members of the community).
4. Cast a vote for what you would like the County to focus on for future behavioral health data sets.

# What We Heard: Key Learnings



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10/15/2025

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- Breaking Barriers: Tackling Everyday Challenges to Behavioral Health Access;** The audience expressed concern around social determinants of health that directly shape access to behavioral health services. Environmental factors such as balancing basic needs with competing wellbeing priorities, the high cost of living, and limited transportation were seen as prominent barriers.
- Military Affiliated Populations are Underrepresented;** Community members voiced concern that military-affiliate individuals are not adequately reflected in regional mental health data or outcomes.
- Access, equity, and Regional Gaps Limit Support;** Sociocultural barriers, including stigma by age, gender, and culture, as well as language differences, limit care seeking.
- Older Adults, Youth, and LGBTQIA+ Face the Highest Risk and Impact;** Community members noted the high impact on older adults across the regions mental health data, particularly in relation to serious mental illness, emergency department visits, and death rates. This was followed by a concern for the high trend of impact amongst youth, foster youth, and LGBTQIA+ identifying youth across mental health and substance youth regional data

# What We Heard: Recommendations



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10/15/2025

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- Expand Access and Flexibility Across Channels;** Participants shared the need to expand access to mental health and substance use services by meeting people where they are - physically, culturally, and digitally. Use mobile units, after-hours programs, peer-led groups, multilingual resources, digital tools, and non-digital community programs to reach more people. Focus outreach on seniors, youth, and marginalized populations in both rural and urban areas.
- Integrate Basic Needs and Social Determinants into Care;** Address the root social and structural causes of mental health challenges by integrating behavioral health care with support for housing, food, insurance, and financial stability.
- Strengthen Partnerships, Cultural Competence, and Data-Driven Targeting;** Invest in local partnerships whenever possible with schools, faith-based organizations, community programs, parents, and caregivers to deliver trusted, community-rooted services. Build culturally responsive programming, train providers in cultural competence, and embed trusted messengers to reduce stigma.
- Additional Goals: Engagement in Schools and Social Connections;** For the State's "Additional Goal," the audience identified two main areas they would like to see prioritized regarding the local County performance on population-level goals vs. the State. These two measures included

- **Top 5 Key Themes across ALL input sessions:**
  - Access & Navigation Barriers
  - Trust, Safety, and Cultural Responsiveness
  - Crisis Response & Clinical Leadership
  - Housing & Social Stability as Foundations
  - Integrated Systems & Workforce Sustainability

# BHSA Overview: CPP Timeline



<b>Phase 1</b> <b>Receive New State Guidance for Planning</b>	<b>Phase 2</b> <b>Conduct Community Engagement &amp; Education</b>	<b>Phase 3</b> <b>Develop IP for Fiscal Years 2026-2029</b>	<b>Phase 4</b> <b>Review &amp; Approve IP</b>	<b>Phase 5</b> <b>Submit IP to State</b>
<b>Summer 2025-Fall 2025</b>	<b>Fall 2025-Winter 2026</b>	<b>Winter 2026-Spring 2026</b>	<b>Spring 2026-Summer 2026</b>	<b>By June 30, 2026</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review BHSA County Policy Manual (finalized June 2025) and evaluate new requirements for counties from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).</li> <li>• Attend DHCS webinars for counties on Integrated Plan (IP) development and the Community Planning Process (CPP) to structure BHSA CPP engagement activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate outreach, listening sessions, focus groups, and other opportunities at community events and convenings for stakeholders to provide input.</li> <li>• Document key learnings and stakeholder recommendations to support community priorities and system needs.</li> <li>• Provide BHSA education through informational handouts and presentations at public meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Department synthesis of stakeholder input, fiscal data, and program assessments.</b></li> <li>• <b>Draft San Diego County’s IP for Fiscal Years 2026–2029.</b></li> <li>• <b>Implement community-identified strategies to encourage participation in BHSA Public Comment opportunities.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post IP draft for public comment and feedback.</li> <li>• Incorporate public comments and finalize IP language.</li> <li>• Present proposed IP to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board-approved IP provided to State (DHCS) through their BHSA County Portal.</li> <li>• Prepare for official implementation of BHSA funding and reporting requirements on July 1, 2026.</li> </ul>

# BHSA Integrated Plan Overview



**Counties' first BHSA Integrated Plan (IP) will cover Fiscal Years 2026-2029 and be due to DHCS by June 30, 2026.**

## All counties given template by State to provide:

- County Demographics and Behavioral Health Needs
- Plan Goals and Objectives
- **Community Planning Process (CPP)**
- **Comment Period and Public Hearing**
- County Behavioral Health Care Continuum Capacity
- Services by Total Funding Source
- Behavioral Health Services Fund Programs
- Workforce Strategy
- Budget and Prudent Reserve



**Section 3  
County  
Integrated  
Plan**



<https://policy-manual.mes.dhcs.ca.gov/behavioral-health-services-act-county-policy-manual/V1.0.0/3-county-integrated-plan>

# BHSA IP Overview



DHCS Approved Draft Integrated Plan

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT INTEGRATED PLAN TEMPLATE VERSION 1

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### Comment Period and Public Hearing

All fields must be completed unless marked as optional. You don't need to finish everything at once—your progress will be saved automatically as you go. Use "Return to plan" to navigate between sections and track overall progress. For related policy information, refer to [B.3 Public Comment and Updates to the Integrated Plan](#).

#### Comment Period and Public Hearing

For related policy information, refer to [B.3 Public Comment and Updates to the Integrated Plan](#).

**Date the draft Integrated Plan (IP) was released for stakeholder comment**  
10/3/2025

**Date the stakeholder comment period closed**  
11/4/2025

**Date of behavioral health board public hearing on draft IP**  
11/4/2025

**Please provide proof of a public posting with information on the public hearing. Please select the county's preferred submission modality**  
Link

**Please provide the link to the public posting**  
<https://MarinBHBS.org/MHSA>

**If the county uses an existing landing page or other web-based location to publicly post IPs for comment, please provide a link to the landing page (optional)**

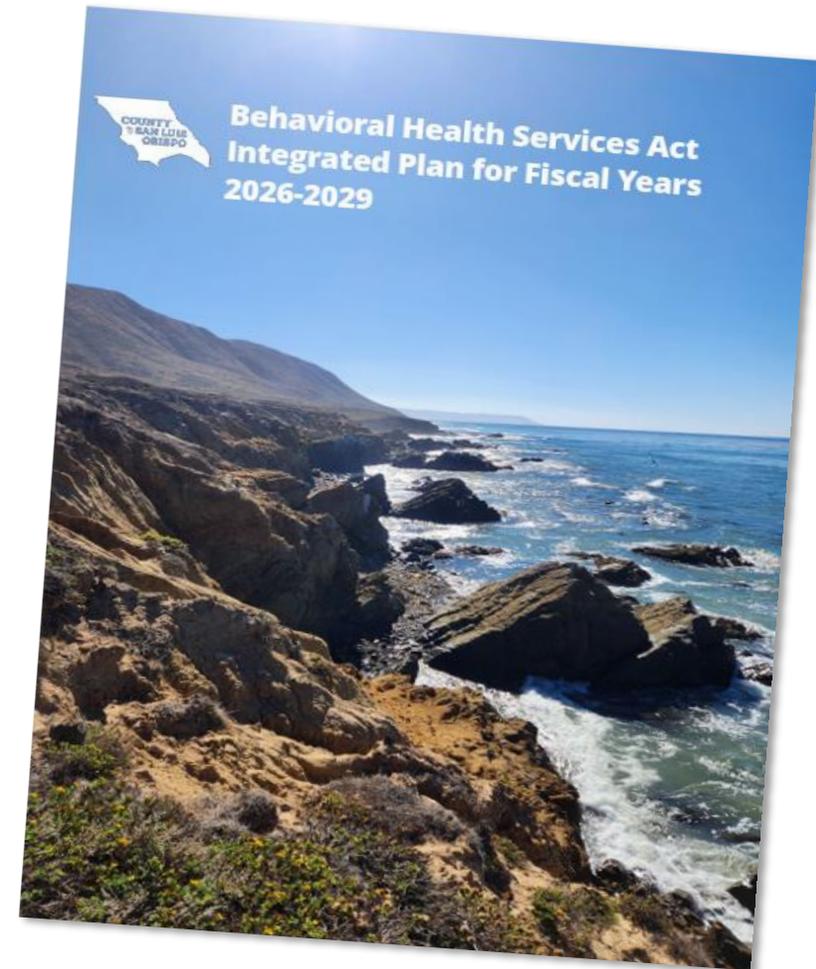
**File Upload (optional)**

**Please select the process by which the draft plan was circulated to stakeholders**  
Public posting

**Please describe [stakeholder input](#) in the table below. Please add each**

Some counties have already posted their Integrated Plans, which can be reviewed as examples, e.g.,

- Contra Costa
- Marin
- Riverside
- San Luis Obispo



# How to Make Public Comment?



- **Key Opportunities for Input & Feedback:**

**30-Day Public  
Comment Period**

**Public Hearing  
with BHAB**

**County  
Board of Supervisors  
Meeting**



- **30-Day Public Comment Period**

- California law (Welfare and Institutions Code, or WIC) requires counties to ask the public for input before submittal of their finalized BHSA IP to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).
- During baseline years, every county must host a **30-Day Public Comment Period**, during which people may read the draft plan and share their thoughts in writing — what they like, questions they may have, recommended changes, etc.
- If a county elicits participation from stakeholders for an Annual or Intermittent Update to their IP, they must fulfill this Public Comment Period requirement prior to the effective date of the updates.

- **Key Opportunities for Input & Feedback:**

**30-Day Public  
Comment Period**

**Public Hearing  
with BHAB**

**County  
Board of Supervisors  
Meeting**



- **Public Hearing**

- Every counties' behavioral health board/commission shall conduct a public hearing following a 30-Day Public Comment Period. The **Public Hearing for San Diego County's 2026-2029 BHSA IP draft** is scheduled for the BHAB's **05/07/2026** convening.
- At this convening, stakeholders may share opinions with BHS leadership in-person or online and react to others' comments. The department will document and summarize feedback and revise the IP before presenting it to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors for final approval and DHCS submittal.

- **Key Opportunities for Input & Feedback:**

**30-Day Public  
Comment Period**

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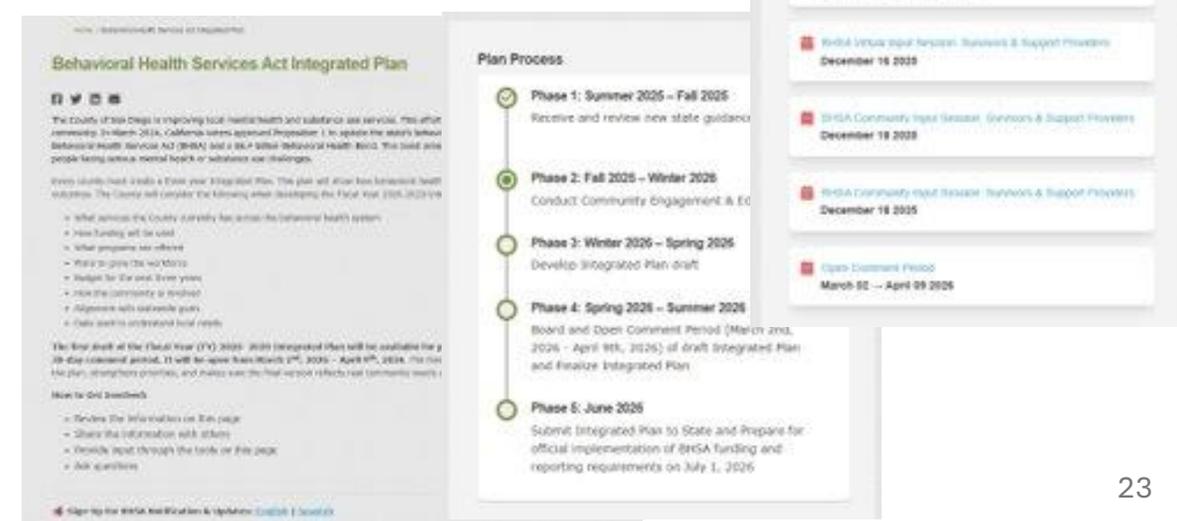
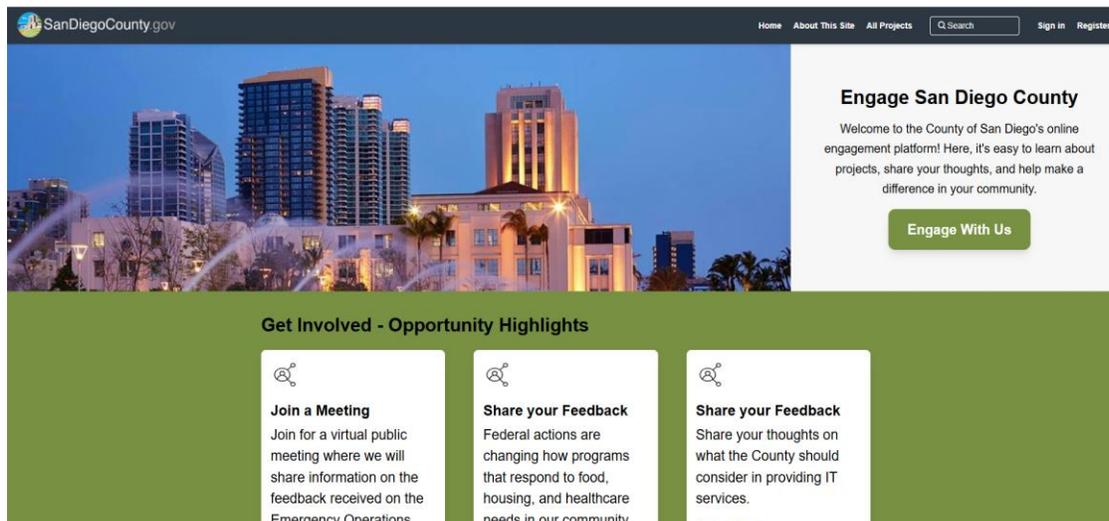
- **County Board of Supervisors Meeting**

- **Speak at the meeting day-of:** Attend in-person and sign up to talk and share your thoughts with the Board during the public comment time
- **Write to the Board:** Send an email or letter with your comments ahead of the meeting
- **Watch and comment online:** Join the meeting by video or phone to give your public comment

# Plan Review & Public Comment



- For the 30-day public comment period, the Integrated Plan will be posted to EngageHQ. Here are the steps you'll need to follow to participate:
  - Register to create an account and share feedback
  - Search, “**Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan**” project page
  - Review the plan, timeline, upcoming key dates, and FAQs
  - Ask questions on the EngageHQ page or via email, attend public meetings, and comment on the draft once released



# How to Use EngageHQ



## SAMPLE:

Table of Contents Page 15 of 95 Type to search Comment Drag

Click anywhere in the document to add a comment

Hide → Comments Close ×

Most recent Most replied Most supported By page REPLIES

**Nancy Wheeler** Mar 8 2023 at 9:45PM on page 15 **Suggestion**

This is very important. We must conserve our landscape. If we don't care for the environment, we won't have one. 0 replies

**Jossie** Feb 27 2023 at 4:19PM on page 55

I love this plan. So glad trees will be preserved. 0 replies

**Roger Moore** Feb 17 2023 at 10:22AM on page 15 **Suggestion**

I've enjoyed this park for 75 years and want my great grandchildren to say the same. 0 replies

**Helpdesk Pro Tip** Oct 14 2022 at 11:28AM on page 4 **Suggestion**

Take a look at a discussion by visiting the content overlay pin in the top left corner of Page 4! 0 replies

**Anonymous** Sep 15 2022 at 12:46PM on page 1 **Idea**

Can you add comments anonymously?

Guided Tour Full Document

Powered by Konveio

a set of overarching goals and objectives to guide the Plan in the development of the Master Plan. A common thread through the Master Plan document involves investigation of how the Park can be maintained and enhanced in a way that supports the mission of the Audubon Commission and Audubon Nature Institute.

Audubon Commission and the Planning Team have identified the following organizing principles for the Audubon Park Master Plan:

- Preservation and Heritage**  
Sustain and enhance Audubon Park as a public amenity
- Education and Culture**  
Foster opportunities for education and community engagement  
Celebrate the cultural heritage of the Park
- Access / Infrastructure**  
Investigate improvements to circulation / access  
Recommend strategies for water management
- Recreation / Entertainment / Wellness**  
Evaluate use of recreational open space  
Maintain and enhance exercise and athletic facilities
- 1 Environmental Stewardship**
  - 1 Conserve and enrich the landscape and environment
  - Evaluate best horticultural practices for application
  - Preserve and augment tree canopy 1

Audubon Commission recognizes the importance of these principles as a means of organizing thoughts and discussions related to the Audubon Park Master Plan. These principles provide an outline for future work and a methodology of thinking that strives to maintain the Park's legacy of balance and harmony of uses to benefit the community and the environment.

# Next Steps



- Scheduled Public Comment Period:  
03/17/2026-04/15/2026
- Scheduled Public Hearing at BHAB:  
05/07/2026
- County Board of Supervisors Presentation Date (*Tentative*):  
05/19/2026

# Questions?



# Stay Connected



Upcoming Engagement Opportunities

Past Activity Materials

BHSA Distribution List



[bit.ly/BHSA\\_BHS](https://bit.ly/BHSA_BHS)

Visit our BHS website!

Contact Us

Communication & Engagement Unit: [Engage.BHS@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Engage.BHS@sdcounty.ca.gov)

The screenshot shows the Behavioral Health Services website. The main heading is "Join Us for an Upcoming Activity". There are three featured cards: 1. "Virtual Input Session" for the Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) AOD Continuum of Care Subcommittee Input Session on Monday, October 13, 2025. 2. "Live Well Advance Conference & School Summit" on Monday, October 27, 2025. 3. "Virtual Input Session" for the Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) Re-Entry Support Subcommittee Input Session on Monday, October 27, 2025. Below these are "Past Engagement Activities" including a "BHS Housing Council Input Session Engagement Summary" dated September 25, 2025, and a "Summary of Engagement Activity" dated September 25, 2025.

Overlapping document images showing engagement summaries and distribution lists. One document is titled "BHS Housing Council Input Session Engagement Summary" and another is titled "Summary of Engagement Activity". Both documents contain detailed information about the activities, including dates, locations, and participant feedback.

# Thank You!

