



UC San Diego

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS)

Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Overview & Input Session at Healthy San Diego Operations Meeting

Thursday, October 16, 2025, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

BHS Communication & Engagement (C&E) Unit

Kat Casabar Briggs, MPH, Chief

University of California, San Diego (Contract #566007)

Krystal Lira, PhD

Land Acknowledgment



“

We acknowledge that the San Diego County region is made up of the traditional lands of the Kumeyaay, Luiseño/Payómkaichum, Cahuilla and Cupeño/KuupangaxwicheM Peoples.

We acknowledge the harmony that existed among the land, nature, and its original Peoples, who have since endured displacement, persecution, and systemic oppression.

We pay our respect to the uncaded territory and homelands of the 18 federally recognized tribes in our region.

We honor the ancestral grounds and sovereignty of the Tribal Nations, whose resilience and strength inspire forward movement towards more equitable and sustainable programs, policies, and practices.

”



Today's Session



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- **Welcome & Background – BHS**
 - BHSA Overview
 - Community Planning Process
- **Input Session – UCSD Health Partnership**
- **Next Steps – BHS**

About BHSA



- Part of Proposition 1; takes effect July 1, 2026
- Modernizes the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) passed by CA voters in 2004
- No additional funding introduced, but brings new components, requirements, and restrictions for how revenue derived from millionaire's tax may be used by counties for behavioral health programs/services

Learn More

bit.ly/BHSA_BHS



SanDiegoCounty.gov Home

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.

To learn more about BHSA:

- [Behavioral Health Transformation \(DHCS\)](#)

To receive updates about BHSA, subscribe to these statewide sites:

- [Department of Health Care Services \(DHCS\)](#)
- [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#)

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.

Share Input via Our Online 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.

Participate in Upcoming 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.

Additional Key Differences from MHSA



- Emphasis on system-wide integration between County Behavioral Health Plans (BHPs) and Managed Care Plans (MCPs)
- Housing is now a required, reportable component *(optional under MHSA)*
- Mandates data-driven reporting and population-level outcome tracking – much more rigorous than MHSA

Opportunities to Strengthen Alignment

- *Shared members*
- *Shared metrics*
- *Step-up/step-down coordination*
- *Data exchange & shared care planning*
- *Early intervention partnerships*
- *Joint workforce initiatives*

MHSA Three-Year
Expenditure Plans
& Annual Updates



**BHSA Three-Year Integrated
Plans (IP) & Annual Updates**

**Behavioral Health
Outcomes, Accountability,
and Transparency Reports**

MAIN GOALS OF BHSA

1. Reach and serve most high-need populations
2. Increase access to substance use disorder services, housing interventions, and evidence-based and community-defined practices
3. Expand the behavioral health workforce
4. Focus on data, outcomes, and health equity

- **All** local, state and behavioral health funding (*previously only MHSA*)
- Workforce strategies
- Alignment with statewide goals and outcome measures

Key BHSA Populations



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Eligible adults/older adults who are:

- Chronically homeless or experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.
- In, or are at risk of being in, the justice system.
- Reentering the community from prison or jail.
- At risk of conservatorship.
- At risk of institutionalization.

Eligible children and youth who are:

- Chronically homeless or experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.
- In, or are at risk of being in, the juvenile justice system.
- Reentering the community from a youth correctional facility.
- In the child welfare system.
- At risk of institutionalization.

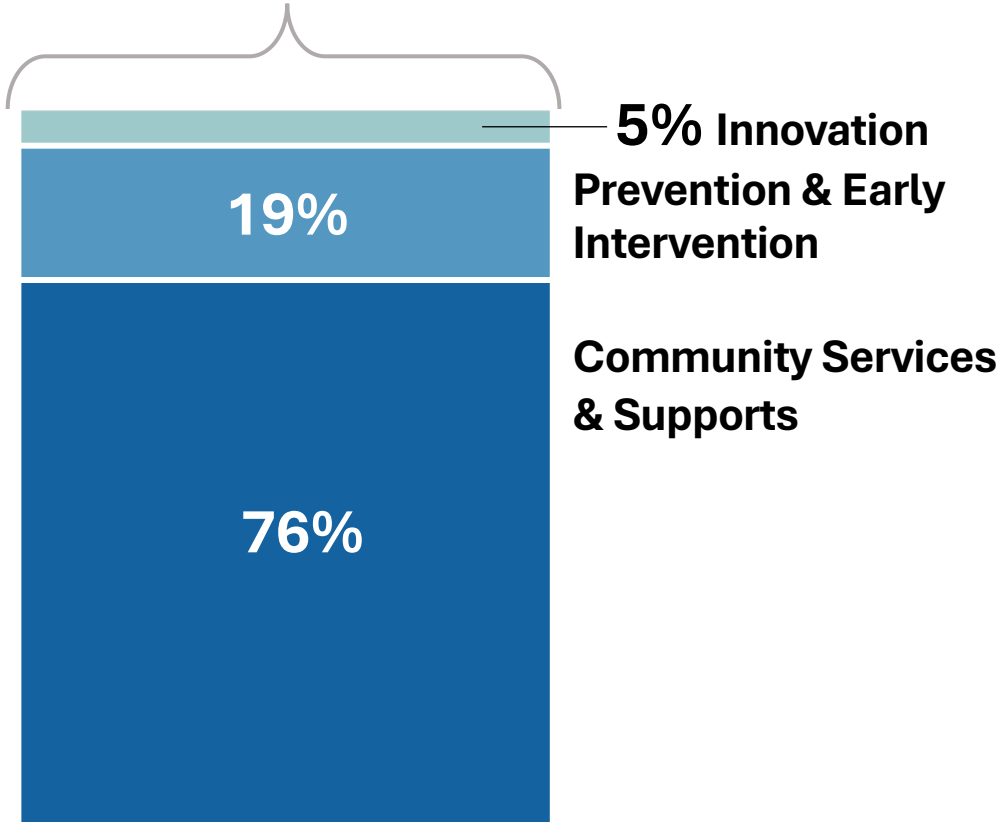


BHSA Components



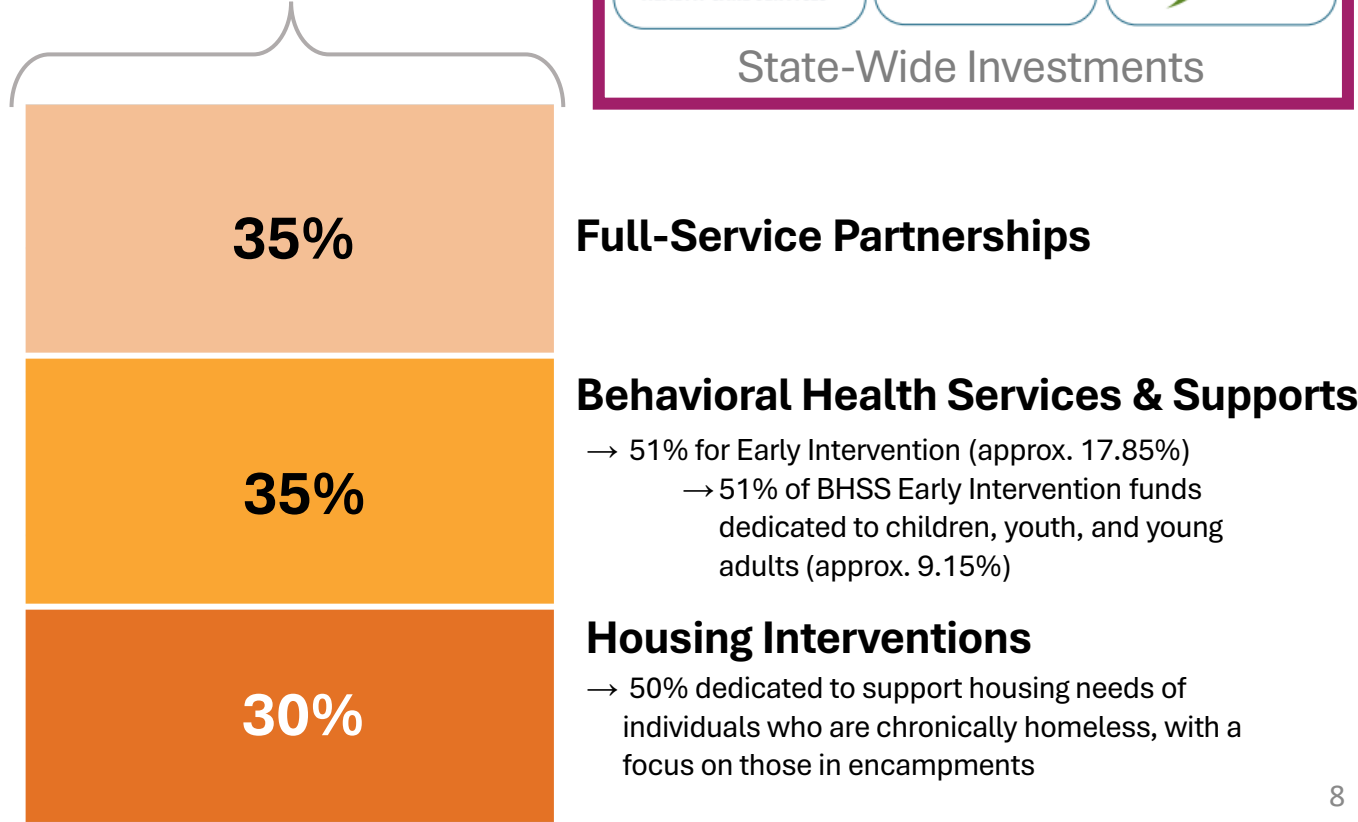
County Allocation of MHSA Dollars (Before Prop 1)

95% County Allocation
5% State



County Allocation of Proposed BHSA Dollars (Under Prop 1)

90% County Allocation
10% State



BHSA Integrated Plan (IP)



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**Counties' first BHSA Integrated Plan 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: CPP Timeline



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

Learnings from Past Engagement



Overarching goal: Continue to build upon learnings from past years' CPP and community engagement activities

Topics frequently identified through MHSA CPP/other input opportunities:

1. Accessibility
2. Care coordination and navigation
3. Community outreach and education
4. Crisis response services
5. Culturally appropriate and affirming care
6. Support for people experiencing homelessness
7. Services for youth and transition age youth
8. Workforce capacity and diversity

Community members indicated a desire for more tailored activities and materials to:

1. Promote awareness and health literacy of local behavioral services and resources
2. Bolster socio-emotional competence and wellness (more skill-building)
3. Prevent deaths by suicide
4. Prevent social isolation
5. Promote substance use prevention
6. Promote overdose prevention
7. Engage and support youth and transition age youth
8. Support behavioral health workforce training and development

Input Session Overview

The bottom of the slide features three overlapping, wavy horizontal bands. The top band is a medium blue, the middle band is a lighter teal, and the bottom band is white. These bands create a sense of movement and depth at the base of the presentation.

Input Session Overview



Questions:

- What opportunities exist to improve access and care navigation so members can more easily connect with the appropriate level of care early on?
- Which populations face the greatest challenges in accessing or staying engaged in behavioral health care, and how might we collaborate to close these gaps?
- Where do you see opportunities to better align around these or other quality improvement initiatives, and how might we use this information together to support common goals?
- How do these services intersect with behavioral health care, and where could stronger coordination help reduce separation and improve the member experience?
- What opportunities exist to enhance collaboration for smoother coordination, better member experiences, and shared accountability between MCPs and the County?

Input Session

University of California, San Diego (Contract #566007)

Krystal Lira, PhD

UC San Diego

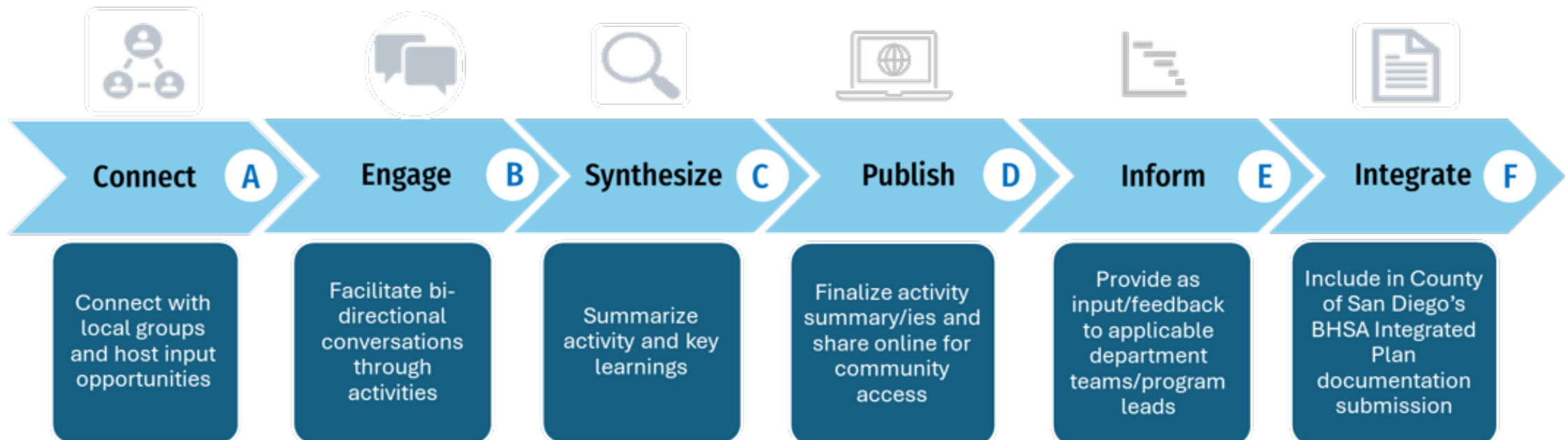
Next Steps



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How will input from today's meeting be utilized by the department?

Input will inform specialty mental health and substance use disorder treatment services priorities and investments included in San Diego County's first BHSA Integrated Plan draft scheduled for presentation to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors in Summer 2026.





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bit.ly/BHSA_BHS


SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

The County of San Diego's Behavioral Health Services Department invites you to share your ideas and recommendations for behavioral health programs and services as California counties prepare to implement the Behavioral Health Services Act on July 1, 2026.

The Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) modernizes the Mental

ENHANCED BY Google

GET HELP NOW

I WANT TO FIND 

MENTAL HEALTH ✓

SUBSTANCE USE ▼

CONNECT ▼

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.

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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.

Select from the list below to populate response boxes:

- ## About You

Please share a little about yourself to help us understand who we heard from.

Which of the following best describes you and/or the agency or organization you represent? *

(Mark all that apply)

- ☐ Adult or older adult with lived mental health or substance use experience
- ☐ Youth or young adult with lived mental health or substance use experience
- ☐ Family member of someone with lived mental health or substance use experience
- ☐ Mental health, substance use, or social services provider
- ☐ Public or government agency

Stay Connected



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Upcoming Engagement Opportunities

Planned Engagement Activities

Past Activity Materials

SCAN ME



Contact Us

Communication & Engagement Unit: Engage.BHS@sdcounty.ca.gov

The screenshot displays the Behavioral Health Services website. The header includes the agency logo, navigation links (GET HELP NOW, I WANT TO FIND, MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE, CONNECT), and a search bar. The main content area is titled "Join Us for an Upcoming Activity" and features three event cards:

- Virtual Input Session:** Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) AOD Continuum of Care Subcommittee Input Session. Join us on Monday, October 13, 2025, from 3:00pm - 4:30pm.
- LIVE WELL ADVANCE CONFERENCE & SCHOOL SUMMIT:** Reflecting on 15 Years of Collective Impact. Connect with Behavioral Health Services (BHS) and thousands of other local partners at the 10th Annual Live Well Advance.
- Virtual Input Session:** Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) Re-Entry Support Subcommittee Input Session. Join us on Monday, October 27, 2025, from 3:30pm - 5:00pm for a virtual input session, co-

Below the event cards, there is a section titled "Activities" which states: "BHS is dedicated to conducting meaningful engagement dialogues with stakeholders. This includes capturing and sharing key learnings from recent activities. See recent efforts."

The document is titled "BHS Housing Council Input Session Engagement Summary". It provides an overview of the session held on Thursday, May 1, 2025, between the County of San Diego Housing Council, Behavioral Health Services (BHS), housing stakeholders, and community members. The document includes a table with the following details:

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), 3665 Ruffin Rd, San Diego, CA 92123
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60 min discussion• Nearly 40 attendees• 4 discussion questions• 200+ comments received• 163 comments submitted through Mentimeter• 40 comments through open discussion

The document also includes a "Summary of Engagement Activity" section, which states: "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 CCRC
- Alpha Project
- Vista H8
- Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
- Legal Aid Society
- Jewish Family Services of San Diego
- Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)/Exodus Recovery

The document concludes with a "Lessons Learned" section, which states: "Participants expressed a desire to perhaps see wellness kiosks (similar to like in convenience stores), mobile resource hubs, lending platforms, and libraries as service hubs. These approaches were seen as essential for lowering barriers and reaching harder-to-engage populations."

Thank You!



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