



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## AGENDA ITEM

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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**DATE:** July 18, 2023

# DRAFT

# XX

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### SUBJECT

**AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BRIDGE HOUSING GRANT FUNDS; AUTHORIZE NOTICES OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY; AND AUTHORIZE COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENTS FOR LICENSED ADULT AND SENIOR CARE FACILITY SLOTS (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

### OVERVIEW

To support the well-being of those with behavioral health conditions, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) and the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) remain committed to investing in services to meet the needs of this vulnerable population. In alignment with this commitment, HHS's Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department continues to pursue new funding opportunities to enhance and expand access to critical mental health and substance use disorder prevention, engagement, and treatment services.

Through the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) will provide a total of \$1.5 billion in funding to county behavioral health agencies and Tribal entities to operate bridge housing settings to address the immediate and sustainable housing needs of people experiencing homelessness who have serious behavioral health conditions, including serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder, with a primary focus on serving historically underserved client populations that are most in need of care, including individuals with a Community Assistance, Recovery & Empowerment (CARE) plan.

BHBH funds will primarily provide operational and supportive services funding to expand bridge housing capacity within existing settings or new settings, and can be utilized across four domains, including:

- County program implementation,
- Bridge housing outreach and engagement,
- Bridge housing, including shelter/interim housing, rental assistance, enhanced rates (patches) for licensed residential adult and senior care facilities (board and cares), and housing navigation, and
- Bridge housing start-up infrastructure.

BHBH funds are being released through four distinct funding rounds, as follows:

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- **February 2023:** \$907 million non-competitive allocation to counties.
- **Spring 2023:** \$50 million competitive allocation to Tribal entities.
- **Summer 2023:** \$250 million competitive allocation to counties and Tribal entities.
- **Fiscal Year 2024-25:** \$250 million competitive allocation to counties and Tribal entities.

On June 23, 2023, BHS was notified by DHCS that San Diego County was conditionally awarded \$44,300,211 of non-competitive BHBH grant funding through the initial funding round to increase bridge housing capacity for individuals with serious behavioral health conditions who are experiencing homelessness. The BHBH grant funds will be utilized to increase licensed residential adult and senior care facility (board and care) slots through rate enhancements (patches) that will be operational through June 30, 2027. A portion of the BHBH funds will also be utilized to support infrastructure start-up costs in the first year to expedite the ability for the new board and care slots to be operationalized and would shift to additional board and care patches, if unspent.

Approval of today's recommended actions will authorize the acceptance of the one-time non-competitive BHBH Program funding allocation and authorize Notices of Funding Availability and competitive procurements for BHBH Program funding to increase the capacity of new licensed board and care slots with enhanced rates (patches) for people with behavioral health conditions.

These items support the County's vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities by supporting housing stability for adults and seniors with behavioral health conditions, including those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**  
**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Authorize the acceptance of \$44,300,211 of one-time Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) grant funding and authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee to execute all required documents, upon receipt, including any annual extensions, amendments, or revisions that do not materially impact or alter the services or funding level.
2. Authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency or designee, to issue Notices of Funding Availability for licensed residential adult and senior care facility (board and care) slots (patches), publish notices, determine eligibility, execute agreements, and amend agreements as needed, to reflect changes to services and funding, execute certification forms, prepare and execute all necessary documents for the submittal, regulatory processing, and implementation, and take any other actions necessary, as required, for BHBH Program funding, as applicable.
3. In accordance with Section 401, Article XXIII of the County Administrative Code, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to issue competitive solicitations for licensed adult and senior care facilities, and upon successful negotiations, and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award contracts, and, if needed, to amend

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contracts as required to reflect changes to services and funding or services requirements, subject to the availability of funds and the approval of the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency.

### **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The vision of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) is to build a system in which mental health and substance use services are equitably and regionally distributed and accessible to all individuals and families within the region who are in need. In alignment with this goal, BHS is committed to pursuing funding sources that will support the provision of services to vulnerable and underserved populations. Today's actions will allow BHS to accept new Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program grant funding to increase board and care slots through enhanced rates (patches) that support individuals with behavioral health conditions who are experiencing homelessness within licensed residential adult and senior care facilities.

According to the San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness, the 2022 point-in-time data revealed at least 8,427 individuals were experiencing homelessness across San Diego County, which is a 10% increase from the 2020 point-in-time data. Of the individuals experiencing homelessness in San Diego County 13% of individuals identified as having a serious mental illness (SMI) and 9% stated they had a substance use disorder (SUD). Individuals with SMI and/or SUD have a higher difficulty exiting homelessness and establishing housing stability. The BHBH funding will bolster support to enhance bridge housing that meets the unique needs of low-income seniors and individuals experiencing homelessness with behavioral health needs, ensuring that an already vulnerable population receives the care and support they need, further contributing to reductions in local health disparities.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Today's item supports the County of San Diego (County) Sustainability Goal #7 to reduce pollution and waste by preserving existing board and care facilities. The majority of the funding outlined in today's item is dedicated to supporting new board and care slots in existing facilities. This will allow the County to meet the regional need for immediate and sustainable housing for people experiencing homelessness who have a serious behavioral health condition while leveraging established board and cares, limiting the waste associated with new capital builds.

This item also supports Sustainability Goal #4 to protect the health and wellbeing of everyone in the region and Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access to County services. The available funding focuses on serving historically underserved client populations that are most in need of care. As noted in the Equity Impact Statement, today's actions will support the unique needs of low-income seniors and individuals experiencing homelessness with serious behavioral health needs. In alignment with the Behavioral Health Optimal Care Pathways model, today's actions will also support optimal future capacity across the entire behavioral health system ensuring that services at all levels of care are available and accessible.

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### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for this request are not included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-25 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this request result in estimated total costs and revenues of approximately \$44.3 million in FY 2023-24 through FY 2026-27. Today's recommendations address the new total project cost as detailed above and the related contractual actions necessary to fully implement. The funding source is State General Fund. Funding for this request will be included in future Operational Plans upon final approval of the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program proposal, subsequent execution of the BHBH Program contract, and the receipt of the final award. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

### **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

### **ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

On April 6, 2023, the Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) received an informational update on the BHBH program as Behavioral Health Services was developing the BHBH Program submission proposal. At their meeting on July 6, 2023, BHAB voted to [REDACTED] these recommendations.

### **BACKGROUND**

To support the well-being of those with behavioral health conditions, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) and the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) remain committed to investing in services to meet the needs of individuals. In alignment with this commitment, County HHSA, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) continues to pursue funding opportunities to enhance and expand access to critical mental health and substance use disorder prevention, engagement, treatment services, and housing.

On September 27, 2022 (23), the Board adopted the Behavioral Health Optimal Care Pathways (OCP) model, which outlined the optimal future capacity necessary across key services in the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care to support people with critically limited opportunities for placement due to complex needs, lack of existing services in the continuum, inadequate capacity, and/or other specialty care needs that present barriers to care. Within community-based care services, BHS identified the need to increase capacity for board and care slots by nearly 400 to care for individuals within our system.

To advance implementation of the OCP model, the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program will offer one-time funding to increase board and care slots with enhanced rates (patches) dedicated to supporting individuals with behavioral health conditions who are experiencing homelessness, including individuals with a Community Assistance, Recovery & Empowerment (CARE) plan, to ensure they receive effective care in the least restrictive setting, based on their unique needs.

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In September 2022, Assembly Bill 179 legislation authorized \$1.5 billion in funding for the BHBH Program. The BHBH Program provides funding for bridge housing expansion, which offers short- and mid-term housing options to people experiencing homelessness who have serious behavioral health conditions with the goal of connecting them to long-term housing. On April 27, 2023, BHS applied for funding through the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to support the BHBH Program.

BHBH funds are being released through four rounds, as follows:

- **February 2023:** \$907 million non-competitive allocation to counties.
- **Spring 2023:** \$50 million competitive allocation to Tribal entities.
- **Summer 2023:** \$250 million competitive allocation to counties and Tribal entities.
- **Fiscal Year 2024-25:** \$250 million competitive allocation to counties and Tribal entities.

BHBH funds will be utilized to address the following priorities:

- Complement ongoing state, county, and Tribal efforts, to address homelessness.
- Provide supportive services and housing navigation to assist people who have serious behavioral health conditions and are experiencing homelessness.
- Serve individuals with serious behavioral health conditions, including serious mental illness (SMI) and/or substance use disorder (SUD), who are experiencing homelessness.
- Provide bridge housing and supportive services throughout the county, including in rural areas, to enable people to remain in their communities.

BHBH funds primarily provide operational and supportive services funding to expand bridge housing capacity within existing settings or new settings, and can but utilized across four domains, including:

- County program implementation,
- Bridge housing outreach and engagement,
- Bridge housing, including shelter/interim housing, rental assistance, auxiliary (patch) funds for assisted living settings (board and cares), and housing navigation, and
- Bridge housing start-up infrastructure.

On June 23, 2023, BHS was notified by the DHCS that San Diego County was conditionally awarded \$44,300,211 of non-competitive BHBH grant funding through the initial funding round to increase bridge housing capacity to expand board and care capacity for individuals with serious behavioral health conditions who are experiencing homelessness, including individuals with a CARE plan. Funding must be utilized through June 30, 2027.

In alignment with the findings outlined in the Behavioral Health OCP model, a total of approximately \$41.5 million of the BHBH grant funds will be utilized to establish new board and care slots with enhanced rates (patches) that will be operational through June 30, 2027. The remaining BHBH funds totaling \$2.8 million will be utilized for first year infrastructure start-up costs that will expedite the ability for the new board and care slots to be operationalized. Start-up

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costs may be used for but not limited to start-up costs for furniture, equipment, and minor renovations. Start-up funds would be utilized in the first year and would be shifted to additional board and care slots, if unspent.

Approval of today's recommended actions will:

- Authorize the acceptance of one-time BHBH Project funding totaling \$44.3 million.
- Authorize Notices of Funding Availability for board and care slots services with licensed adult and senior care facilities.
- Authorize competitive solicitations for licensed adult and senior care facilities to establish new board and care slots through enhanced rates (patches).

Staff will return to the Board at a future date to seek further authority to accept additional BHBH funding if awarded through future funding rounds.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's proposed actions support the County of San Diego's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan initiatives of Equity (Health) and Community (Quality of Life) as well as the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision, by reducing disparities and disproportionality of individuals by pursuing housing stability for adults and seniors with behavioral health conditions, including those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Respectfully submitted,

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HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER  
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

N/A