

July 11, 2023

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN  
AND KATHRYN BARGER**

**Strengthening Bridge Housing Resources Through the Behavioral Health Bridge  
Housing Program for People Experiencing Homelessness Living with Serious  
Behavioral Health Conditions**

People that experience homelessness and live with serious behavioral health conditions face numerous challenges. They experience diminished quality of life; higher mortality rates (4-9 times higher than the general population); vulnerability to victimization; recurring institutionalization; and symptoms that could cause or contribute to losing housing and lengthen the duration of homelessness,. In 2022, Assembly Bill 179 established the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Program to fund counties that could immediately and sustainably house individuals experiencing homelessness with serious behavioral health conditions, including those enrolled in the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court Program.

This statewide program provides California counties with funding for four (4) fiscal years (FYs) beginning in FY 2023-24 and ending in FY 2026-27 to enhance, develop, and operate bridge housing settings that are tailored to the unique needs of individuals with serious behavioral health conditions. The State defines bridge housing as short- or mid-term housing provided for two (2) or less years. Funding for the BHBH Program is being released by the California Department of Health Care Services through their fiscal intermediary Advocates for Human

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Potential (AHP), who will enter into an agreement directly with the County, administer the funds, and oversee the County's implementation of the BHBH Program. Per program requirements, all BHBH-funded bridge housing must become operational within one (1) year of the County executing an agreement with AHP and counties that can meet the project timelines will receive a competitive advantage for future funding rounds.

The Department Mental Health (DMH), Department of Public Health - Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH-SAPC), Department of Health Services (DHS), and the Chief Executive Office - Homeless Initiative (CEO-HI) formed a workgroup to identify bridge housing gaps in the County and collaborated to submit two (2) BHBH Program proposals in April of 2023, which aligned with other County efforts including the County's declaration of a local state of emergency for homelessness (Homeless Emergency Response). The proposals submitted by DMH and DPH requested the maximum earmarked amount of \$321,189,238 for Los Angeles County in Round 1 funding. DMH and DPH were notified by the State on June 23, 2023 that Los Angeles County has been selected to receive a conditional award for the full requested amount which will be awarded upon execution of the contract with AHP. When fully implemented, it is estimated that the County's BHBH Program would fund 1,638 bridge housing beds countywide and 100 rental assistance subsidies.

The County's proposed BHBH Program places emphasis on expanding supportive and housing navigation services, which is a state requirement for all participants of the BHBH-funded beds. A core tenet of the proposals submitted by the County is active participation from

stakeholders and people with lived experience in program planning, implementation, and quality improvement efforts. Funding will enable various forms of bridge housing, such as hotel/motels, master-leased units or buildings, tiny houses or duplexes/large homes. Also, as required by the State, the County's BHBH Program will prioritize BHBH bridge housing and services for individuals enrolled in the CARE Court Program, which the County is actively planning to implement on December 1, 2023 including working internally to develop workflows for this population's entrance to BHBH Program services.

DMH, DHS and DPH will collaborate to develop the Crocker Campus in Los Angeles' Skid Row area which includes the 350 new interim housing beds. The new interim housing beds are included in the Skid Row Action Plan (SRAP) to transition Skid Row into a safe and healthy community which was developed as a result of the June 28, 2022 motion passed by the Board of Supervisors. The Crocker campus services include an outdoor safe services space, 24/7 urgent care, Safe Landing model for 24/7 access to interim housing beds, Harm Reduction Health Center.

DMH will also develop approximately 580 new interim housing beds countywide; enhance the services provided at its existing 308 non-congregate interim housing beds to better meet the needs of the population served; and provide 100 rental assistance subsidies dedicated to CARE Court participants. DPH-SAPC will develop 300 Recovery Bridge Housing (RBH) beds that provide safe, stable, and supportive living environments for individuals concurrently enrolled in outpatient treatment. Additionally, a new type of interim housing called Recovery Housing (RH)

will establish 100 beds and serve as a safety net for those who have engaged in Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment but have not yet established finances and/or found permanent housing. Additionally, the DPH-SAPC proposal included the addition of Housing Navigation services to all existing and expanded RBH and RH clients to ensure that while clients are in RBH or RH they can work towards securing a permanent housing plan to prevent homelessness and relapse with SUD. Projects will be able to use up to \$75,000 per bed and up to 25% of the total BHBH funds for infrastructure costs including to purchase property; rehabilitate buildings; and acquire necessary equipment and appliances. The number of new interim housing beds funded through BHBH will be dependent on the amount of funding needed for infrastructure vs. operations. DMH and DPH-SAPC have also requested BHBH funds to hire staff to implement and administer the BHBH Program.

This Motion urges this Board to prioritize the expansion and enhancement of the County's bridge housing capacity to develop over 1,600 beds through the BHBH Program. Through the directives of the Homeless Emergency Response and the authorities included in this Motion, DMH and DPH will be able to expedite implementation of the BHBH Program and ensure funds are expended on time and reach those most in need. By doing so, we can safeguard the lives, health, and safety of vulnerable residents experiencing homelessness, ensuring they have access to bridge housing including the supportive and housing navigation services they need to transition to permanent housing.

To move forward with implementing the BHBH Program and to effectively support the

Homeless Emergency Response, DMH and DPH-SAPC require the following authorities.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of Mental Health, or her designee, to accept up to \$259,280,749 and the Director of Public Health, or her designee, to accept up to \$61,908,489 for a total of up to \$321,189,238 and any additional funds that may be applied for and awarded by the State through its third-party administrator, AHP; and to negotiate and execute contracts with AHP for BHBH Program funds to increase bridge housing beds and services for people with serious behavioral health conditions experiencing homelessness, subject to review and approval as to form by County Counsel and notification to the Board and CEO.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Mental Health, or her designee, and the Director of Public Health, or her designee, to negotiate and execute new agreements for the provisions of BHBH programs and related services in an equitable manner, including but not limited to, direct work order contracts and/or amendments with existing providers, and to use existing master agreements, such as the Supportive and/or Housing Master Agreements list to find qualified bridge housing operators. Grant additional authority to amend the agreements in Actions 1 and 2 of this Motion to revise agreement language; add, delete, modify, or replace BHBH statements of work and make corresponding funding changes; extend agreement terms and/or increase or decrease contract amounts; allow for the rollover of unspent funds; and/or reflect federal, State, and County regulatory

and/or policy changes, provided such actions do not exceed BHBH funding awarded by the State and approved by the Board to deliver BHBH services, including infrastructure costs, which may include capital purchases, subject to review and approval as to form by County Counsel with notification to the Board and the CEO.

3. Delegate authority to the Director of Mental Health, or her designee, and the Director of Public Health, or her designee, to terminate the BHBH contracts in accordance with the termination provisions set forth in the contracts. The Director of Mental Health, or her designee, or Director of Public Health, or her designee, will notify the Board and CEO, in writing, of such termination action.
4. Direct DMH and DPH to work with the CEO to review the BHBH Program plan, and as necessary through existing, available financial resources to sustain programming, allocate the necessary clinical, administrative, and programmatic items needed to implement the BHBH Program, including taking any steps needed to allow the Departments to immediately and successfully recruit and hire for these positions. This may include but is not limited to:
  - a) Using existing delegated authority from the Homeless Emergency Response and, if necessary, providing additional delegated authority to DMH and DPH for ordinance position authority and special step placements for a period to be determined by the CEO;
  - b) Approving job-related specialty exams that recognize relevant expertise and lived

experience; and

- c) Immediately identifying and hiring a manager (and/or clinical and support team members) dedicated to BHBH Program implementation and starting the process to identify and hire additional staff.
5. Authorize the Director of Mental Health, or her designee, and the Director of Public Health, or her designee, to enter into non-monetary agreements (including memorandums of understanding and data use agreements) to facilitate the communication and information exchange needed to comply with legislative mandates for service coordination, outcome reporting, and financial reimbursement of County services rendered to participants of the BHBH Program and CARE Court.
6. In consultation with the CEO, report back to the Board in writing on progress achieved on these items listed above on the same schedule and within the report back for CARE Court updates.

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