

## CALIFORNIA AWARDS \$23 MILLION TO SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

*Grants Announced Today Will Support Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce*

**SACRAMENTO** – The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) today [awarded](#) more than \$23 million in funding to 81 nonprofit, tribal, and county-operated behavioral health providers to expand the state’s behavioral health care workforce.

Each entity will receive up to \$350,000 to enhance and build its behavioral health substance use disorder (SUD) workforce, focusing on resources to expand the prevention, treatment, and recovery workforce for those who work with individuals with or at risk of developing an opioid use disorder.

“The past several years of the COVID-19 pandemic and opioid epidemic have brought many challenges and strains to our behavioral health workforce,” said **DHCS Director Michelle Baass**. “This funding will assist community partners in building and supporting their teams to serve California’s many diverse communities with the flexibility needed to meet each organization’s recruitment and retention needs.”

This funding is for the Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention (BHRR) grant program, which will support organizations in developing comprehensive strategies for recruiting, onboarding, engaging, and retaining behavioral health staff. The grant program also prioritizes organizations that serve underserved and diverse communities.

### **GRANTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE:**

- The BHRR grant supports providers in 24 counties throughout every region of California, including providing essential support in rural areas. **Kevin Caskey, the Director of Behavioral Healthcare and SUD Treatment Services for El Dorado Community Health Centers**, said, “BHRR grant funding is essential to our organization as far as recruitment and retention for top talent in behavioral health and SUD services in our rural county. These funds will help us to strategically develop our behavioral health workforce and expand access to persons served by Medi-Cal in our rural community. I applaud DHCS for extending funds to behavioral health providers to support our sustainability in the long run.”

- One New Heartbeat, a nonprofit organization committed to improving the accessibility of behavioral health peer support services in California, is excited to begin implementing the grant. “The BHRR grant is going to help support us in developing a strategic plan and focusing on organization development that will take us to the next level,” said **One New Heartbeat Executive Director Waynette Brock**. “The grant will help us examine our strengths and weaknesses and find ways to tighten up to sustain ourselves going forward. Ultimately, we just want to do the work, so we need to be sure we can sustain our programs.”

**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:** The BHRR grant program allows behavioral health organizations to build an implementation plan to assist with attracting a diverse workforce that better reflects the needs of the communities they serve; improving workplace culture, benefits, and wellness; and offering educational support, tuition reimbursement, incentives, retention bonuses, flexible schedules, mentorship opportunities, and more to assist individuals with enhancing skillsets and climbing career ladders.

“California’s behavioral health workforce is experiencing severe challenges in meeting the growing needs of our diverse state,” said **Tyler Sadwith, Deputy Director of DHCS Behavioral Health**. “DHCS is dedicated to growing that workforce to increase access and competence in prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for individuals with behavioral health concerns. DHCS is also committed to supporting the diversification of California’s behavioral health workforce to support the goals of equity and belonging in behavioral health services throughout the state.”

**BIGGER PICTURE:** The BHRR grant program is part of the Behavioral Health Workforce Development (BHWD) initiative, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This initiative complements the Workforce for a Healthy California Initiative, the state’s broader strategy to build a health workforce that represents California’s diverse communities and provides people with the quality care they deserve while addressing the growing workforce shortages throughout the state’s health and human services system.

Since 2021, more than \$197 million has been invested through the DHCS BHWD initiative to recruit, mentor, and retain behavioral health professionals, along with significant investment in the peer workforce, to support treatment for those with substance use and opioid addiction. As of June 2023, 308 grantees across California have been awarded funds that support the expansion of their behavioral health operations through the initiative.

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