

California Behavioral Health Planning Council

Housing and Homelessness Committee Agenda

Thursday, June 18, 2026

8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

[Marriott Riverside at the Convention Center](#)

3400 Market Street
Riverside, CA 92501
Embassy Room

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 261 743 5061

Passcode: 705358

Join by phone: (669) 444-9171

Passcode: 705358

- 8:30 a.m. Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping**
Barbara Mitchell, Chairperson
- 8:40 a.m. Review and Accept April 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes (Action)** **Tab 1**
Barbara Mitchell, Chairperson
- Committee Discussion
 - Accept Meeting Minutes
- 8:45 a.m. General Public Comment**
Members of the public can comment on any non-action agenda item that did not have public comment or any other general item.
- 8:50 a.m. Committee Review of State Guidance on Recovery Housing** **Tab 2**
Barbara Mitchell, Chairperson
- Committee Discussion
 - Public Comment
- 9:20 a.m. Break**

If reasonable accommodation is required, please contact the Council at (916) 701-8211 at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

California Behavioral Health Planning Council

- 9:30 a.m. California Department of Social Services (CDSS): Tab 3**
Community Care Expansion Program Update
Hanna Azemati, Deputy Director of the Housing and Homelessness Division
Nija Fountano, Section Manager, Housing and Homelessness Division
- 35-minute presentation, 15-minute Q&As
 - Public Comment
- 10:20 a.m. Break**
- 10:30 a.m. Palm Desert Recovery Center: Overview of the Tab 4**
Long-Term Offender Reentry Recovery Program
Matt Carpenter, Director of Operations
Luisa Spadafino, Program Coordinator
Cody Kennedy MSW, CADC-II, ICADC, Clinical Director
Brandon Hurst, Case Manager
- 35-minute presentation, 15-minute Q&As
 - Public Comment
- 11:20 a.m. Presentation Debrief and Discussion Tab 5**
Barbara Mitchell, Chairperson
- Committee Discussion
 - Public Comment
- 11:50 a.m. Wrap-up & Next Steps**
Barbara Mitchell, Chairperson
- 12:00 p.m. Adjourn**

The scheduled times on the agenda are estimates and subject to change.

Public Comment: Limited to a **2-minute maximum** to ensure all are heard.

Committee Members

Chairperson: Barbara Mitchell **Chair-Elect:** Maria Sierra

Committee Members: Susie Baker, John Black, Jason Bradley, Monica Caffey, Dave Cortright, Erin Franco, Janet Frank, Lynne Martin Del Campo, Lanita Mims-Beal, Don Morrison, Danielle Sena, Daphne Shaw, Deborah Starkey, Bill Stewart, Samantha Tosetti, Arden Tucker

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**California Behavioral Health Planning Council
Housing and Homelessness Committee**

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Agenda Item: Review and Accept April 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes (Action)

Enclosure: April 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes

Background/Description:

Committee members will review the draft meeting minutes for the April 2026 Quarterly Meeting. Members can request edits before the minutes are accepted.

California Behavioral Health Planning Council

Housing and Homelessness Committee

Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

April 16, 2026

Council Members present: Susie Baker, John Black, Monica Caffey, Dave Cortright, Erin Franco, Lanita Mims-Beal, Barbara Mitchell, Don Morrison, Danielle Sena, Daphne Shaw, Deborah Starkey, Bill Stewart, Samantha Tosetti, Arden Tucker

Staff present: Jenny Bayardo, Naomi Ramirez, Simon Vue

Meeting Commenced: 8:30 a.m.

Quorum Established: 14 out of 16 members

Item #1 Review and Accept January 2026 Meeting Minutes

The Housing and Homelessness Committee (HHC) reviewed the January 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes. The minutes were accepted by the committee as written.

Action/Resolution

The January 2026 HHC Meeting Minutes are accepted and will be posted to the Council's website.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Simon Vue – April 2026

**Item #2 Nominate Interim Housing and Homelessness Committee
Chairperson for 2026 (Action)**

The Chairperson position became vacant after the January 2026 HHC Meeting when the former Chairperson stepped down. Each standing committee must have a Chairperson and a Chair-Elect. The Chairperson serves a one-year term and may receive a re-nomination for a second term.

Deborah Starkey motioned to approve Barbara Mitchell as the Interim Chairperson for the remainder of 2026. Don Morrison seconded the motion. Staff took a roll call vote, and the motion passed.

Item #3 Debrief of Turn to Recovery Tour

Committee members reported on their experiences and key takeaways from the off-site tour of TURN to Recovery in San Diego, California.

Key discussion points included:

- A committee member shared that Turn to Recovery staff demonstrated compassion and long-term commitment to support their residents.
- A committee member commented that while the presentation was informative, they would have appreciated additional opportunities to view the physical facilities and hear directly from current residents.
- Committee staff clarified that the TURN to Recovery presenters were not current program residents but were former residents who had completed the program and were now employed as staff.
- A committee member shared that TURN to Recovery’s housing program does not utilize formal leases or tenant protections and appears to operate more like a shelter. The program also limits enrollment to people with alcohol use disorder.

Chairperson Barbara Mitchell asked the Committee how they would like to proceed with this information. Key discussion points included:

- Chairperson Mitchell recommended that the Committee review the Guidance on Recovery Housing published by the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH), identify areas where the guidance may not align with current implementation, and provide feedback to Cal ICH.
- A committee member stated that abstinence-based housing should remain an available option for individuals who prefer that model.
- Members agreed that some programs may not meet the state’s definition of recovery housing but may still be eligible for state funding if they demonstrate positive outcomes.
- A member questioned whether any programs fully meet the state definition and suggested that the Committee call out the problem. Another member suggested that the Committee should not only call out the problem but also offer feedback and practical alternatives.

Item #4 General Public Comment

Anthony, a public commenter from Stanislaus County, shared his experience with sobriety within the county’s shelter and transitional housing system. He stated that drug use is widespread, which makes recovery nearly impossible even for people who fully commit to it. Anthony recommended that facilities designate a sober living area within existing shelter spaces to provide a clean and safe environment for people in recovery.

Item #5 Update on Committee Activities

Simon Vue, committee staff, reported on his experience at the Housing California 2026 Annual Conference in Sacramento in March 2026. He explained that one major topic was a new proposed Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rule that would bar mixed-immigration-status families from living in HUD-assisted housing. Under this proposal, households would have to either break apart their families or face eviction and homelessness. According to Justice in Aging, nearly 3,000 older adults and over 5,000 people with disabilities currently live in these mixed-status

households. The proposal would also create a new administrative burden by requiring tenants and applicants to provide documentation that verifies citizenship or immigration status.

Committee staff shared that Justice in Aging issued a call-to-action to oppose the rule through a comment letter coordinated by the Protecting Immigrant Families Coalition. Staff reviewed the letter, confirmed it aligns with the Planning Council's Policy Platform and priorities, and received approval from the Housing and Homelessness Committee (HHC) leadership and the Officer Team to sign on.

Committee staff also shared that the Council submitted a recommendation letter to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) on the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Housing Policy. The letter addressed two issues:

- **Length of Stay in Interim (Transitional) Housing:** Current policy limits support to 12 months (six months plus a six-month extension). This timeframe does not align with current housing market conditions or the stabilization needs of individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders. In many regions, permanent housing placements exceed 12 months.
- **Income-Based Tenant Contributions:** BHSA prohibits programs from charging rent in interim housing settings. While appropriate for emergency shelters, this does not reflect the structure of transitional housing programs that provide longer-term stabilization. Federal guidelines typically allow tenants to contribute up to 30% of income.
- **Recommendation:** Allow up to 24 months of interim housing support and permit programs to charge up to 30% of tenant income, consistent with federal practice.

Item #6 Hope Cooperative Presentation – An Overview of Renewed Hope

Joseph Smith, Director of Residential Services at Hope Cooperative; Jennifer Johnson, Program Manager; and Fe'la Dalton, Program Manager, presented on Renewed Hope, a transitional housing program for justice-involved individuals experiencing homelessness.

Fe'la Dalton provided a brief introduction to Hope Cooperative. Hope Cooperative is a Sacramento-based nonprofit that has provided behavioral health and housing services since 1981. The organization operates permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and outreach services, and employs nearly 350 staff and serves about 10,000 Sacramento residents annually.

Jennifer Johnson shared that Renewed Hope operates at a motel-style site with 55 studio units. The program offers up to six months of stabilization per participant. The program accepts justice-involved individuals and people who enter from unsheltered homelessness, jail, prison, rehabilitation, or detox centers. Referral sources include county jail, behavioral health providers, diversion programs, hospitals, and community partners. Participants often face multiple barriers such as mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and chronic health conditions. The program aims to stabilize residents, enroll them in benefits, prepare them for employment, and connect them to healthcare and support services.

Joseph Smith shared that Renewed Hope is classified as transitional housing and partly as emergency shelter to support stabilization. He also shared recent program data, which shows the program has served 76 people to date. More than half of its residents entered from unsheltered homelessness or incarceration with little to no income. Thirty participants attained employment at some point during their stay and one resident enrolled in school.

Item #7 AMI Housing Presentation – An Overview of The Harbor

Dr. Marjan Soltani, LMFT, PsyD, Director of Sun Rose Apartments at AMI Housing, and Shaneka Hampton, a Peer Support Specialist, presented on The Harbor. The Harbor is a new 16-bed peer respite program in Placer County, funded through the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) and the American Rescue Plan Act.

The Harbor serves as a 21-day short-term placement for people with a history of substance use who transition from county jail, inpatient facilities, or who wait for treatment, sober living, or permanent housing. The program aims to act as a bridge between discharge and the next care or housing option.

Dr. Marjan Soltani shared that the program requires county referrals, performs an intake screening, and accepts planned admissions only. The program does not accept walk-ins.

Shaneka Hampton shared that The Harbor houses up to 10 men and six women in separate units with shared kitchens, bathrooms, and common areas. Residents must attend mandatory groups on Monday through Friday, such as Narcotics Anonymous/Alcoholics Anonymous (NA/AA) and life skills sessions.

Dr. Marjan Soltani shared that staffing includes at least one awake staff member on site at all times, a second staffer from midday into the evening, overnight security, and an on-call staff member who lives on site for emergencies. She also noted that the program does not perform Medi-Cal billing and that county subsidies cover client stays. She shared that The Harbor originated from a model in Placer County and that AMI Housing has operated the program for about one year with positive client outcomes.

Item #8 Presentation Debrief and Discussion

The Committee debriefed on the information presented by Hope Cooperative and AMI Housing. Key discussion points included:

- A committee member noted that Renewed Hope and The Harbor would not qualify as housing under most county standards and would likely be considered unlicensed shelters.
- Another committee member explained that the programs receive county funding to fill local service gaps, and that counties determine what services they need. The committee must view these programs through the lens of county-specific needs rather than state-funded models.

- A committee member shared that state law requires 24-hour staffing in shelters and noted that county enforcement of this requirement varies. Some programs alter their structure to avoid classification as a shelter.
- Committee members questioned what these programs qualify as if they are not shelters and do not have leases and tenant protections.
- A committee member advocated for a housing-first approach and stated that behavioral health status should not determine a person's access to housing.

Committee members discussed next steps for future committee meetings. The committee provided the following suggestions for future meeting topics:

- A request for outcome data and program agreements from the presenters.
- More education for the committee so they understand the differences between a shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing, sober living, and recovery housing, etc.
- A presentation from the Community Care Licensing Division of the Department of Social Services (CDSS) in Riverside on the distinction between licensed and unlicensed program status.
- A presentation by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on its Long-Term Offender Reentry Recovery Program. The program aligns with the Council's focus on justice-involved populations and recovery housing.
- A presentation from the Department of Social Services (CDSS) on housing models for older adults, with emphasis on models that feature stronger healthcare integration and lease-based arrangements.
- A presentation from the California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals (CCAPP) about their housing certification process, the programs that they certify, and the criteria for that certification.

Item #9 Wrap-up & Next Steps

Chairperson Barbara Mitchell thanked the Committee for their participation and time. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

California Behavioral Health Planning Council Housing and Homelessness Committee

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Agenda Item: Committee Review of Recovery Housing Guidance

Enclosure: [Cal ICH Guidance - Implementing Recovery Housing Programs In Alignment With California Housing First Requirements](#)

How This Agenda Item Relates to Council Mission

To review, evaluate and advocate for an accessible and effective behavioral health system.

The Housing and Homelessness Committee works to influence policy and ensure access to housing programs and services for people who experience or are at risk of homelessness. The Committee carries out activities, such as development of recommendations, that support the Committee Work Plan goals:

- **Work Plan Goal 1:** Advocate for equitable access to housing for persons with serious mental illness and substance use disorders across the lifespan.
- **Work Plan Goal 2:** Contribute to the development of regulations for housing initiatives serving these populations.

This agenda item aligns with the Council's focus area on Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) modification of regulations.

Background/Description:

Recovery Housing is recognized by both the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the United States Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as an important housing option for individuals with substance use disorders. In July 2025, the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) released state guidance on Recovery Housing. The guidance explains that Recovery Housing does not conflict with Housing First principles and is an eligible use of state funds such as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA). This creates new opportunities for counties and programs to expand or develop this housing model.

At the April 16, 2026, committee meeting, there was general consensus for the Committee to review the guidance and provide feedback to Cal ICH. Committee members will discuss and provide feedback on the state guidance on Recovery Housing.

Additional Resources:

[California Interagency Council on Homelessness \(Cal ICH\)
Summary: Recovery Housing Program Guidance](#)

California Behavioral Health Planning Council Housing and Homelessness Committee

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Agenda Item: California Department of Social Services: Community Care Expansion Program Update

How This Agenda Item Relates to Council Mission

To review, evaluate and advocate for an accessible and effective behavioral health system.

This agenda item provides committee members with information about a California Department of Social Services (CDSS) program that funds the acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of adult and senior care facilities that serve Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) applicants and recipients, who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Identification of best practices and housing models for older adults is part of the scope of work of the Committee.

This item also supports the Council's 2026 focus on statewide behavioral health integration for older adults. The Committee continues to highlight and advocate for programs that help people achieve long-term recovery and housing stability.

Background/Description:

The Housing and Homelessness Committee continues to track the implementation of the Community Care Expansion (CCE) Program administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The program was established by [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 172 \(Committee on Budget, Chapter 696, Statutes of 2021\)](#). The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 state budget appropriated \$805 million for the program, available over multiple years. In FY 2022-23, [AB 178 \(Chapter 45, Statutes of 2022\)](#) appropriated an additional \$55 million to fund operating subsidies for existing licensed facilities.

CCE is part of a broader, state-wide effort to expand the state's housing and care continuum, improve treatment outcomes, and prevent the cycle of homelessness or unnecessary institutionalization. These state-wide investments include a total of \$3 billion in funding opportunities through competitive grants to qualified entities to construct, acquire, and rehabilitate real estate assets. These funds are available through CCE as well as the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) at the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

Committee members will hear from **Hanna Azemati, Deputy Director of the Housing and Homelessness Division**, and **Nija Fountano, Section Manager, at CDSS**. Hanna and Nija will provide an update on the program's progress and outcomes.



Hanna Azemati is the Deputy Director of the Housing and Homelessness Division at the Department of Social Services. Before that, she held various positions at the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab and served as a Senior Advisor for Human Services Policy in the New York City Mayor's Office. Hanna also worked as Director of Social Innovation Financing for the New York State Governor's Office developing social impact bonds.

Prior to her focus on state and local government, she worked in international development and in finance. She holds a Master of Arts degree in International Relations from Yale University.



Nija Fountano is a Section Manager in the Housing and Homelessness Division at the California Department of Social Services, where she works in partnership with her team to oversee the development, implementation, and management of the Community Care Expansion Program.

Nija joined the Housing and Homelessness Division in January 2019 as an Analyst helping oversee homelessness services programs for adults, including the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program, Home Safe, and Project Roomkey.

Additional Resources:

[Community Care Expansion Program - California Department of Social Services](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions - Community Care Expansion \(CCE\) Program Grant](#)
[Data Dashboard - Community Care Expansion \(CCE\) Program Grant](#)
[Determine the Best Housing Option For Me - Care Options | California Department of Aging - State of California](#)
[Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program](#)

California Behavioral Health Planning Council Housing and Homelessness Committee

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Agenda Item: Palm Desert Recovery Center: Overview of the Long-Term Offender Reentry Recovery Program

How This Agenda Item Relates to Council Mission

To review, evaluate and advocate for an accessible and effective behavioral health system.

This agenda item provides committee members with information about a state-funded residential reentry and recovery program designed for people who have served long term or life sentences in California prisons. Identification of best practices and housing models funded by the public health system is part of the scope of work of the Committee.

This item also supports the Council's 2026 focus on the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) and the justice-involved populations in the public behavioral health system. The Committee continues to highlight and advocate for programs that help people achieve long-term recovery and housing stability.

Background/Description:

The Long-Term Offender Reentry Recovery (LTORR) Program is designed to assist individuals who have been incarcerated for extended periods. Operated under a contract with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the program focuses on life skills and successful reintegration back into the community through peer-driven support, assistance, and guidance.

LTORR offers a range of services:

- Safe, clean, substance-free housing
- Meals
- Supervision
- Programming
 - Stress management
 - Victim awareness
 - Computer supported literacy
 - Substance abuse education (based on assessed need)
 - 52-week Batterer's Treatment Program (based on assessed need)



Committee members will hear a presentation on the Long-Term Offender Reentry Recovery (LTORR) Program from representatives of the Palm Desert Recovery Center.



Matt Carpenter, Director of Operations at the Palm Desert Recovery Center, has spent nearly six years helping expand the organization's Long-Term Offender Reentry Recovery Program (LTORR) from the ground up. Drawing from his own journey in recovery, Matt is passionate about supporting individuals as they rebuild their lives through structure, accountability, and opportunity.

Beginning his career in the field at an entry-level position, he advanced into executive leadership while overseeing significant program growth, operational development, and community partnerships. Matt also holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix and finds the greatest fulfillment in witnessing the daily success stories of recovery, reunification, and personal transformation.



Luisa Spadafino, Program Coordinator, is passionate about helping individuals heal from past trauma and rediscover purpose, hope, and connection in their lives. She believes recovery is more than sobriety — it is about learning how to truly live again.

Through compassion, leadership, and lived understanding, Luisa works closely with individuals as they rebuild their confidence, heal emotionally, and step back into life with strength and dignity. She is deeply committed to creating a safe and supportive environment where people feel seen, valued, and empowered to grow.



Cody Kennedy MSW, CADC-II, ICADC is the Clinical Director at Palm Desert Recovery Center and brings more than 20 years of experience in mental health and addiction recovery treatment. He earned his Master's degree in Social Work from California State University, San Bernardino, and is certified as both a CADC-II and ICADC professional. Over the course of his career, Cody has served as a case manager, counselor, therapist, and clinical director, giving him extensive experience supporting individuals through every stage of treatment and recovery. Guided by both personal experience and a genuine passion for helping others, he is dedicated to building meaningful connections and creating positive outcomes for clients, families, and communities.



Brandon Hurst, Case Manager, provides one-on-one counseling, facilitates groups, handles administrative duties, and coordinates urinary analysis testing with lab services. Drawing from his own recovery from substance use disorder and past criminality, Brandon uses his lived experience to support individuals transitioning from incarceration back into society. He is currently completing his education to become a substance use disorder (SUD) counselor and plans to obtain his CDAC-1 certification. With a background in customer service and private security for high-end events, Brandon brings a balanced approach of accountability, professionalism, empathy, and understanding to his work in recovery services.

Additional Resources:

[Long Term Offender Reentry Recovery Program \(LTORR\) - Division of Rehabilitative Programs \(DRP\)](#)

California Behavioral Health Planning Council Housing and Homelessness Committee

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Agenda Item: Presentation Debrief and Discussion

How This Agenda Item Relates to Council Mission

To review, evaluate and advocate for an accessible and effective behavioral health system.

This agenda item allows the Housing and Homelessness Committee to assess key points raised during the presentations by the Palm Desert Recovery Center and Department of Social Services (CDSS). The discussion will help guide and identify action items to inform policy recommendations that improve housing access and behavioral health outcomes for individuals with mental health and substance use disorders.

This discussion aligns with Committee Work Plan Goal 1.

- **Goal 1:** Advocate for Equitable Access to Housing for Persons with Serious Mental Illness Across the Lifespan

This agenda item also supports the Council's 2026 focus on the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA). The Committee will utilize this information to advocate for more effective policies that support individuals with behavioral health needs.

Background/ Description:

The committee will review today's presentations and discuss possible next steps. Members may identify topics that need more research, set advocacy priorities, and suggest action items.