

BHSA Housing Interventions DHCS Office Hours

Friday, January 30, 2026
2:00-3:30 PM

Welcome and Purpose

Office Hour Dates

DHCS will host three Office Hour Sessions in Q1 2026 to communicate BHSA Housing Interventions policy clarifications and new policy, where applicable:

- » **January:** Friday, 1/30 from 2:00-3:30pm PT
- » **February:** Monday, 2/23 from 12-1:00pm PT
- » **March:** Monday, 3/23 from 12-1:00pm PT

» Recommended Office Hour Attendees:

- County Behavioral Health Directors
 - County staff working on housing-related issues
 - In cases where another county entity serves as the contracted Transitional Rent Provider, Community Supports Provider, or is otherwise involved, those representatives are also encouraged to attend.
- » The information presented during Office Hours will be subsequently published in the [BHSA Housing Interventions Policy and Implementation Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ). Relevant information will also be communicated with Medi-Cal MCPs.

DHCS Resource: BHSA Housing Interventions Policy and Implementation FAQ (Updated December 2025)



The FAQ is posted online on the DHCS Behavioral Health Transformation [Resources](#) tab and on the [Housing for Health](#) webpage.

- » In December 2025, DHCS published a revised a version of the BHSA Housing Interventions Policy and Implementation [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ).
- » The update expands the FAQ to include
 - Questions DHCS has received about BHSA Housing Interventions more broadly
 - Guidance for integrating Medi-Cal in the transition from existing programs (e.g., Mental Health Services Act and Behavioral Health Bridge Housing).

Recap: Implementation of New Housing Services

DHCS encourages coordination and collaboration between counties and MCPs to ensure eligible Medi-Cal Members have access to this Medi-Cal benefit and BHSA Housing Interventions.

Transitional Rent(*Medi-Cal Community Support*)

- » Covered by Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans (MCPs)
- » **NOW LIVE:** Effective 1/1/26 for the Behavioral Health Population of Focus (POF)
- » Includes coverage of **up to six months** of rental assistance
- » *For more information see [Community Supports Policy Guide Volume 2](#)*

Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Housing Interventions

- » Administered by County Behavioral Health Agencies (Counties)
- » Effective 7/1/26
- » Counties are required to spend 30 percent of their BHSA funds on housing interventions for BHSA-eligible individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness¹
- » *For more information see [BHSA Policy Manual Section 7.C Housing Interventions](#)*

¹ Counties with populations under 200,000 may request an exemption to the 30% Housing Intervention Component Allocation.

Today's Topics

1. Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) and Medi-Cal Sequencing Best Practices

- » Use of “the Transitional Rent benefit, *where available*” clarification for BHBH
- » Use of BHBH to Support Medi-Cal Members Who Need Urgent Housing

2. Policy Clarifications Based on Questions on the FAQ

- » BHSA Housing Interventions Cap on Interim Settings
- » Use of BHSA/BHBH when a Medi-Cal Member is Transitioning MCPs
- » Coverage of Housing Outreach and Engagement for Small County Exemptions

3. Documentation Best Practices

- » Housing Support Plans

1. Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHHB) and Medi-Cal Sequencing Best Practices

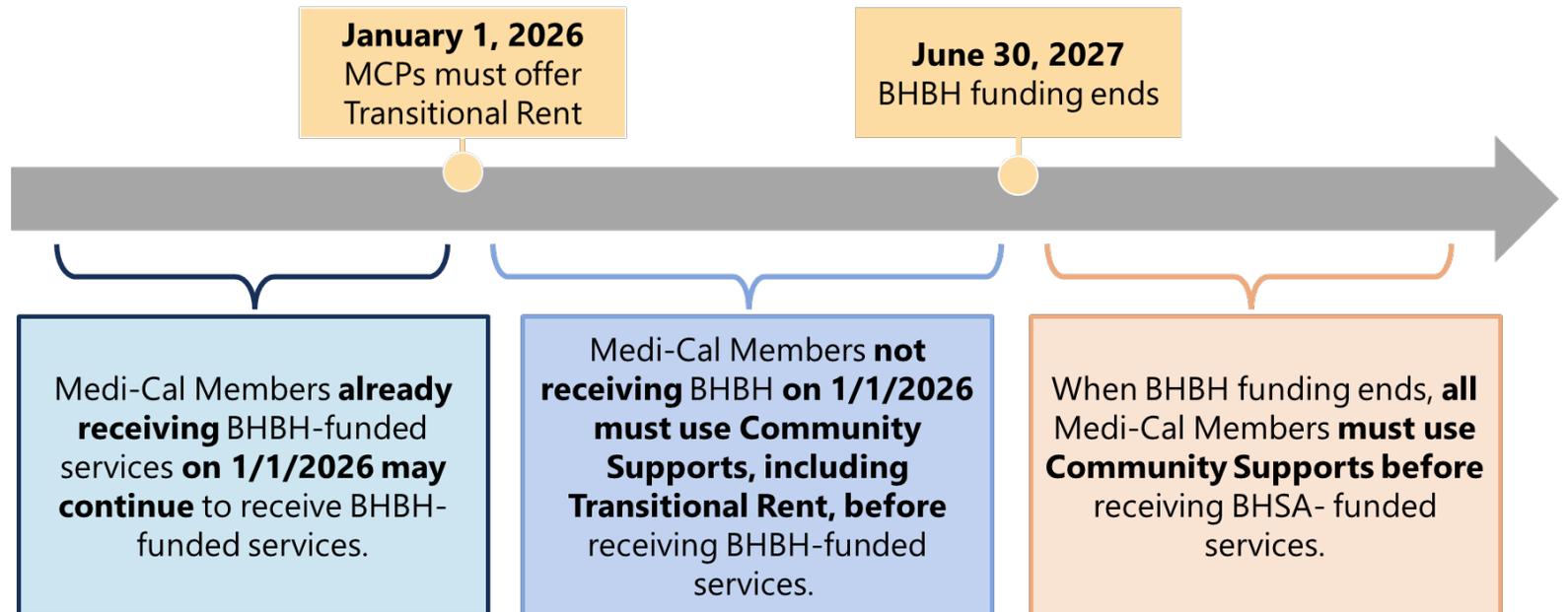


Recap: Sequencing of BHBH and Medi-Cal Funding Guidance Shared to Date

DHCS clarified the principles for sequencing BHBH and Medi-Cal funding during the 12/10 County Behavioral Directors' Meeting.

What Happens for Individuals Receiving Services under **BHBH** when Transitional Rent goes live?

Individuals already receiving services under BHBH on 1/1/2026 – may continue to receive services under BHBH.
Individuals not receiving BHBH on 1/1/26 – required to use Community Supports before BHBH.



Sequencing of BHBH and Medi-Cal Funding Guidance Shared to Date

DHCS also released guidance in the December 2025 update of the BHSA FAQ.

See [FAQ](#) Section 2, Part II, Question 2.

Question: What are the requirements for using BHBH funding with the Transitional Rent benefit?

Response: In alignment with the [BHBH program requirements](#), those who are currently housed under BHBH on January 1, 2026, are allowed to remain housed under BHBH funding and are not expected to use the Transitional Rent benefit until the conclusion of the BHBH funding on June 30, 2027.

Individuals who are new to the BHBH program after January 1, 2026 will be expected to use the Transitional Rent benefit, **where available**, before receiving BHBH funded housing.

BHBH and Medi-Cal Sequencing Policy

DHCS has received several questions about expectations of counties for serving Medi-Cal Members who are new to the BHBH program after January 1, 2026.

Today, we will clarify...

- » The general expectation to use Medi-Cal “where available” for Medi-Cal Members who are new to the BHBH program after January 1, 2026.
- » What options are available to counties to continue to use BHBH to serve individuals in **urgent** need of **short-term** housing.

DHCS' Guiding Principles

1. Uphold the expectation to **leverage Medi-Cal, which is federally matched spending**, to the greatest extent possible.
2. Acknowledge operational complexity and **provide flexibility for counties while contracting for Transitional Rent remains under way**.
3. Ensure Medi-Cal Members can **rapidly access housing in urgent situations**.
4. Continue to promote **close coordination** between counties and MCPs to serve their common clients.

Reminder of Housing Services Available Under Medi-Cal

The policies we are about to review apply to the services that are *both supported by BHBH and available under Medi-Cal* (i.e., interim housing, housing navigation, housing deposits, recuperative care, and short-term post-hospitalization housing).

Reminder: Housing Community Supports Funded by Medi-Cal

- » Transitional Rent*
- » Housing Transition Navigation Services (HTNS)*
- » Housing Deposits*
- » Recuperative Care (Medical Respite)*
- » Short-Term Post-Hospitalization Housing (STPHH)*
- » Housing Tenancy and Sustaining Services (HTSS)
- » Day Habilitation Programs

These five (*) Housing Community Supports are those that overlap with what your county might be funding with BHBH today. We know that interim housing and housing navigation are the most common points of intersection.

As a reminder:

- » MCPs are required to cover Transitional Rent for the Behavioral Health Population of Focus.
- » While MCPs are not required to cover HTNS and Housing Deposits, all MCPs in all counties currently do.¹

¹ See CalAIM Community Supports Managed Care Elections here: [Community-Supports-Elections-by-MCP-and-County.pdf](#)

Medi-Cal “Where available” Clarification

What “where available” means for Medi-Cal Members varies based on Housing Community Supports contract formation in the county at the time the county is seeking to deliver the intersecting Housing Community Supports (see previous slide).

Scenarios

- 1) County **is** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports service.
- 2) County **is not** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports service, but the MCP has another Community Supports Provider in the county in its network to deliver the service.
- 3) County **is not** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports service, and the MCP is not contracted with any other Community Supports Provider in the county to deliver the service.

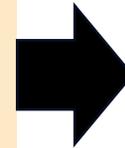
Note: County refers to the county behavioral health agency or their designated county department or agency.

Scenario 1

Clarification for counties that *are* contracted with the MCP to deliver Housing Community Supports:

Scenario 1

- » County **is** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports service that would otherwise be funded with BHBH



Requirement to use Community Supports funding, including Transitional Rent

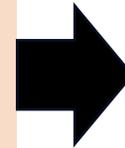
- » Counties are required to utilize Housing Community Supports funding before using BHBH to cover a Medi-Cal Member's housing services.
- » Flexibility for Medi-Cal Members who need urgent interim housing (*see slide 17*)

Scenario 2

Clarification for counties that are *not* contracted with the MCP to deliver Housing Community Supports, but where there is *another* Community Supports Provider contracted with the MCP:

Scenario 2

- » County **is not** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports service, but the MCP has another Community Supports Provider in the county in its network to deliver the service that would otherwise be funded by BHBH.



Requirement to use Community Supports funding, including Transitional Rent

- » The county must refer the Medi-Cal Member to the Member's MCP for use of Housing Community Supports before using BHBH to cover a Medi-Cal Member's housing services. **DHCS expects coordination between counties and MCPs to ensure provider identification and establish referral pathways.**
- » Flexibility for Medi-Cal Members who need urgent interim housing (*see slide 18*)

Scenario 3

Clarification for counties that are *not* contracted with the MCP to deliver Housing Community Supports and where there is *no other* contracted Community Supports Provider:

Scenario 3

- » County **is not** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports service, and the MCP is not contracted with any other Community Supports Provider in the county to deliver the service at this time.
- » Note: DHCS expects this scenario will diminish over time as MCPs expand contracting for Housing Community Supports, including Transitional Rent



Requirement to use Community Supports funding, including Transitional Rent

- » The county may use BHBH to cover a Medi-Cal Member's housing services.

Flexibility for Urgent Housing Needs

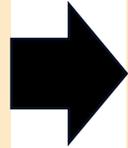
The following slides outline the policies to support Medi-Cal Members who need urgent housing based on Transitional Rent Provider Status:

- » County **is** a contracted Transitional Rent Provider.
- » County **is not** a contracted Transitional Rent Provider.
- » DHCS recognizes there are **times when counties need access to flexible funding** to address urgent housing needs.
- » The policies to support Medi-Cal Members who need urgent housing **differ based on whether the county is a contracted Transitional Rent Provider or not a contracted Transitional Rent Provider.**
- » These policies apply to both **BHBH and BHSA.**

Policies to Support Medi-Cal Members Who Need Urgent Interim Housing

Transitional Rent Provider Status

- » County **is** a contracted Transitional Rent Provider.



Policies¹

- » **Streamlined Provisional Authorization** — County preliminarily authorizes Transitional Rent for Medi-Cal Member.
- » **Use BHBH and BHSA Funds as an “advance”** — County and Flex Pools use BHBH or BHSA funds as a cash advance for Medi-Cal Member to receive Transitional Rent/Housing Community Supports while submitting a claim to the MCP for reimbursement.

¹ See [BHSA Policy and Implementation FAQ \(Updated December 2025\)](#) Section 1, Part IV, Question 4 (pg. 19-21) for more information on Streamlined Provisional Authorization, and Section 1, Part III, Question 10 (pg. 15-16), and Section 2, Part II, Question 4 (pg. 24) for information on using BHBH/BHSA as a cash advance.

Policies to Support Medi-Cal Members Who Need Urgent Interim Housing

Transitional Rent Provider Status

- » County **is not** a contracted Transitional Rent Provider.



Policy

- » County may use BHBH or BHSA funds for **up to 21 calendar days** to cover immediate housing and related support costs.
- » The county **must develop a Housing Support Plan and submit a Transitional Rent referral to the Medi-Cal Member's MCP within 7 calendar days.**
- » At the end of the 21 calendar days, the county **cannot use BHBH or BHSA funding until the Medi-Cal Member's Transitional Rent benefit is exhausted.**

BHBH and Medi-Cal Sequencing Summary

Scenario

County **is** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports Service



Policy Clarification on "Where Available"

County is required to utilize **Community Supports funding, before BHBH.**



Policies to support Medi-Cal Members who need *urgent* interim housing:

- » **Streamlined Provisional Authorization** — County preliminary authorizes Transitional Rent.
- » **BHBH Funds as an "advance"** — County and Flex Pools use BHBH or BHSA funds as a cash advance for Transitional Rent/Housing Community Supports.

County **is not** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports service, but there is another Community Supports Provider contracted with the MCP.



County must refer the **Medi-Cal Member to the Member's MCP for use of Community Supports before BHBH.**



- » County may use BHBH and BHSA funds for **up to 21 calendar days** to cover immediate interim housing and any related navigation support costs.

County **is not** contracted with the MCP to deliver the Housing Community Supports service and there is no other contracted Community Supports Provider.



County may use **BHBH.**

2. Policy Clarifications Based on Questions on the FAQ



BHSA Housing Interventions Cap on Interim Settings (1/2)

Question: If a Medi-Cal Member does not receive coverage of the full 6 months of Transitional Rent in an interim setting¹, can BHSA Housing Interventions cover the difference between Transitional Rent and the 12-month interim settings limit?

(see next slide)

1. Due to the Medi-Cal global cap on coverage of room and board, a Medi-Cal Member may receive less than 6-months of coverage for Transitional Rent.

BHSA Housing Interventions Cap on Interim Settings (2/2)

Current Policy¹

“For BHSA eligible individuals who have exhausted the Transitional Rent benefit, counties may use the BHSA Housing Interventions funding to provide an additional six months of subsidy for placement in an interim setting. For BHSA eligible individuals who are not eligible for Transitional Rent, 12 months of coverage in an interim setting may be provided. After the 6- or 12-month time limit has expired, Housing Interventions funds may only be used for placement in a permanent setting.”



Policy Clarification

- » Yes, if a Medi-Cal Member does not receive the full 6 months of Transitional Rent, **BHSA Housing Interventions can cover the remaining months of placement in an interim setting up to the 12-month interim settings limit.**
- » *Example: 3 months of Medi-Cal Transitional Rent + **up to 9 months** of BHSA HI funded interim housing*

Use of BHSA/BHBH when Medi-Cal Member is Transitioning MCPs (1/2)

**Question: Can counties pay rent or deposits using
BHBH/BHSA for Medi-Cal Members transitioning between
MCPs (e.g., switching managed care plans mid-program)?**

(see next slide)

Use of BHSA/BHBH when Medi-Cal Member is Transitioning MCPs (2/2)

Current Policy¹

“If a Member transitions to a new MCP and the **new MCP offers the same** Community Support(s) that the Member received under their previous MCP, then the **new MCP must honor the Community Support authorization for that Member.**” This includes:

- » MCP must automatically authorize newly enrolled Members receiving a Community Support.
- » MCP must have a process for engaging the previous MCP, Member, and/or Community Supports Provider to mitigate gaps in care.
- » MCP is also encouraged to bring in network new Members’ out-of-network Community Supports Providers.

Policy Clarification

If a Medi-Cal Member transitions to a new MCP and the new MCP offers Transitional Rent and/or Housing Deposits (see note below), **the Medi-Cal Member is still eligible to receive the service from the MCP, and BHBH/BHSA cannot be used for those services until expended, following the usual requirements.**²

Reminder:

- » All MCPs must offer **Transitional Rent** for the Behavioral Health Population of Focus (POF).
- » All MCPS currently offer **Housing Deposits**.
- » Counties may use BHSA/BHBH to support Medi-Cal Members who need urgent interim housing in the event MCP funding is not immediately available (as discussed on prior slides).

1. See pages 85-86 of the [Community Support Policy Guide Volume 2](#).

2. California Welfare & Institutions (W&I) Code section 5830, subdivision (c)(2).

Coverage of Housing Outreach and Engagement for Small County Exemptions (1/2)

Question: Can a small county requesting an exemption to reduce their Housing Interventions allocation spend a portion of their remaining Housing Interventions funding on housing outreach and engagement?

(see next slide)

Coverage of Housing Outreach and Engagement for Small County Exemptions (2/2)

Current Policy¹

“In a fiscal year, a county may transfer from its housing intervention funds up to 7 percent of its total BHSA allocation for that fiscal year. **However, if a county uses housing intervention funds (up to 7 percent) to provide outreach and engagement, the amount of funds the county can transfer out of the housing intervention component must be decreased by a corresponding amount.** For example, if County A chooses to use 3 percent of its annual Housing Intervention funds for outreach and engagement, then County A would be able to transfer no more than 4 percent out of its Housing Interventions component into another funding component. Counties are not required to utilize Housing Interventions funding for outreach and engagement.”

Policy Clarification

- » Yes, small counties requesting an exemption to reduce their 30% Housing Interventions allocation beyond the 7% transfer allowance **can dedicate up to 7%** of their remaining Housing Interventions allocation to **housing** outreach and engagement.
- » DHCS recommends counties include how much of the requested percentage for Housing Interventions they are proposing to spend on outreach and engagement in their **exemption request justification.**

3. Documentation Best Practices



Housing Support Plan Clarifications (1/2)



As a reminder, the MCP must require a Housing Support Plan (HSP) to be in place as a condition for authorizing Transitional Rent for a Medi-Cal Member, in both interim and permanent settings.

- » HSPs are personalized roadmaps supporting a Medi-Cal Member's journey from homelessness or housing instability to long-term housing stability.
- » DHCS will **not** be releasing a HSP **template**.
- » **The HSP should include, but does not need to be specific to, Transitional Rent.**
- » **Existing HSPs are acceptable, so long as they meet the requirements** specified in the [DHCS Community Supports Policy Guide](#).

Housing Support Plan Clarifications (2/2)

» One required element is that the HSP must identify the Medi-Cal Member's permanent housing strategy and solution after Transitional Rent:

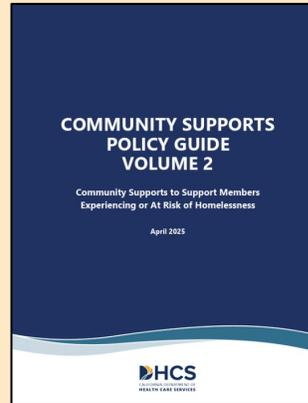
- *For authorization for interim settings:* The HSP should indicate that the Member's county behavioral health agency confirmed that the Member is BHSA-eligible and will be able to transition to BHSA Housing Interventions at the expiration of Transitional Rent, if the Member is otherwise not able to secure a long-term rental subsidy.
- *For authorization for permanent settings:* A comprehensive housing support plan must be in place. This means that a permanent housing solution has been developed for the member, including identifying the payment source(s) and mechanism(s) to maintain housing at the expiration of Transitional Rent.

» HSPs are **not compliance or enforcement tools**, but are intended to support coordination to meet Medi-Cal Member needs.

» **Note:** Flex Pools can satisfy this requirement with a blanket statement indicating that a Member has secured a permanent subsidy, without providing further details.

Housing Support Plan Resources

**DHCS
recommends
counties consult
the following
resources when
developing
Housing Support
Plans:**



[DHCS' Community Supports Policy Guide Volume 2](#)

- » For HSP details see pages 17-19
- » For Transitional Rent authorization guidelines see pages 72-74



[CSH's Housing Support Plan Quality Review Tool](#)

- » Designed to support consistent and more person-centered HSPs, with particular checklists for Transitional Rent and Housing Deposits

Additional Resources

Resources

- » [BHSA Policy Manual Section 7.C. Housing Interventions Volume 3](#)
- » [Community Supports Policy Guide Volume 2](#)
- » [Housing for Health](#)
 - DHCS strategies to assist members experiencing Homelessness
- » [Behavioral Health Transformation](#)
 - Discover additional information and access resources
 - Sign up on the DHCS [website](#) to receive monthly Behavioral Health Transformation updates

Questions and Feedback

- » Please send any other questions or feedback about Behavioral Health Transformation to BHTInfo@dhcs.ca.gov and/or about Transitional Rent to CalAIMECMILOS@dhcs.ca.gov
- » Stay tuned for further updates!