

California Behavioral Health Planning Council

**Housing and Homelessness Committee**

Meeting Minutes

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

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**Item #1      Review and Accept January 2026 Meeting Minutes**

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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

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

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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.

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**Item #3      Debrief of Turn to Recovery Tour**

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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.

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**Item #4      General Public Comment**

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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.

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**Item #5      Update on Committee Activities**

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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.

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

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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.

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

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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.

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**Item #8 Presentation Debrief and Discussion**

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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.

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**Item #9      Wrap-up & Next Steps**

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