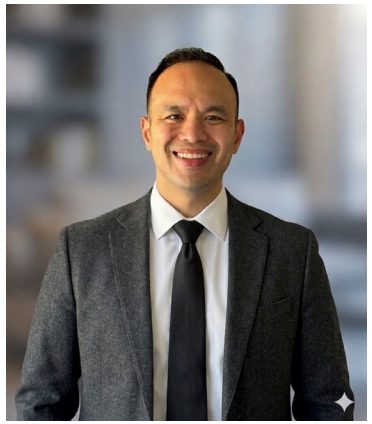
Flexible Housing Subsidy Pools ("Flex Pools") Request for Applications Webinar: Tribal Funding Partners

November 17th, 2026

DHCS
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Welcome



Glenn Tsang

Policy Advisor for Homelessness and Housing, DHCS



Andrea Zubiate

Chief, Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA), DHCS

Purpose

- This is the Tribal Funding Partner – specific webinar for the recently released 'Flex Pools Investment Grant Request for Applications (RFA)"
- The goal is to share an overview of the RFA and Tribal Funding Partner model, guidelines for Tribal Funding Partner and County eligibility, recommendations for successful, collaborative applications, and discuss questions from those interested in learning more or applying for the opportunity.
- Content shared here will be posted on DHCS Housing for Health website.

Please send any questions not covered today about this RFA to FlexPools@dhcs.ca.gov.

Today's Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Overview of Flex Pools
3. Overview of the Request for Applications (RFA)
4. Tribal Funding Partner Model
5. Eligibility Criteria
6. Permitted Uses of Funding
7. RFA Application Questions and Guidance
8. Submission Instructions
9. Q&A

Overview of Flexible Housing Subsidy Pools ("Flex Pools")

With the launches of Transitional Rent and BHSA Housing Interventions, DHCS is committed to supporting the formation and sustainability of Flex Pools.

Flex Pools help house people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness by:

- Coordinating and **braiding funding streams**, facilitating compliance and required reporting
- Acting as a **fiscal intermediary** between funders and landlords, on behalf of participants
- Identifying, securing, and supporting **a portfolio of units** for participants
- **Coordinating with providers of housing supportive services** to support participants

For more information, see the Flex Pools Technical Assistance Resource.

Flex Pools Academy Faculty



Alison Klurfeld

Health Care and Housing Consultant, Klurfeld Consulting, LLC

Previously: Director of Safety Net Programs and Partnerships, L.A. Care Health Plan



Whitney Lawrence

Housing and Health Care Consultant

Previously: Director of Policy and Planning for Housing for Health, L.A. County Dept. of Health Services



Danielle Wildkress

Housing and Health Care Consultant

Previously: Chief Program Officer at Brilliant Corners



Stephany Ashley

Housing and Health Care Consultant

Previously: Director of Northern California Housing Services at Brilliant Corners



Cheryl Winter

Behavioral Health and Housing Consultant

Previously: Associate Director of CA Policy, Corporation for Supportive Housing

Overview of 2026 Flex Pools Investment Grant RFA

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Overview of BH Flex Pools RFA

On November 2, 2026, DHCS announced a new grant opportunity, providing approximately $57 million, to help launch or scale Flex Pools in local communities to serve people with behavioral health needs.

About the Flex Pool Investment Grant

County behavioral health agencies are eligible to apply for this competitive funding opportunity to launch or scale their Flex Pool. Grantees will apply for one of two cohorts below, and all recipients will participate in technical assistance activities:

1. **Operational Cohort:** Intended for communities with an established, operational (or near-operational) Flex Pool with a third-party Operator, as well as sufficient scale and infrastructure to support high-volume housing efforts, or
2. **Building Cohort:** Intended for communities that are actively planning or establishing their Flex Pool or operating smaller-scale, In-House models, including small and rural counties

Tribal entities may join applications in either cohort as Tribal Funding Partners.

Key Dates

- **November 2, 2026:** RFA Released
- **December 17, 2026:** RFA Deadline
- **February, 2027:** Grantees announced
- **March 2027:** Grants awarded; program launch

Tribal Funding Partner Model

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Flex Pools Investment Grant RFA Applicants

Cohort	Operational Cohort	Building Cohort	Tribal Funding Partner
Eligible Applicants	County behavioral health agencies	County behavioral health agencies	Tribes and Tribal Entities
Designed For	Communities with an established Flex Pool and a third-party Operator that is under contract or near-operational	Communities planning or establishing new Flex Pools or operating smaller-scale, in-house* model Flex Pools	Tribal entities that are interested in investing in their local Flex Pool to expand housing opportunities in their communities
Award Size Per Grantee	Up to $6 million	Up to $500,000	Up to $500,000
Permitted funding uses: Domain 1	☑	☑	☑
Permitted funding uses: Domain 2	☑	☑	☑
Estimated # of Awards	8-10	8-10	4-6

For more information on Flex Pools models, including the in-house model, please refer to the Flex Pools Model TA Resource.

Focus for Today

Defining Tribal Entities for This RFA Opportunity

Tribal entities that are eligible to apply for this RFA include:

a) Federally recognized Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, or Urban Indian organizations or

b) Health care programs operated by Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, or Urban Indian organizations, as defined in Section 1603 of Title 25 of the United States Code and further defined in Section 5304.

Other eligible applicants can include organizations that do not meet the above definition of eligibility (such as Tribally Designated Housing Entities, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporations, or for-profit businesses) that have written support from an eligible Tribal entity for a proposed Flex Pool benefitting a tribal community.

Tribal Funding Partners Overview

Tribal entities are key partners in local housing and behavioral health systems and are invited to join county behavioral health agencies' applications for this funding opportunity as "Tribal Funding Partners."

Tribal Funding Partners can **receive up to $500K** in addition to the county's award

Counties can receive **bonus points of up to 7.5% of the RFA maximum score** for including a Tribal Funding Partner

Aspects of Tribal Funding Model	Description
Multiple Partnerships	More than one Tribal entity can join the same county application. A Tribal entity can partner with more than one county if geographically appropriate.
Direct Payment	Awards paid directly to Tribal entity, with option for Tribal entity to defer funds to the county
Dedicated Technical Assistance	Tribal Funding Partners will be expected to participate in activities of their Academy team, as appropriate. Tribal Funding Partners will have their own dedicated TA space.
Shared Accountability and Reporting	County and Tribal Funding Partner(s) to partner on data for quarterly progress reports.

Basic Flex Pool Model

Funders

- Funding Source A
- Funding Source B
- Funding Source C

Flex Pool Administration and Operation

Lead Entity: Plays the role of convener and "system driver"—identifies, aggregates, and administers funding sources, and contracts with the Operator, if the Operator is separate. The Lead Entity may also be one of the funders.

Operator: Responsible for keeping the day-to-day operations of the Flex Pool running smoothly and delivering excellent customer service to landlords, participants, and the Lead Entity

Housing Supportive Service Providers

Landlords

- Landlord X
- Landlord Y
- Landlord Z



Housing and Supports for Participants

The DHCS Flex Pools TA Resource defines the basic Flex Pool Model. However, this model looks different in every community.

Tribal Entities Applying as Tribal Funding Partners: Eligibility Criteria

1. Must **join an existing** Investment Grant application whose Flex Pool geography includes people served by the Tribal entity.
2. Must be named as a **Tribal Funding Partner.**
3. Must demonstrate intent to work with the partner Flex Pool, to **serve people with behavioral health needs** whom the Tribal entity refers.
4. Must demonstrate intent to partner with the Lead Entity and Operator to **design and manage a Tribal referral pathway** into the Flex Pool.
    1. People referred by the Tribal entity do not need to be Tribal members – that is up to the Tribal entity's discretion.
5. Must demonstrate a commitment to take part in the Flex Pool's **planning and governance** in partnership with the Lead Entity and other Flex Pool funders.
6. Must submit a joint partnership statement signed by authorized representatives of the Tribal entity, the applicant, and the Lead Entity (if different).

Counties Applying with a Tribal Funding Partner: Eligibility Criteria

1. Must demonstrate intent to include the Tribal Funding Partner in the Flex Pool's **governance structure.**
2. Must demonstrate intent to develop a **referral pathway in partnership** with the Tribal Funding Partner and accept referrals in good faith.
3. Must work with the Tribal Funding Partner on **culturally responsive approaches** to housing placement and supportive services for the people it refers.
4. Must share information with the Tribal Funding Partner on **how its funds are used and on outcomes** for the people the Tribe refers, consistent with applicable privacy law and Tribal data sovereignty.
5. Must sign a **written partnership agreement** (such as a Memorandum of Understanding) with the Tribe within six months of award, setting out these commitments in more detail.

Technical Assistance (TA) Academy 2.0

To access Investment Grant funding, all grantees (including Tribal Funding Partners) must commit to and sustain participation in the Flex Pool TA Academy 2.0, led by a team of Flex Pool Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) who bring deep statewide expertise in housing, health care, and Flex Pools, with support from DHCS.

TA Focus Areas

Assist organizations to **launch, expand, or strengthen a sustainable Flex Pool** model in their locality

Help communities identify resources and partners to establish or further develop their Flex Pool

Provide **strategic guidance** to navigate local challenges and develop tailored solutions

Create **dedicated space for Tribal entities** to build and share Flex Pool knowledge, and take part in local Flex Pool decisions on equal footing as other funders

Technical Assistance (TA) Academy 2.0

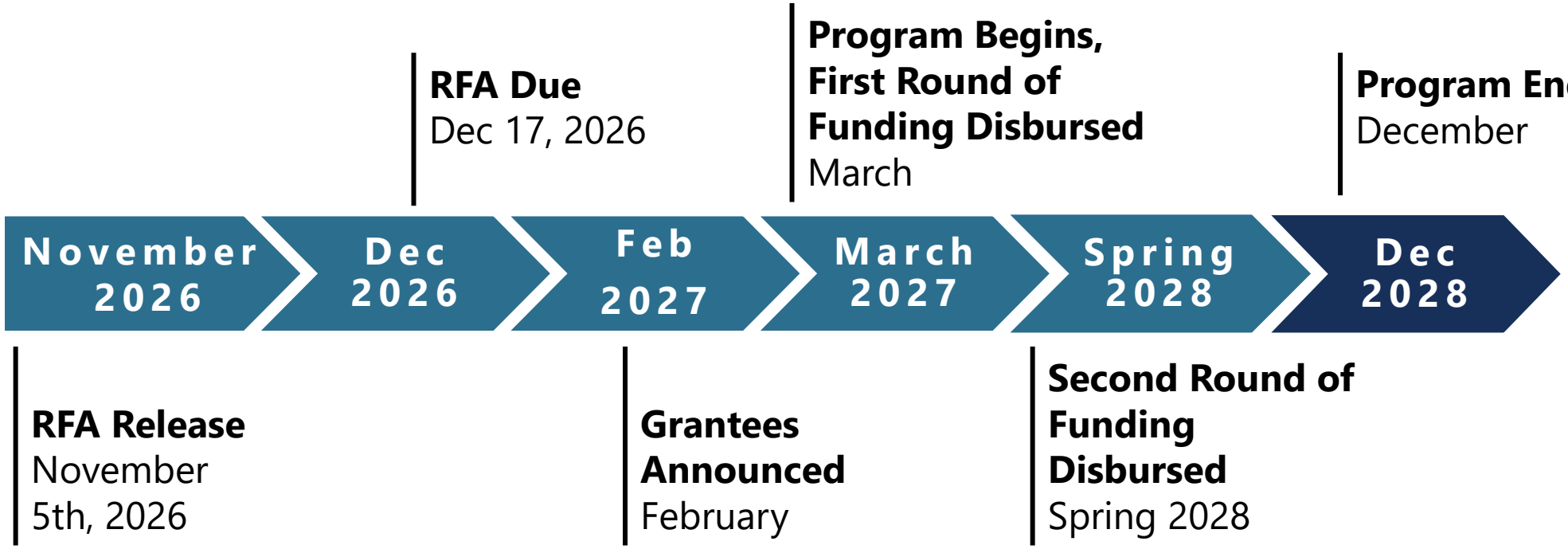
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Tribal Funding Partners should **be prepared to participate fully** in all Flex Pool Academy activities as appropriate, including:

- One-on-one coaching sessions *specifically offered to Tribal Funding Partners*
- Tribal Peer Learning Cohort *specifically offered to Tribal Funding Partners*
- One-on-one coaching sessions with Lead Entities as needed
- All-Academy, One-Day In-Person Gatherings (no more than 2 total)
- Small Cohort Virtual or In-Person Gatherings *specifically offered to Tribal Funding Partners*
- DHCS Virtual Office Hours (no more than quarterly)
- Ad hoc support & resource sharing

Flex Pools Investment Grant Timeline

The RFA is now open and is due on December 17, 2026
DHCS will notify selected applicants of awards in February, and the program will run through December 2028.



The Tribal entity must spend or encumber the funds into the Flex Pool by December 31, 2028; once encumbered, the funds have no spending deadline.

Permitted Uses of Funds

Domain 1: Capacity and Flex Pool Infrastructure

Domain 1 funds can be used for expenses associated with planning and establishing a new Flex Pool or expanding and strengthening an existing Flex Pool. Allowable uses of funds consist of:

- **Staff/Consultant Costs:** Costs for staff or consultants to hold meetings, draft materials, conduct background research and needs assessment(s), develop educational and outreach materials to assist with engaging stakeholders, and otherwise assist in the launch, maintenance, and expansion of the Flex Pool.
- **Supplies and Materials:** Supplies and materials pertaining to the establishment, maintenance or operations of the Flex Pool.
- **Meeting / Provider Engagement Costs:** Community and provider engagement activities including in-person, virtual meetings, and collaboration forums.
- **Travel or Other Costs:** To support the participation of Flex Pool Lead Entity, Operators, and partners.
- **Technology:** To support the launch or operations of a Flex Pool (e.g., client relationship management system, financial documentation or billing software, data analysis or visualization software, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) modifications, data exchange planning and/or implementation support).
- **Capacity-Building**: For the third-party Flex Pool Operator, such as funding for working capital, staffing costs for HR, Finance, IT, and other administrative positions, training, leadership development, and/or strategic planning support.
- **One-Time Startup Funds:** to otherwise support Flex Pool launch or expansion, including initial staffing, infrastructure, or administration within the Lead Entity or other partners.

Domain 2: Start Up and Gap Funding

Domain 2 funds are intended for operational expenses of Flex Pools, including costs necessary to help eligible individuals secure and sustain housing and facilitate faster move-ins and support sustainable outcomes. The entirety of Domain 2 funding must be invested in and administered through the Flex Pool as well as focus on serving individuals with behavioral health needs. Allowable uses of funds consist of:

- **Rental Payments and Move-In Supports**
  - Communities are expected to maximize reimbursement of Transitional Rent, BHSA, and other housing funding sources for rental subsidies and move-in costs. Flex Pool Investment grant funds may complement but not replace these sources. This may be done by using Investment Grant payments to be deployed first and later reimbursed by Transitional Rent/BHSA, through an Advance structure, and/or deploying Flex Pool Investment Grant funding for ongoing rental subsidies after Transitional Rent/BHSA sources have been exhausted.
- **Unit Acquisition Costs:** Including rental payments, holding fees and deposits made for vacant units at the onset of procuring units into a portfolio and/or during vacancy periods between placements of program participants.
- **Operating Costs:** For master leasing, master rental subsidy agreements, or similar models.
- **Damage mitigation and landlord incentives**
- **Advance and Reserve Funds:** For Flex Pool operations, including any staff costs.

RFA Application Questions and Guidance

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RFA Guiding Principles for Tribal Funding Partners and County Applicants Applying Together

Develop your application collaboratively.	Counties and Tribal Funding Partners should work together to identify individual and shared housing needs and discuss how best to reflect them in the application, especially for the budget and budget narrative sections.
Resource the partnership.	Collaboration takes time and resources to be successful. Make sure you include any support needed to facilitate development of joint MOUs and workflows, staff time, and technology, as well as funding for participant needs.
Treat the Tribal Funding Partner as a Flex Pool funder.	The Tribal Funding Partner can "buy into" the Flex Pool as a funder of housing, services, and/or capacity for individuals it refers. This could mean funding rental subsidies, master leasing units for Tribal members, or many other models.
Pair housing with culturally-specific services.	Tribal Funding Partners are experts on the needs of their community members, and Flex Pool models work best when paired with supportive services. Counties and Tribes should work together to identify culturallyresponsive services to pair with the Flex Pool housing services package.

Operational and Building Cohorts: Tribal Funding Partner Section

Narrative and Application Questions (180 points)
Budget (10 points)
Tribal Funding Partner Section (if applicable, allows applicant to qualify for bonus points up to 7.5% of total)

- Applicants should describe **how they intend to partner with the Lead Entity and invest in the Flex Pool**.
- Applicants should clearly demonstrate:
  - A clearly defined target population and planned use of funds
  - Readiness for the Tribal Funding Partner and Lead Entity to work together as collaborative partners

Tribal Funding Partners: Budget

Narrative and Application Questions (180 points)

Budget (10 points)

Tribal Funding Partner Section (if applicable, allows applicant to qualify for bonus points up to 7.5% of total)

- Applicants should describe **how they intend to use the investment grant** to achieve desired outcomes.
- Applicants should ensure that the requested budget for the Tribal Funding Partner is complementary to the county's budget request.

Operational and Building Cohorts: Tribal Funding Partner Section

Narrative and Application Questions (180 points)

Budget (10 points)

Tribal Funding Partner Section (if applicable, allows applicant to qualify for bonus points up to 7.5% of total)

- A joint partnership statement is **required from the Tribe, the applicant, and the Lead Entity, if different**, to qualify the application for bonus points and consideration for Tribal Partner funding.

Tribal Funding Partners: Budget

Category	Brief Narrative *(no more than 50-100 words per row)*	Expected budget *(dollar amount)*	Expected Timeframe *(can extend beyond 12/2028)*
DOMAIN 1: Capacity & Flex Pool Infrastructure			
Staff and/or Consultant Costs, Supplies and Materials, Meeting Costs and/or Provider Engagement Costs, Travel or other Costs to Support Stakeholder Participation, Technology, Capacity Building, One-Time Startup Funds			
DOMAIN 2: Start Up and Gap Funding			
Rental Payments and Move-In Supports, Unit Acquisitions, Operating Costs, Damage Mitigation and Landlord Incentives, Advance and Reserve Funds, Other, Indirect Costs (Maximum = 15% of grant)			
TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED *Up to $500k*			

Submission Instructions

Application Submission Instructions

- The application and attachments, along with submission instructions, can be found on the **DHCS Housing for Health website.**
- Applications will be **accepted electronically only**. Applications may not be hand delivered or mailed.
- **Submit applications by email** to FlexPools@dhcs.ca.gov with the following:
  - Subject Line: RFA Submission [Operational or Building Cohort] by [Name of Applicant Organization]
  - See RFA Attachments A, B, and C for required application content
- The deadline for applications will be **December 17, at 5:00 p.m. PT**.



For individuals with disabilities, DHCS will provide assistive services such as reading or writing assistance and conversion of the RFA in braille, large print, audiocassette, or computer disk. To request copies of written materials in an alternate format, please send an email to FlexPools@dhcs.ca.gov.

Upcoming Flex Pools Investment Grant RFA Webinars

- **RFA Office Hours: December 3rd from 10-11am PST**
  - Drop-in hours for applicants to ask questions regarding the application
  - Registration Link

Contact & Additional Resources



Please send questions about this RFA to FlexPools@dhcs.ca.gov.

- Explore the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pools: Technical Assistance Resource to learn more about Flex Pools, their key functions, and the roles and responsibilities of partner organizations.
- Visit the DHCS Housing for Health website for the full RFA, additional resources, and webinar recordings.

Questions?



Appendix

Operational Cohort Eligibility Criteria

County Behavioral Health Agencies can apply for the Operational Cohort; applicants must meet all the following requirements:

1. Be a county behavioral health agency that is a funder of the Flex Pool.
2. The Flex Pool population of focus includes individuals with behavioral health needs.
3. Lead Entity and/or Operator actively offer all four core Flex Pool functions.
4. Third-party Flex Pool Operator must be under contract (preferred), or an active RFP / sole source contract is in progress.
5. Transitional Rent must be incorporated within the Flex Pool, via at least one MCP contract.
6. Some BHSA funding must be (or is in the process of being) incorporated into the Flex Pool.
7. There must be either:
   a) At least one other funding source for permanent housing braided within the Flex Pool, or
   b) A concrete plan to achieve this braiding within one year.
8. The Flex Pool must have referred or placed at least one participant in permanent housing as of the date of this RFA application *(December 17, 2026)*. If Operator is not yet live, the County must have placed at least one person in permanent housing using Transitional Rent or BHSA.

Applicants found ineligible for the Operational cohort will be considered for the Building cohort.

Building Cohort Eligibility Criteria

County Behavioral Health Agencies can apply for the Building Cohort: applicants must meet all the following requirements:

1. Be a county behavioral health agency that is a current or intended funder of the Flex Pool.
2. The Flex Pool population of focus includes individuals with behavioral health needs.
3. The Flex Pool must have at least two funding sources. At least one of the funding sources must be Transitional Rent or BHSA; both are strongly preferred.
4. Demonstrate a commitment to maximizing BHSA Housing Interventions and pursuing Medi-Cal reimbursement for all eligible Flex Pool costs.
5. Commit to selecting and onboarding an Operator within 12 months of receiving Investment Grant (if intending to procure a third-party Operator).
6. Demonstrate how the Flex Pool is currently conducting or plans to conduct the four core Flex Pool functions in-house within 12 months of receiving Investment Grant (if applicant is from a small county pursuing an In-House model).