



Mental Health Wellness Act Peer Respite Project Outline

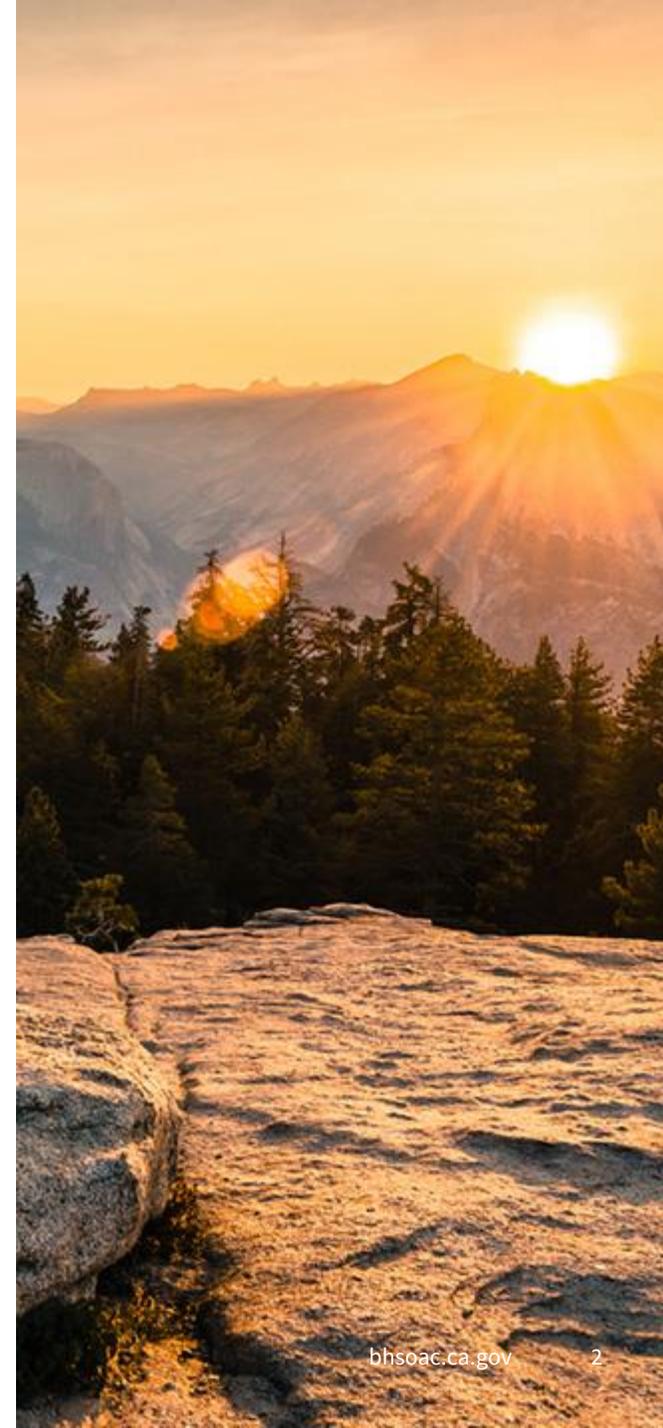
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Goals

Review and consideration of the outline for the Mental Health Wellness Act Peer Respite grant project.



MHWA Funds

California's Mental Health Wellness Act (MHWA) grant program provides \$20 million each year to improve community response to people facing behavioral health crises.

Grants enable crisis responders to connect those in crisis with wellness, resiliency, and recovery-oriented programs that offer the least restrictive settings appropriate for their needs.

MHWA Funding Priorities

SIX FOCUS AREAS

1. EmPATH
2. PEARLS and Age Wise
3. Maternal Behavioral Health and Children Ages 0-5
4. Substance Use Disorder Pilot Program
5. Full Service Partnership Technical Assistance
6. Peer Respite



The Peer Respite Project

Peer Respite Definition

A peer respite is a temporary residence offering peer support services provided 24/7 in a homelike setting, staffed and operated entirely by peers.

- Guided by the intentional peer support model, not the medical or clinical model
- Stays are generally 7 to 14 days, with extensions possible up to 30 days
- Peer support specialists offer linkage to services, skill development, and advice and support

Project Process & Community Engagement

- Interviews with over 40 experts, peer respite operators, county behavioral health staff, and peers
- Seven site visits to peer respites in California
- Literature review and landscape analysis
- Communication with 58 out of 59 California behavioral health jurisdictions
- Communication with 11 Peer-Run Organizations (PROs) in California



Peer Respite Site Visits

- ✓ SHARE! in Los Angeles
- ✓ Insight Peer Respite in Grass Valley
- ✓ Sally's Place in Hayward
- ✓ Safe Harbor in San Leandro
- ✓ Monarch House in Roseville
- ✓ 2nd Story in Aptos
- ✓ Garden Gate in Modesto



Peer Respite Integration within the Behavioral Health Continuum



Serves those struggling with severe mental illness, substance use, and risk of homelessness



Delivers cost-cutting outcomes of reduced hospitalization and increased linkage to lower levels of care



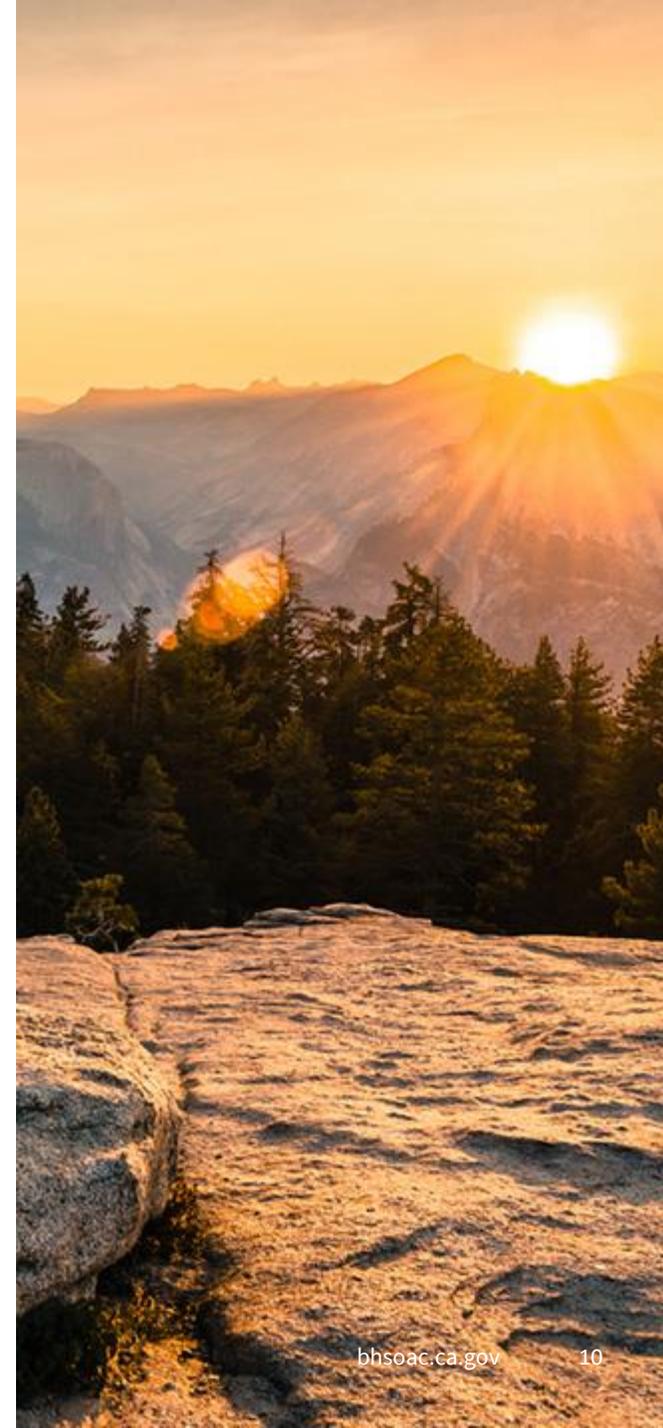
Acts as an engagement tool for Full-Service Partnerships and other county-offered care



Employs peers via a guest-to-staff pipeline

Barriers to Establishing Peer Respite

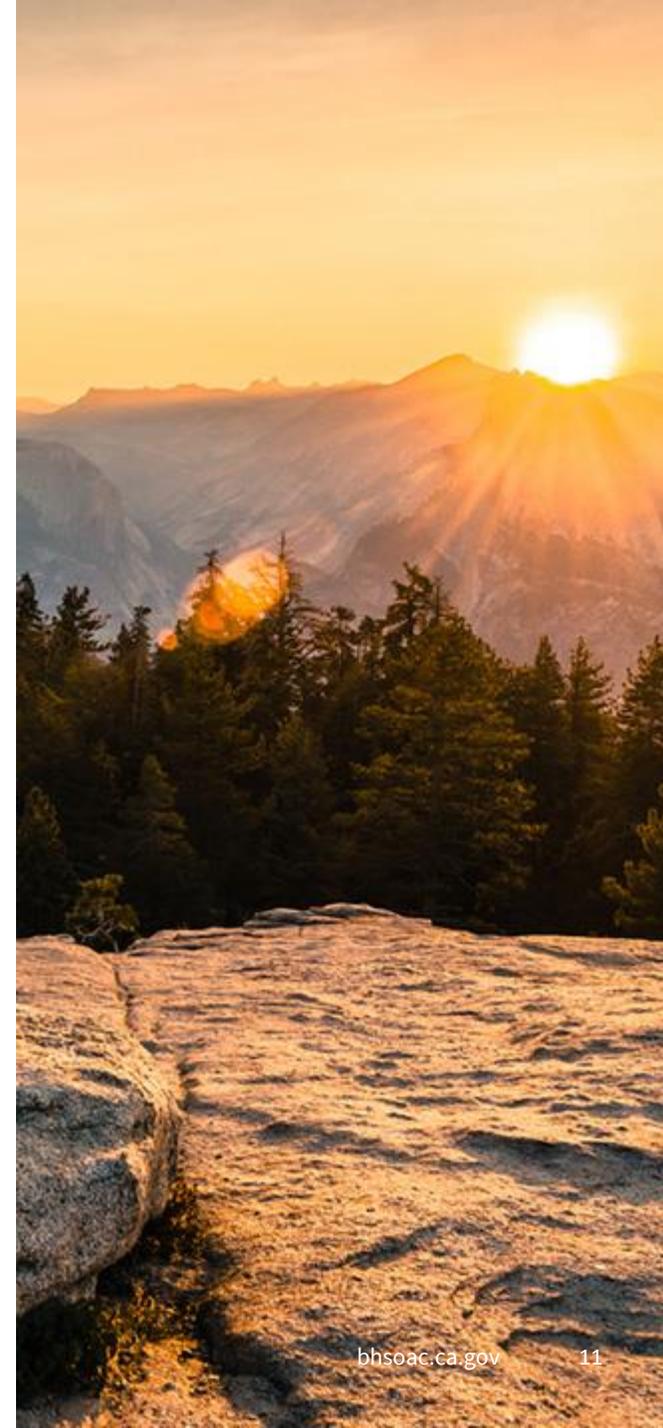
- Lack of sustainable funding to establish and maintain a peer respite.
- Some PROs do not yet have the capacity to bill Medi-Cal for services.
- Absence of partnerships between county behavioral health and local PROs.
- County and PROs lack the knowledge and guidance to work in partnership on operating a peer respite.



Best Practices for Peer Respite Success

Peer respites succeed when:

1. The environment is homelike and welcoming.
2. They are led and staffed entirely by peers.
3. They have strong ties with county behavioral health and other community-based organizations offering services.
4. They are governed by strong policies and procedures.
5. There is a system in place for collecting data and monitoring outcomes.
6. They are sustained by braided, long-term funding.





MHWA Peer Respite Funding Outline

Peer Respite Funding – Two Phases

Phase 1: Investment \$10M

- 2 years
- Pilot project and learning collaborative are established

Phase 2: Investment \$10M

- 2 years
- Tailored funding offered to new and existing peer respites to meet their unique needs
- Learning collaborative continues

Peer Respite Funding – Phase 1

- **Pilot project** with interested counties and a PRO in their community
- A **learning collaborative** on establishing and sustaining an integrated peer respite
- **Technical assistance** on partnership development, business planning, securing sustainable funding, and best practices in peer respite
- **Evaluation**

- **Timing:**
 - RFA to be released in spring 2026 / RFP for TA to be released in Summer 2026
- **Funding:** MHWA FY 2025-26 funds
 - \$10 million needs to be encumbered by June 30, 2027 (expiring June 30, 2029)

Peer Respite Funding – Phase 2

- **Tailored funding** offered to new and existing peer respites to meet their unique needs
- **Learning collaborative** continues
- **Technical assistance and evaluation**

- **Timing:** Projected to be released in spring 2028
- **Funding:** MHWA FY 2026-27 funds
 - \$10 million needs to be encumbered by June 30, 2028 (expiring June 30, 2030)



Motion

That the Commission approves the Peer Respite procurement outline plan not to exceed \$20 million and authorizes the Executive Director to conduct the competitive solicitation, issue a Notice of Intent to Award to the highest-ranked proposer(s), and execute all resulting contract and grant agreements in accordance with the approved outline plan and applicable procurement laws.