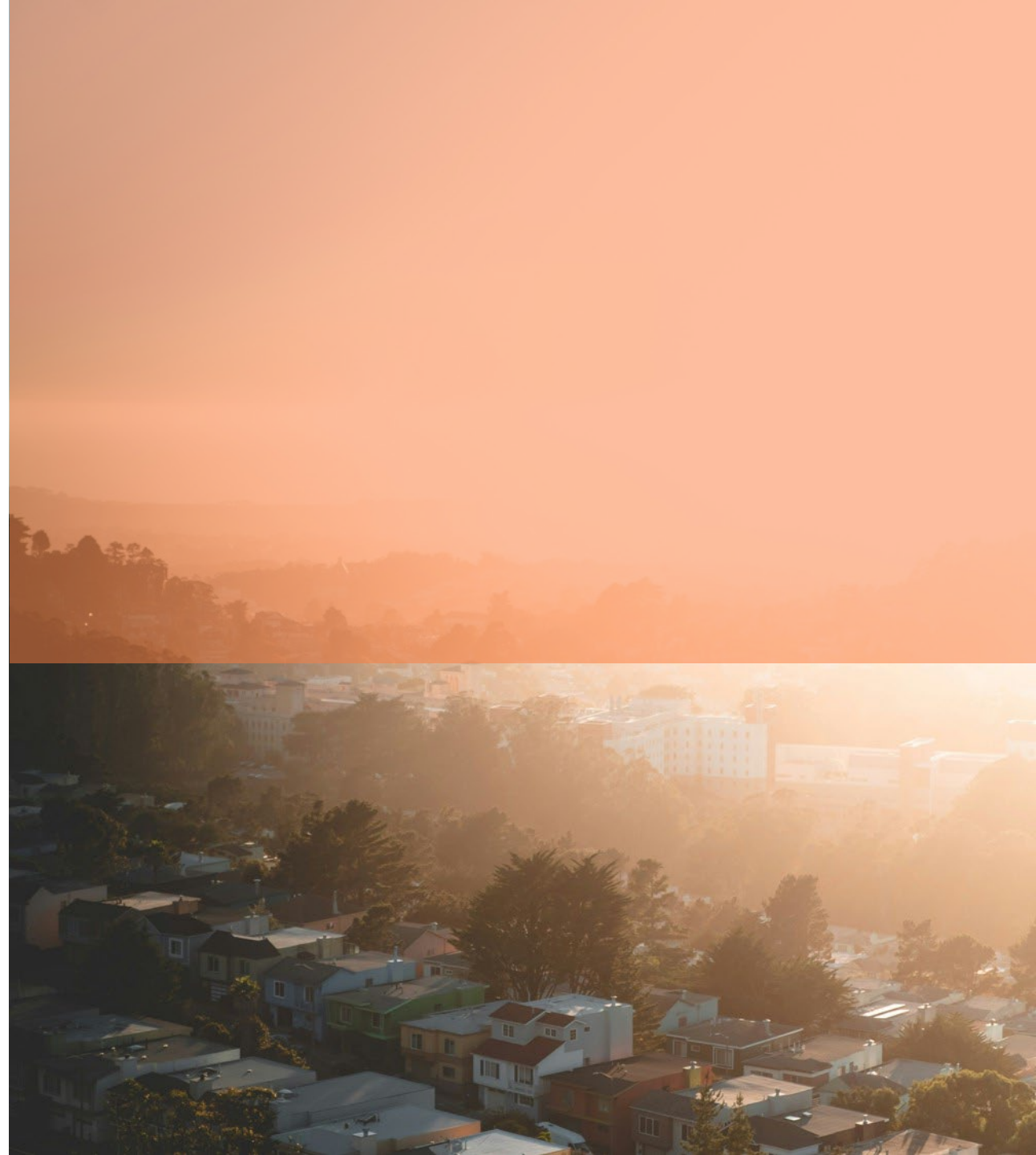


# Advocacy Request for Proposal Outlines: LGBTQIA+ and Veterans

**Kendra Zoller**

*Deputy Director of Legislation and External Affairs*

June 18, 2026



# History

“... assist consumers and family members so that the appropriate state and county agencies give full consideration to concerns about quality, structure of service delivery, or access to services. – MHSA/BHSA”

- LGBTQIA+ current contractor: Mental Health of America (MHA)
- Veterans current contractor: California Association of Veteran Service Agencies (CAVSA)
- Three-year contracts: End May 2027
- Each \$670,000 per year for a total of \$2,010,000 each year and overall total of \$4,020,000

# BHSA priority populations

Those with a serious mental illness (SMI) / serious emotional disturbance (SED), moderate/severe substance use disorder (SUD), and/or co-occurring SUD/SMI and:

- Chronically homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Involved in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system
- Re-entering the community from prison or jail
- In the child welfare system
- At risk of conservatorship
- At risk of institutionalization

# BHSA-aligned advocacy goals

**Overarching:** Elevate and address the critical needs of BHSA priority populations within behavioral health systems.

- **Advocacy:** Identify and elevate critical needs through direct advocacy and supported self-advocacy with decision-makers.
- **Training and education:** Build understanding of behavioral health systems and strengthen skills to organize, educate peers, and participate in local and state decision-making.
- **Outreach and engagement:** Expand reach and trust by gathering feedback, increasing participation, and connecting new voices.

# Listening session themes

## LGBTQIA+

- Safety and fear limit participation
- Representation builds trust
- Access barriers are practical
- Outreach must be multi-channel
- System pressures are increasing needs

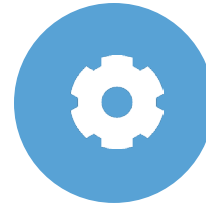
## VETERANS

- Veteran-led, culturally competent support matters
- Connection reduces stigma and risk
- Unmet needs drive coping through substances
- Housing instability is a central barrier
- Engagement requires proactive outreach and practical supports
- Creative modalities are important

# Cross-cutting themes



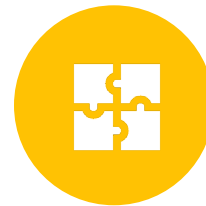
Safety, trust, and cultural responsiveness drive engagement



Practical barriers limit participation



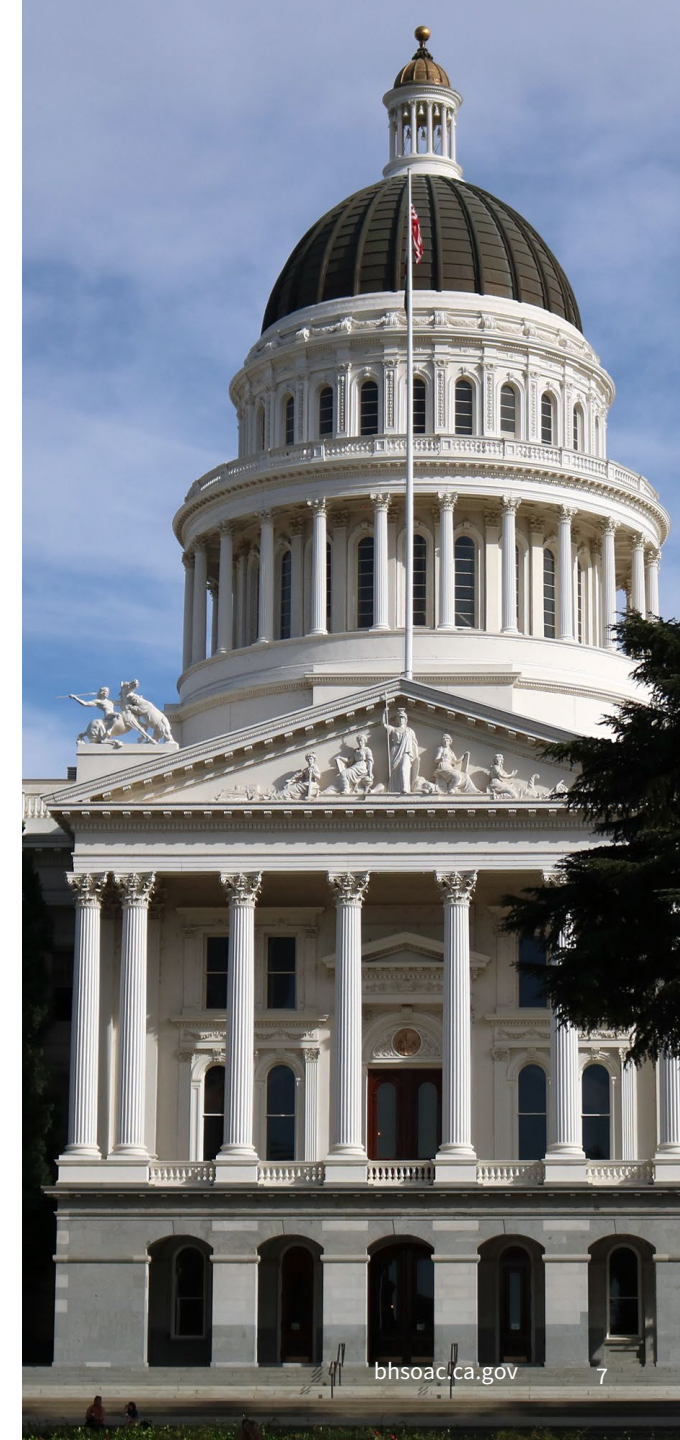
Connection and belonging are protective



People want skill-building and pathways to leadership/work

# Proposed Core Activities

- Contractor-led advocacy and collaborative advocacy with participants at key state and local venues
- Support self-advocacy (training, mentorship, hands-on support)
- Outreach and engagement to gather feedback and build participation



# Capacity building stages

- Stage 1: **Serious Mental Illness (SMI) / Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED)**
- Stage 2: **Moderate/Severe Substance Use Disorder (SUD)**
- Stage 3: **Co-occurring SMI/SED + moderate/severe SUD**

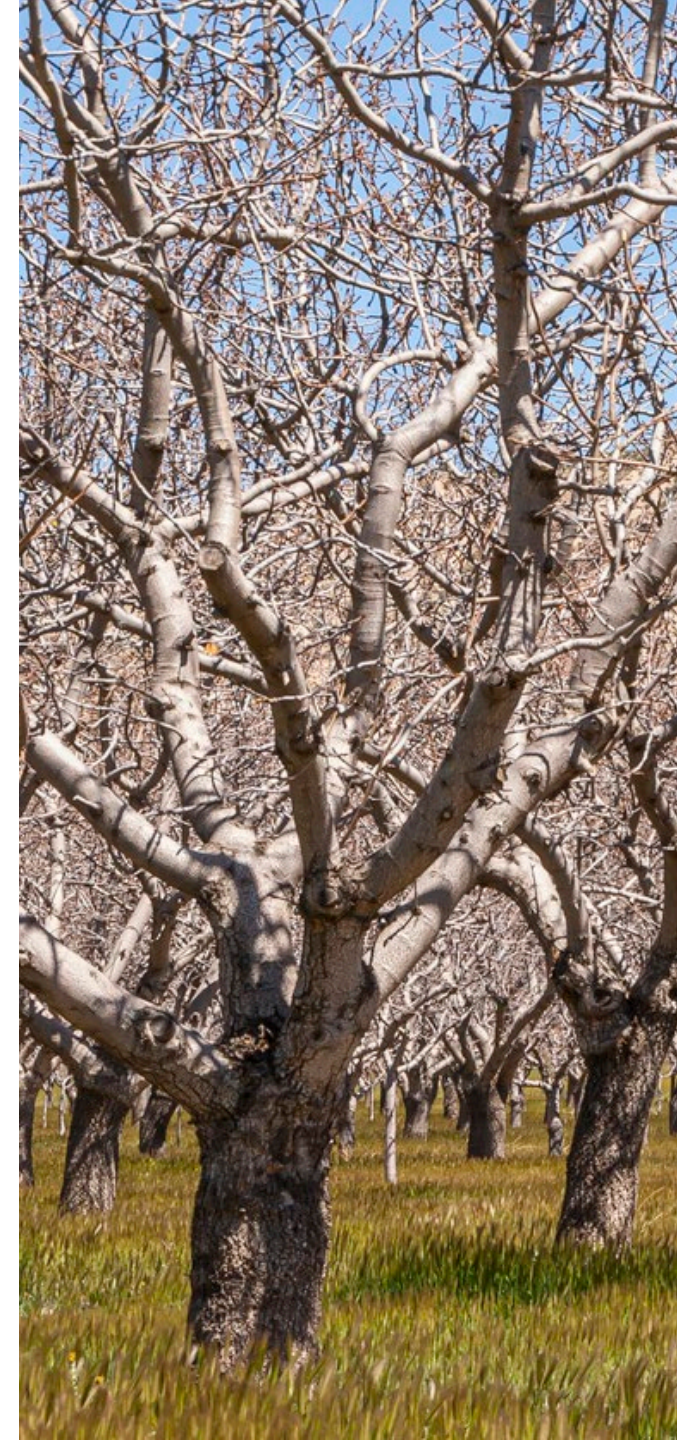
Stage 3: **Co-occurring SMI/SED + moderate/severe SUD**

Stage 2: **Moderate/Severe Substance Use Disorder (SUD)**

Stage 1: **Serious Mental Illness (SMI) / Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED)**

# Additional Program Components

- Impact showcase and story collection
- Supportive services: behavioral health career pathways
- Supportive funding:
  - Participation/stipend funds
  - Equity Access Funds



# Evaluation dimensions

- Advocacy impact
- Engagement and reach
- Self-advocacy growth
- Implementation performance
- Equity and access



# Full picture proposal

- \$670,000 per year over 3-years
- 3-month planning phase
  - Detailed roadmap, strategy, and development of training/materials
- 30-month operations phase
  - State and local advocacy, outreach/engagement, facilitate self-advocacy and training
  - Supportive services: career pathways, stipends, equity access funds
  - Impact showcase and story collection
    - Stage 1: SMI/SED, months 4–13
    - Stage 2: Moderate/Severe SUD, months 14–23
    - Stage 3: Co-occurring SMI/SED and moderate/severe SUD, months 24–33
- 3-month evaluation phase

# Motion

That the Legislative and External Affairs Committee recommend that the Commission approve the Veterans Advocacy contract procurement outline plan not to exceed \$2,010,000 and authorize 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 agreements in accordance with the approved outline plan and applicable procurement laws.

# Motion

That the Legislative and External Affairs Committee recommend that the Commission approve the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy contract procurement outline plan not to exceed \$2,010,000 and authorize 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 agreements in accordance with the approved outline plan and applicable procurement laws.