



Housing Support Plans (HSPs)

From Requirement to Roadmap

Learn how to create, write, review, and improve a Housing Support Plan that focuses on the member's needs and helps them move toward stable housing.



Housing Support Plans: The Big Picture

- What an HSP is?
- Why it matters
- How an HSP becomes a clear housing plan, not just a requirement

HSP Requirements

- When an HSP is needed
- Required elements
- How often to review and update
- How HSPs connect to Medi-Cal Community Supports and BHS housing programs

From Assessment to Housing Plan

- Identifying housing barriers, strengths, and needs
- Turning assessment information into goals and steps
- Deciding what needs to happen first

Writing a Strong Housing Support Plan

- Member-focused housing goals
- Specific, measurable action steps
- Who is responsible and by when
- Resources and supports needed
- Planning for long-term stability

Case Example: Building an HSP

- Review a sample scenario
- Identify barriers
- Build goals and steps
- Walk through a completed HSP

What Good Looks Like

- Strong vs. weak documentation
- Common HSP problems and fixes
- Keeping the HSP active and updated

Review, Monitoring & TA

- Provider responsibilities
- Contract Monitor oversight
- When updates are needed
- How feedback is provided

What you should be able to do after this training

1 Know the standard

- Understand when an HSP is required
- Know the basic elements
- Know how and when the County reviews updates

2 Build a useful plan

- Turn a member's housing history, needs, and barriers into clear goals
- Write action steps that help staff move housing forward

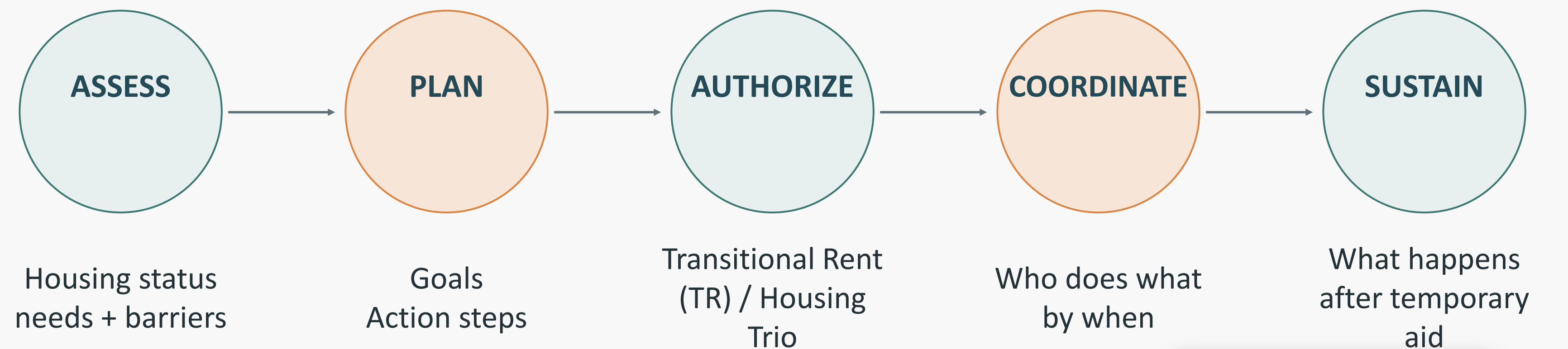


3 Review for quality

- Tell the difference between “complete” and “strong”
- Find gaps before submitting
- Coach staff toward long-term, stable housing strategies

Why the HSP matters

An HSP is more than a form. It shows the member’s needs, the actions planned, and how housing will remain stable over time.



A strong HSP explains why support is needed, what the member wants, what barriers exist, what actions will be taken, and how housing will last.



Source: BHS Housing Supports Plan Policy, lines 65-80; CSH HSP Quality Review Tool, pp. 3-4.

Who needs an HSP — and when?

BHS expectation

Providers must create and maintain an HSP for members who need housing support, including:

- Transitional Rent
- Housing Trio (Deposits, HTNS, HTSS)
- BHBH rental/participant assistance
- BHSA Housing Interventions

Timing

- Start when medical necessity or service need is documented
- If not completed during early engagement, complete during assessment and treatment planning
- Emergency HSPs can address urgent needs temporarily.



Do not confuse requirements

- Some housing supports require an HSP for authorization (see [Corporation for Supportive Housing \(CSH\) review tool](#))
- Others may not require one right away
- County policy may still require an HSP even if the payer does not



- Providers should plan for long-term housing stability, even when a member has little or no income.
- A lack of income cannot be used to deny housing-related assistance.
- Clients cannot be denied BHSA Housing Interventions because they have no income.
- When clients *do* have income, they pay 30% toward rent.

No Income ≠ No Housing Assistance

When a member has low or no income, the HSP should include steps to help them build sustainability, such as:

Applying for or restoring benefits (SSI/SSDI or others)

Seeking employment or training

Finding long-term rental subsidies

Considering Permanent Supportive Housing

Exploring lower-cost housing options

Using other available supports that help keep housing stable after temporary help ends

Sources: BHS Policy lines 167-182; Partnership HSP p. 6.

The 8 Parts of a Strong Housing Support Plan



1

Housing History

Current housing situation and past episodes

2

Presenting need

How behavioral health affects housing

3

Barriers

Challenges that make housing difficult

4

Goals + action plan

Clear goals and steps with timelines

5

Preferences + strengths

Member's choices and supports

6

Roles + coordination

Who is involved and what they'll do

7

Amount + duration

What is being paid, for how long, and by whom

8

Sustainability + transition

How housing will remain stable long-term

Source: BHS Policy, Required Elements of the HSP, lines 146-189.

Start With the Housing Story — Not the Funding Request

The reviewer should understand the member's housing situation before reading the goals.

Current housing

Where is the member staying now?
Unsheltered or sheltered? Where?
How long has this episode lasted?
What changed recently?

Relevant history

List key housing episodes in the
past 3 years



Why support is needed

Explain how behavioral health
affects housing stability

Avoid: “Client is homeless and needs housing.” Prefer: details that show duration, needs, and why help is needed now.

Work on the HSP While Other Tasks Move Forward

Housing Document Readiness

- Help members get ID, Social Security card, birth certificate
- Address missing documents early

HMIS Documentation

- Make sure HMIS data is complete and updated
- Use HMIS information to confirm housing history



Coordinated Access System (CAS)

- Refer when appropriate
- Support assessments, follow-ups, and housing opportunities

Key Message: Do these activities at the same time. Making an HSP should not delay document readiness, HMIS work, or CAS referrals.

Turn Barriers into Action Steps

Every barrier should lead to a clear action. Every action needs a responsible person and a timeline.

Barrier Examples

No ID
Eviction debt
No income
Accessibility needs
Conflict with landlord



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GOAL

What will be different when the barrier is addressed?



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ACTION

What steps will be taken?



OWNER + DATE

Who will complete the action and by when?



Sources: BHS Policy lines 153-160; CSH Quality Review Tool pp. 6-7.

Write Goals People Can Act On

SMART goals make it clear what needs to happen, who will do it, and by when.

TOO VAGUE

“Get documents ready for housing.”

This does not explain which documents, who is helping, or when it will be done.

ACTIONABLE

“Member will meet with the housing navigator twice a week for the next 3 months to get an ID and complete housing and subsidy applications.”

- SMART Breakdown:**
- Specific:** Clear and detailed
 - Measurable:** Progress can be tracked
 - Achievable:** Realistic
 - Relevant:** Supports the housing goal
 - Time-bound:** Has a due date or timeline.



Source: CSH Quality Review Tool p. 11; minimum authorization standard remains barrier + goal + action plan.

Member Choice Is Part of the Plan — Not a Checkbox

Build the HSP with the member. Their choices should be visible in the plan.

Housing Preferences

Location • Household size • Unit type • Accessibility needs • Recovery needs

Strengths & Supports

Natural supports • Skills and interests • Income potential • Treatment engagement

Community Integration

Access to transportation • Medical and behavioral health care • Employment and education opportunities • Social connections

When First Choice Isn't Possible

Explain options, discuss tradeoffs, and document the member's decisions.



Sources: BHS Policy lines 155-160; CSH Quality Review Tool p. 8.

Plan for What Happens After Temporary Support Ends

The plan should explain how housing will stay stable once temporary help ends.



The sustainability plan should be clear from day one and get more detailed over time.

Interim vs. Permanent Housing Plans

INTERIM SETTING

- ✓ Permanent housing may not be arranged yet
- ✓ Document transition steps and active applications
- ✓ Show who is working on next steps
- ✓ County may need to confirm eligibility for BHSA if long-term options are limited



PERMANENT SETTING

- ✓ Plan must name the long-term housing strategy
- ✓ Include how rent will be paid after supports end
- ✓ Use clear wording like: “approved,” “issued,” “secured,” or “committed”
- ✓ Avoid vague terms like “pending,” “waitlisted,” or “TBD” alone



Key distinction: “We are looking for a solution” is not enough. “We have a solution and here is how it will be paid for” is required.

Sources: CSH Quality Review Tool pp. 13-17; Partnership HSP pp. 4 & 6.

Example: Strengthening the Sustainability Plan

Scenario: Member is in permanent housing using Transitional Rent. SSI is pending. Member needs help maintaining tenancy.

WEAK

“Member applied for SSI and is on housing waitlists. Staff will continue to assist. BHSA may be used if needed.”



WEAK

STRONGER

“Transitional Rent is authorized through 1/31/27. SSI is pending; the benefits worker will follow up by 10/15. County BH has confirmed BHSA eligibility and will begin rental assistance on 2/1/27 if no long-term subsidy is active. Housing navigator will submit two subsidy applications by 9/30. HTSS will begin within 7 days of move-in to support budgeting, landlord communication, and recertification.”



STRONG

What Improved: Clear dates • Named resources • Specific responsibilities • Back-up funding plan • Ongoing services • No gaps in the plan.

Training example based on BHS Policy sustainability requirements and CSH pp. 14-17; illustrative language, not a required template.

Provider Workflow: Build the HSP as a Living Plan

1 ENGAGE

Explain the purpose of the HSP
Identify urgent needs
Make sure the member's voice is included

2 ASSESS

Review the member's housing history
Identify barriers, preferences, risks, and income/resources

3 DEVELOP

Write goals
Add action steps
List who is responsible
Set dates

4 FUND

Document the amount and duration of help
List the payer
Note authorizations or referrals

5 TRANSITION

Explain what will happen after temporary help ends

6 REVIEW & DOCUMENT

Track progress, changes, and outcomes



Update the HSP at least every 6 months • Update within 30 days if something major changes

Workflow: Review, Coach, and Spot Patterns



1. COMPLETE? Are all required parts included? Is the HSP current?

2. COHERENT? Do the housing story, barriers, goals, actions, funding, and transition plan connect?

3. SUSTAINABLE? Does the long-term plan make sense for the member’s situation? Are gaps addressed?

4. DOCUMENTED? Are roles, dates, approvals/denials, outreach attempts, amounts, and changes clearly recorded?

5. COACHABLE? What single improvement would make the plan stronger? Is this a one-time issue or a pattern with the provider?

Use the quality review tool to guide your feedback. Don’t turn best practices into new requirements.

Sources: CSH Quality Review Tool pp. 4, 12-13; BHS Policy line 190.

Red Flags to Catch Before Submission



- Barrier listed but no goal or action to address it
- Goals that are too general (example: “find housing”)
- No responsible person or date
- Housing preference copied without asking the member again
- Transitional Rent end date is known but no transition plan



- Only “pending” or “waitlist” resources in permanent housing plans
- No explanation of how rent will be paid long-term
- Services listed but not connected to housing stability
- Conflicting information across HSP, HMIS, or records
- Household changes or income changes not updated



Standard Check: Could another staff pick up this HSP tomorrow and know exactly what happens next?

Practice Activity: Review this Mini-HSP

Scenario:

- ∴ Member is staying in Safe Stay
- ∴ Transitional Rent requested for a permanent unit
- ∴ Barrier: No income
- ∴ Goal: “Get benefits”
- ∴ Intervention: “Staff will help”
- ∴ Preference: One-bedroom near family
- ∴ Sustainability: SSI pending, on PSH waitlist, BHSA if needed
- ∴ Responsible party: Case manager
- ∴ No target date

DISCUSS

1. What is missing?
2. What is too vague?
3. What would you ask the provider?
4. What can be improved without creating new requirements?
5. What would make the sustainability strategy credible?



Facilitator activity. Use the BHS policy and CSH Quality Review Tool as the review standard.

What Would Strengthen It?

- Clarify housing history and why support is needed now
- Make the income barrier actionable with dates and responsible staff
- Add clear housing steps (not just “staff will help”)
- Include TR start and end dates
- Identify a specific long-term payment plan
- If BHSA is backup funding, show eligibility and when support starts
- Add ongoing services linked to housing stability
- Document member’s preferences and alternatives if the preferred unit isn’t available



Sources: BHS Policy lines 146-205; CSH Quality Review Tool pp. 12-17.

The Standard Providers Should Follow

A strong HSP is...

- MEMBER-CENTERED** The member’s goals, preferences, strengths, culture, and choices are clear.
- SPECIFIC** Barriers, actions, responsible people, dates, and needed resources are spelled out.
- CONNECTED** Housing needs are linked to behavioral health, services, and funding.
- SUSTAINABLE** The plan explains how housing will stay stable after temporary supports end.
- CURRENT** The HSP is updated when circumstances change.



A strong HSP should act as the member’s housing roadmap — not just a form to unlock a benefit.



Transitional Rent Referrals

Transitional Rent- Start Early

Transitional Rent helps cover rent for a short time, but it must be approved by the member's Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (MCP). Starting early prevents delays.

Don't Wait to Start the Referral: You can begin the referral even before housing is found.

- Look for members who may qualify early.
- Start the Housing Support Plan (HSP) and gather documents.
- Follow the MCP steps to start the referral.
- Send any documents you already have.
- Do not wait until a housing unit is located.

An **EARLY START**
is a **SMART START**

Supporting Documents

You will likely need:

- MCP referral/authorization form.
- Proof the member qualifies (records showing behavioral health needs, homelessness history, or transition status).
- Housing Support Plan (HSP).
- Documents like HMIS Homeless History or verification forms.
- BHSA eligibility or transition confirmation when needed.

Transitional Rent Attestation Form

This form proves to the MCP that the member meets the rules for Transitional Rent.

Important: The attestation form is not the Housing Support Plan. Both are required.

Key message: Starting early gives everyone time to fix issues before rent is needed.

SAMPLE

BHSA housing intervention:	
Behavioral health resource: (specify):	
Assisted living/board and care:	
Public housing:	
Criminal legal system-funded program:	
Rental assistance (voucher/rapid re-housing/permanent supportive housing/local/shallow):	
Family reunification assistance:	
Other housing resource: (specify):	

Who Does What?

Referring/BHS Provider

- Checks if the member may qualify.
- Builds the HSP.
- Completes MCP forms when allowed.
- Sends referral and documents.
- Follows up on requests.

Transitional Rent Provider

- Handles rental payments and housing coordination.
- Completes habitability review.
- Works with MCP and the referring provider.

Members cannot be denied
BHSA help because they
have no income.

MCP

- Reviews eligibility.
- Requests missing information.
- Works with the TR provider.

Resources used in this training

Sacramento County BHS — Housing Supports Plan Policy (PP-BHS-MH-04-XX)

This policy explains the County's rules for creating an HSP, what must be included, how to plan for long-term housing stability, how to document updates, and how often plans must be reviewed.

CSH — Housing Support Plan (HSP) Quality Review Tool (2025)

This tool shows the minimum information needed for authorization, best practices for building a strong plan, a simple review checklist, and examples of long-term housing solutions.

Partnership HealthPlan — Transitional Rent Housing Support Plan (April 2026)

This guidance provides a clear structure for an HSP, including barriers, goals, services, member preferences, income/budget details, payment sources, sustainability steps, and required attestations.

Training examples are illustrative and should be adapted to the member's actual circumstances and applicable payer/program requirements.

HSP Case Study

Example show how assessment information becomes a clear housing plan.

Sample case: Marcus

MEMBER & CURRENT SITUATION

Marcus has been homeless for almost two years and staying at a BHBH Safe Stay for eight months. His housing instability makes it hard to keep appointments, manage recovery tasks, and follow treatment routines. Stable housing will help Marcus rebuild daily structure and stay connected to services.

PREFERENCES & STRENGTHS

- Prefers a quiet unit
- Wants to live close to treatment and transportation
- Engaged with supportive services
- Sister provides informal support
- SDI application pending

BARRIERS

1. No income
2. Eviction history and poor credit
3. No recent rental history
4. Substance-use relapse risk
5. Family conflict
6. Needs help communicating with landlords



Marcus- Housing History, Need, and Goals



HOUSING HISTORY / PRESENTING NEED

Marcus has been homeless for almost two years and staying at Safe Stay for eight months. This makes it difficult for him to maintain recovery routines and attend important appointments. Stable housing is a major step toward improving his daily functioning and long-term health.

HOUSING GOAL

Marcus wants to move into a quiet unit close to treatment and reliable transportation. This will help him stay consistent with appointments, services, and recovery activities.

BARRIER 1: INCOME

- Check SDI status regularly
- Identify long-term rental assistance options

BARRIER 2: DOCUMENTS

- Confirm needed ID documents
- Replace missing or expired documents

BARRIER 3: EVICTION & CREDIT

- Review eviction and credit history
- Prepare explanations
- Target landlords open to applicants with screening challenges

Marcus — Action Plan & Supports

The care team will support Marcus throughout the housing process by coordinating responsibilities and providing ongoing follow-up.



Who Does What?

Housing Navigator

- Submit rental applications
- Communicate with landlords
- Address screening barriers and prepare mitigation materials

Case Manager

- Provide behavioral-health and benefits support
- Monitor progress and update the HSP
- Support Marcus in treatment engagement

Member

- Attend appointments
- Provide required documents
- Review and choose unit options

Supports Needed

Supports During Transition:

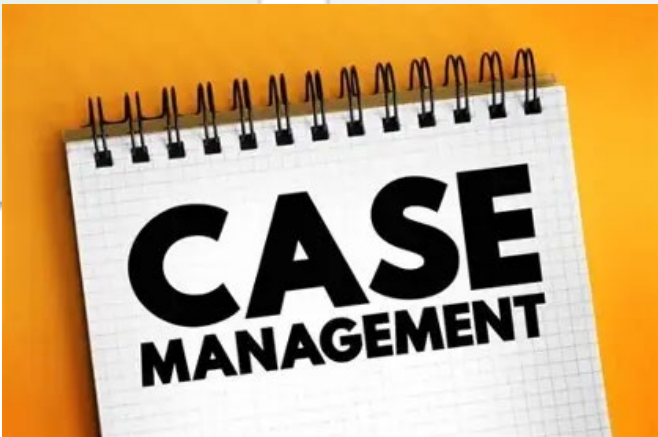
- HTNS
- Transitional Rent
- Deposits assistance (if approved)
- Behavioral health care coordination
- Transportation assistance

Supports After Move-In:

- HTSS
- Ongoing behavioral-health services
- Income follow-up and budgeting support
- Tenancy coaching

Measurable Follow-Up Tasks

- By 10/16: Review the status of benefit applications
- By 11/6: Obtain or confirm required identification documents
- Within 1 week of unit approval: Complete the Transitional Rent and deposit packet
- Within 1 week after move-in: Begin housing stability or tenancy-support services
- Monthly: Review funding sources and overall housing stability
- Every 3 months: Complete an HSP review and update as needed



Marcus — Sustainability Plan

Marcus's sustainability plan explains how he will keep housing stable once temporary supports end. Transitional Rent offers short-term help while longer-term funding and income options are explored.

Sample Narrative

Transitional Rent will serve as short-term support while the team works on a longer-term plan for how Marcus's housing will be paid for. The expected end date for Transitional Rent will be added once it is authorized.

Marcus has an SDI application in progress, and the case manager will check the status regularly and provide follow-up support as needed. At the same time, the housing navigator will continue applying for long-term rental assistance programs and coordinate with the County regarding BHSA Housing Interventions if Marcus is eligible.

Throughout the Transitional Rent period, the team will review funding updates, application progress, approvals or denials, and any other coordination needs. These reviews should happen consistently rather than waiting until the final month of assistance.

Why This Is Stronger

- ✓ Recognizes that Transitional Rent is temporary and includes an expected end date
- ✓ Shows which income sources and long-term housing supports are being pursued
- ✓ Clearly assigns responsibilities to specific team members
- ✓ Requires regular follow-up instead of a one-time referral
- ✓ Documents approvals, denials, and payer coordination.
- ✓ Connects ongoing services to long-term housing stability

Avoid: Statements like "SDI pending," "on a waitlist," or "BHSA if needed." These describe possibilities, not a full transition plan.



What a Reviewer Should Understand

1. Where are we now?

Current housing status

Why support is needed

Behavioral-health connection

Preferences, strengths, barriers

2. What are we doing?

Housing goal

Action steps for each barrier

Responsible staff

Dates and next steps

3. How will housing last?

End date of temporary supports

Long-term rent strategy

Service and subsidy status

Transition plan

A completed form does not always mean the plan is complete. The documentation should clearly describe the member's housing situation and tell an understandable, consistent housing story.

Contact & Resources

BHS-DHS@saccounty.gov

[DHCS Community Supports Guide](#)

[BHSA Housing Interventions](#)

[Ca1AIM CS Housing Deposits Cheat Sheet](#)

[Ca1AIM CS HTNS Cheat Sheet](#)

[HMIS/CAS Policies](#)

[HSP Quality Review Tool](#)

[BHS HSP Policy and Procedure](#)

[Self-Pay and Transitional Rent](#)