

Newsom announces major mental health housing expansion

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At the site of a new facility that will offer housing and medical services to people transitioning out of homelessness, Governor Gavin Newsom recently announced the availability of \$1.1 billion to get and keep vulnerable Californians off the streets and provide them the mental health housing and treatment they need. The announcement is a critical part of the governor’s \$14 billion homelessness package that will create 55,000 new housing units and treatment slots when fully implemented.

“We’re taking unprecedented action to rebuild California’s mental and behavioral health infrastructure, getting folks the help they need to get out and stay out of homelessness,” said Newsom. “Up until this point, our pandemic-response homeless programs have helped provide housing and shelter to more than 58,000 Californians – we’re doubling down on these efforts, providing more services in record time and at a fraction of the price.”

The announcement makes available approximately \$1.1 billion in new funding through Homekey – \$518.5 million for the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program and \$570 million for the Community Care Expansion Program – that local partners are encouraged to utilize as part of the state’s strategy to rebuild mental and behavioral health services and house those most in need, especially those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

“We are systematically building the housing and treatment programs that California needs to better provide services to people with acute behavioral health issues,” said California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly. “That is where our focus has been, and today’s new funding is exactly what we need to be doing.”

In 2021, Newsom invested \$12 billion to help get the most vulnerable people off the streets and into mental and behavioral health services. The Governor’s California Blueprint will bolster last year’s investments with an additional \$2 billion – \$1.5 billion for Behavioral Health Bridge Housing to get people off the street and into treatment and \$500 million toward Encampment Resolution Grants for local jurisdictions to implement short- and long-term rehousing strategies for people experiencing homelessness in encampments around the state.

Taken together, the governor’s multi-year investments will expand the work accomplished through Project Roomkey and Homekey, which provided shelter to avoid COVID-19 exposure for more than 58,000 unhoused Californians and created 6,000 new units for Californians exiting homelessness.