



March 2026

BAIHP AMERICAN INDIAN HEALTH PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

BAIHP Receives State Grant to Launch Behavioral Health Bridge Housing

BAIHP is proud to announce a **grant award from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)** to support individuals navigating serious mental illness (SMI) or substance use disorders (SUD), who are experiencing homelessness or facing housing instability.

This state initiative, launched in 2022, allows BAIHP to **combine stable housing with culturally-informed clinical care**, creating a stronger foundation for long-term recovery in our community.

Development of BAIHP's local housing site began in early 2025, with construction currently underway. The project aims to be fully operational and serving participants by the end of this year, providing a **safe, supportive environment** for residents as they transition to permanent housing.

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Top News

National Social Work Month: Empowering Resilience and Honoring the Healing Journeys of Native American and Alaska Native communities.

BAIHP Updates

Two Crows Songs and Prayers sessions now meet on Thursday nights, offering a dedicated space for communal reflection and spiritual connection through song.



Bakersfield American
B·A·I·H·P
Indian Health Project

Our Feathers Soaring Higher

www.BakersfieldAIHP.org

Bridge Housing: CEO Angel Galvez Interview

Q 1: What specific gap in Bakersfield's current resources does this housing project fill?

This project addresses a vital need in Bakersfield's downtown corridor, particularly near Memorial Hospital and the local canal, where homelessness is highly concentrated. By providing bridge housing and behavioral health services in this area, BAIHP integrates Native American-led health services into the local safety net, offering support where specialized facilities previously did not exist.

Q 2: What mental health and substance use recovery services will be available on-site?

BAIHP offers a fully integrated model of care, combining medical and behavioral health services through its clinics with traditional, culturally-focused wellness programs such as drumming, sweat lodges, and beading. Residents will also have access to a new urgent mental health program and tribal medication-assisted treatment. Both of these services are expected to be completed and operational by early 2030 following the completion of construction.



Q 3: How long can someone stay in the program?

The program is designed to help residents move into permanent housing within 90 days whenever possible.

However, participants can remain in the program for up to three years, depending on compliance, progress, and individual needs. Care plans are personalized, allowing residents to “fast-track” to permanent housing if ready, while providing a full three-year window to ensure a stable transition to long-term independence.

Q 4: What does a successful transition look like?

Successful transition is a three-stage journey toward independence:

- 1. Stabilization:** Recovery, medical care, and building personal resiliency.
- 2. Sustainability:** Educational and vocational support, including GEDs, certifications, and skill-building.
- 3. Workforce Integration:** Professional development, financial literacy, employment, and securing permanent housing.

Through this program, BAIHP is creating a pathway from temporary support to long-term independence, strengthening the health and well-being of Bakersfield's community.

To apply, please contact the BAIHP Housing Department at 661-747-5854 or via email at housing@bakersfieldAIHP.org.

Two Crows Songs and Prayers Classes

Q 1: What are the Two Crows Songs and Prayers classes?

The creation of the Two Crows group was facilitated by CEO Angel Galvez and it is a gathering place for sharing traditional songs. These songs, passed down from tribal elders and family members, are shared to preserve and honor the group's cultural heritage.

Q 2: How is the Two Crows group different than the Cultural Workshop?

While the Cultural Workshop focuses on the hands-on creation of cultural artifacts—such as traditional regalia, clapsticks, hand drums, and moccasins—the Two Crows group is devoted to the oral tradition, sharing ceremonial songs and personal musical heritage.

Q 3: Is anybody allowed to share songs at the Two Crows group?

Yes, anyone is welcome to attend the Two Crows group and share songs.

Q 4: What can somebody hope to get out of participating in the class? If someone shows up, what do they walk away with?

Participants can expect to engage in healing and prayer, gaining a deeper understanding of various tribal ceremonies—such as Chalon, Chumash, and Sioux—and the specific songs used within them.

Q 5: Tell me about the Fire Ceremony that we do at the end of the month?

The Fire Ceremony provides a space for participants to release negative energy and unspoken burdens.

By writing these struggles down and offering them to the fire, attendees can symbolically let go of what weighs them down and find emotional relief.

The classes take place on Thursdays from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM.



Save the Date: Spring Gathering

Sat., April 18 | 10 AM - 3:30 PM | Bakersfield College



BAIHP invites you to our annual Spring Gathering, a special time to celebrate the themes of rebirth and growth as we honor the changing seasons of Mother Earth.

Join us for a day filled with traditional food and cultural activities that focus on self-improvement and moving forward with positivity.

The gathering serves as a meaningful opportunity to cleanse the past and reconnect with what is truly important for this new season of our lives.

Please call (661) 327-4030 for more information on the resources and activities available during the event.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Women's Talking Circle

The Women's Talking Circle's primary mission is to give the women in our community the space to share and connect with each other in a safe, confidential, intertribal environment.

Traditionally, talking circles are meant to feel comfortable, intimate, and sacred. It is important that the women understand there is no hierarchy when they meet; it is not "my" circle.

We are all equals within the space. Only one person speaks at a time. Furthermore, there is no pressure for anyone to speak if they do not wish to, as listening is a perfectly valid way to participate.

Women have said that they feel "lighter" after the Talking Circle sessions and that they do not feel judgement. This collective healing creates a sense of belonging that many carry with them throughout their week.

If you're interested, please know that this is a nonjudgmental space. Conversations regarding sensitive topics may occur, so please ensure you are emotionally prepared to listen.

Beyond that, no further preparation is needed to attend on Wednesdays at 11:30 AM.



Veteran's Talking Circle

The primary mission of the Veteran's Talking Circle is to provide veterans with a safe space to find inner peace and the support needed to lead productive, fulfilling lives.

Traditional cultural practices guide these sessions by mirroring the structure of sacred ceremony.

The Circle itself symbolizes the universe and our connection to it, while the practice of recognizing each direction and ensuring everyone has a voice fosters communal healing and spiritual grounding.

Veterans often find healing by using the Talking Circle as a safe space to release the heavy burdens of stress and negativity they carry.

By sharing their experiences, they are able to let go of emotional baggage, finding a sense of internal balance and peace within themselves.

A separate talking circle for Veterans is essential because it creates a unique space of shared understanding and mutual trust.

Veterans often find it easier to open up among peers who have lived through similar experiences, including the specific challenges of military service and the weight of combat.

It's important to acknowledge that Native Americans serve at the highest rate of any demographic; for many, the call to arms is a natural continuation of a deep-rooted warrior tradition.

This shared background fosters a strong sense of community, allowing them to discuss "heavy" stressors and burdens without needing to explain the context to civilians.

The Veterans Talking Circle takes place on the first Wednesday of each month from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

Green Bell Pepper Enchiladas



Ingredients

1. Green bell pepper (diced) - **1 whole**
2. Jalapeño pepper (minced) - **1 whole**
3. Green onion (scallion) (sliced) - **1 whole**
4. Garlic (minced) - **3 clove**
5. Cooked chicken (shredded) - **2 cup**
6. Olive oil - **3 tbsp**
7. All-purpose flour - **3 tbsp**
8. Low sodium chicken broth - **2 cup**
9. Kosher Salt - **1/4 tsp**
10. Ground coriander - **1/2 tsp**
11. Plain Nonfat Greek yogurt - **1/2 cup**
12. Shredded Mexican cheese blend (reduced fat) - **1/4 cup**
13. Corn tortillas - **8 small**

Author: American Diabetes Association
 Prep Time: 15 min.
 Cook Time: 30 min.
 Servings: 4 (2 enchiladas)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Spray a large skillet with cooking spray and heat over medium heat. Add green peppers, jalapeño, green onion, and garlic. Cook over medium heat for 4–5 minutes, until the peppers start to soften.
3. Remove from heat and place in a bowl with the shredded chicken and mix. Set aside.
4. Return skillet to the heat and add the olive oil. Whisk in the flour for about 1 minute until smooth.
5. Slowly pour the chicken broth in, whisking until the sauce is thickened and smooth, about 3–4 minutes. Add the salt, coriander, and yogurt and whisk until smooth. Remove from heat.
6. Pour a small amount of sauce in a 10 x 8 (or medium size) baking dish. Spread to coat the bottom of the pan.
7. Place tortillas on a flat surface and divide the chicken and pepper mix between them, placing the mix in the center of each. Roll tightly and place seam side down in the baking dish. Pour remaining sauce over the stuffed tortillas and sprinkle with the shredded cheese. Bake for 15–20 minutes.

Employee Spotlight

This month, we are recognizing Shubhangi Shrivastava, our Grants Program Analyst, who was hired on 07/2024. Shubhangi has played a pivotal role in securing more than



\$12 million in grant funding for BAIHP which underscores her professional expertise, strategic foresight, and unwavering dedication to the organization's goals. Shubhangi enjoys traveling, cooking, and spending quality time with her daughter.



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The Growth of BAIHP in 2025

The Bakersfield American Indian Health Project has seen a massive surge in 2025, serving 797 unique clients through over 11,000 encounters—a 47% increase in reach compared to the previous year. This growth is largely driven by a major expansion of the Enhanced Care Management (ECM) program, which now supports 471 clients, alongside a strengthened Behavioral Health department.

To better provide holistic, client-centered care, BAIHP recently launched its Housing Department to tackle local housing instability. This follows the strategic 2024 opening of its first satellite clinic in the Kern River Valley, cementing the organization's role as a rapidly growing, essential provider of integrated medical and social services in the region.

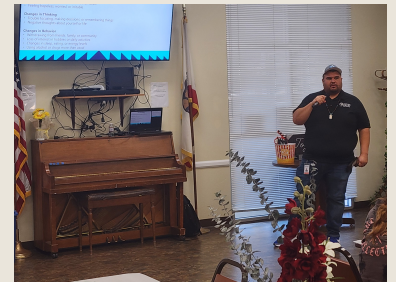
OVCDC Winter Gathering

At the OVCDC Winter Gathering, BAIHP shared a meaningful conversation on mental health—how we think, feel, and act. Mental health is just as vital as physical health, influencing how we handle stress, relate to our community, and make daily choices. Staying "mentally well" means having the resilience to cope with life's challenges while maintaining the strong, supportive relationships that keep our community whole.

Awareness starts with recognizing when things feel "off," such as persistent sadness, withdrawing from loved ones, or changes in sleep and energy. Because historical and generational traumas can impact Native communities, acknowledging these struggles is a brave step toward healing. If these signs last more than a few weeks, reaching out to an elder, counselor, or healthcare provider is a powerful way to regain balance and find a path forward.

You can maintain wellness through small, daily actions like staying connected to family and practicing self-care. Most importantly, culture is medicine. Engaging in traditions—such as drumming, smudging, storytelling, or spending time on the land—provides spiritual grounding and emotional strength. Honoring your roots and seeking support when needed ensures a healthy connection across mind, body, and spirit.

Caring for our mental health is a shared responsibility that strengthens the entire community. By reducing the stigma around asking for help and normalizing conversations about our well-being, we create a safe space for everyone to heal. Whether through a kind word to a neighbor or participating in a tribal ceremony, every small step contributes to a legacy of resilience and health for the generations to come.



Happy Birthday to BAIHP Staff for March!

Michelle Stout (March 20), Cheyenne Bond (March 27), Jesse Behill (March 30)-not pictured

501 40th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
12308 Mountain Mesa Road, Lake Isabella, CA 93240



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