

# Strategic Plan 2027–2031: Grantmaking FAQ

Updated June 2026

## About the New Strategic Plan

### What was approved on May 26, 2026?

The Board of Directors unanimously adopted the 2027–2031 Strategic Plan, a five-year framework guiding all future funding, partnerships, and policy decisions. Built over 10 months with input from eight community listening sessions across the Coachella Valley, it replaces the outgoing 2021–2026 plan. The full plan and supporting documents are available at [dhcd.org/Strategic-Plan](https://dhcd.org/Strategic-Plan).

### How does the new plan organize its work?

The Strategic Plan is organized around four interconnected pillars, each designed to advance community health in a different way. While all four pillars contribute to the District’s overall mission, some pillars provide direct opportunities for funding and partnership, while others focus on convening stakeholders, advancing policy solutions, leveraging data, or strengthening systems-level change:

Pillar	Name	Role in strategy
Pillar 1	Workforce Development	Primary grantmaking
Pillar 2	Awareness & Access	Primary grantmaking
Pillar 3	Engagement	Partnerships & leveraged funds
Pillar 4	Data Driven	Infrastructure – not a funding pillar

Pillars 1 and 2 are where DHCD concentrates its direct grantmaking. Pillar 3 is focused on strategic partnerships and leveraging funds alongside others. Pillar 4 is an internal and external data infrastructure build-out and it is not a funding pillar.

### Will these pillars stay fixed over the life of the plan?

The four pillars provide a durable strategic framework, but the priorities within each pillar are intentionally designed to evolve. As community health needs shift, new data emerge, and the Coachella Valley’s landscape changes, DHCD will adapt its grantmaking and partnership strategies to stay proactive. The pillars define how we work and what we invest in within them will be guided by the community’s most pressing health priorities at any given time.

### How does this differ from the previous strategic plan?

The 2021–2026 plan designated Goals 2, 3, and 6 as the high-priority grantmaking areas. The new plan restructures these into four pillars and introduces goals and initiatives. It also makes a clear distinction between where DHCD leads with direct grants (Pillars 1 & 2) and where it leads with partnerships and co-investment (Pillar 3). This distinction reflects a deliberate strategic choice: DHCD is committed to functioning as a health systems amplifier by using its resources, partnerships, and data infrastructure to move the needle on community health in ways that go beyond any single grant. Rather than responding reactively

to proposals, DHCD is building a proactive, coordinated approach that aligns investments across partners and sustains long-term impact across the Coachella Valley.

## Impact on Grantmaking

### Pillars 1 & 2 — Primary grantmaking areas

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#### **What types of healthcare needs does DHCD fund under Pillars 1 and 2?**

Pillars 1 and 2 are the primary grantmaking pillars. Pillar 1 (Workforce Development) supports efforts to build and sustain an equitable healthcare workforce — with a focus on growing the pipeline of primary care, specialty care, and behavioral health professionals serving District residents. Pillar 2 (Awareness & Access) supports efforts to ensure residents know about and can reach the health services they need, with particular attention to reducing barriers for underserved populations.

The specific focus areas within these pillars will be shaped by evolving community health data, resident input, and gaps identified through DHCD's data infrastructure. Organizations are encouraged to ground proposals in how their work addresses current, documented needs in the District.

#### **Are Pillars 1 and 2 the highest-priority areas for grant applications?**

Yes. Pillars 1 and 2 represent where DHCD will concentrate direct grant investment over the 2027–2031 period. Organizations whose work aligns with building the healthcare workforce or expanding access to care should expect these pillars to anchor the most competitive funding opportunities. The District anticipates reopening its grant application portal in early 2027.

### Pillar 3 — Partnerships & leveraged funds

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#### **What is Pillar 3's role, and how is it different from Pillars 1 and 2?**

Pillar 3 (Engagement) is not a primary direct grantmaking pillar. DHCD's role here is to serve as a strategic partner and co-investor by convening organizations, aligning efforts, and leveraging funds alongside others rather than leading with grants. This pillar addresses the social determinants of health that shape community wellbeing, and DHCD sees its greatest value here as a health systems-level amplifier.

The partnership strategies under Pillar 3 will evolve in step with shifting community health priorities. DHCD will continuously assess evolving social determinant needs and collectively pursue targeted funding opportunities that address critical gaps, strengthen community conditions, and improve health outcomes.

### Pillar 4 — Data infrastructure

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#### **What is Pillar 4, and why does it matter to external organizations?**

Pillar 4 (Data Driven) is not a funding pillar. It is focused on building the data infrastructure needed for DHCD and its partners to make better-informed decisions both internally and externally. This includes strengthening how DHCD measures and communicates impact, and enabling partners and stakeholders to access timely, relevant health data for the Coachella Valley.

As this infrastructure matures, it will play a direct role in identifying which community health priorities warrant increased investment that will inform how the focus areas within Pillars 1, 2, and 3 evolve over time.

### **Will grantees face new reporting requirements under the new plan?**

A core goal of Pillar 4 is to embed consistent outcomes and impact reporting expectations into all DHCD funding relationships. Grantees should anticipate more clearly defined metrics going forward. DHCD will communicate specifics to applicants and current grantees as implementation progresses.

## **Grantmaking Transition & Process**

### **When does the new strategic plan take effect?**

The 2027–2031 Strategic Plan officially takes effect July 1, 2026. However, the next full grant cycle under the new plan is anticipated to open in early 2027. This transition period allows DHCD staff and the Board to ensure a well-structured process aligned with the new framework. Organizations are encouraged to use this time to review the new plan.

### **What is the grant budget for FY 2026–2027?**

The Board has approved a grant budget of \$10 million for fiscal year 2026–2027 (July 2026 – June 2027). This represents a significant increase in DHCD’s annual grantmaking capacity and reflects the organization’s commitment to accelerating community health impact as it transitions into the new strategic plan period. Further details on how these funds will be allocated across grant cycles will be shared in the coming months.

### **Who is eligible to apply for grants?**

Eligibility has not changed. Eligible organizations include 501(c)(3) nonprofits, tax-exempt organizations, governmental entities, tribal entities, public agencies, FQHCs, and local clinics that directly serve residents of the Desert Healthcare District. Except for mini-grant recipients, current audited financial statements are required. All grant applications must address goals in the new strategic plan. Individuals, endowment campaigns, political activities, and retirement of debt are not eligible.

### **Can I meet with DHCD staff about my application?**

Under California AB-2019, individual meetings between grant applicants and District board members, officers, or staff outside of the established grant awards process are prohibited. However, once an initial application has been submitted, District grant program staff may provide technical assistance to applicants upon request.

### **Where can I read the full strategic plan and supporting documents?**

All documents are available at [dhcd.org/Strategic-Plan](https://dhcd.org/Strategic-Plan), including the full 2027–2031 strategic plan, strategic report, discovery report, financial sustainability report, community engagement report, and plan definitions.

**Questions?** Contact the Desert Healthcare District at [info@dhcd.org](mailto:info@dhcd.org).