STRATEGIC PRODUCT PROPOSAL / AUGUST 2026

Build California's therapist operating system.

A 500+ hour proposal to make Therapist Support the independent decision infrastructure therapists use from school selection through practice ownership.

321	17	58	800
PUBLIC SOURCE PAGES	CALCULATORS	CALIFORNIA COUNTIES	PROPOSED HOURS

The governing idea

Do not win by publishing the most therapist articles. Win by becoming the one place where a California therapist can understand a decision, test it with personal circumstances, trace the answer to evidence, and complete the associated work.

Prepared as an executive decision document. The product examples are concepts; illustrative figures are labeled as such. Site inventory reflects the repository scan conducted 26 August 2026.

Move from reference library to professional infrastructure.

Therapist Support already owns an unusually valuable position: checked California arithmetic. The next phase should connect that work into a continuous professional journey.

Recommended category

California's independent decision infrastructure for therapists.

Keep	Add	Avoid
Free, source-linked California guidance	Private My Path and connected Decision Labs	Generic clinical or wellness publishing
Browser-only calculations	Common financial and evidence models	Pay-to-rank schools, employers or vendors
Explicit uncertainty and review dates	County-level market intelligence	Lead selling or client-data collection
Independent editorial voice	Change monitoring and completion workflows	An AI clinical assistant

The strategic shift

- Pages remain the acquisition surface. Searchable guides answer the immediate question.
- Reusable engines become the retention layer. One set of inputs powers school, job, licensure and practice decisions.
- Verified data becomes the moat. Structured California sources, review dates and impact tracking are costly to reproduce.
- Completion becomes the outcome. The site helps a person move from reading to a checklist, comparison, decision or deadline.

A large, growing profession still navigates fragmented systems.

The authoritative sources, professional associations and practice vendors each solve part of the problem. None connects the whole California journey.

154,495	57,595	42,282	17,884
BBS LICENSEES + ASSOCIATES FY24-25	LMFT POPULATION	LCSW POPULATION	AMFT POPULATION

Actor	Primary strength	Unresolved user need
California BBS	Authoritative rules, forms and licensing administration	Interpretation, comparison, planning and execution
CAMFT and chapters	Advocacy, membership, CE, legal consultation and community	Open decision tools and public structured data
EHR and payer platforms	Practice administration, referrals or claims	Career, licensure and independent market intelligence
Practice coaches	Advice, courses and peer experience	Transparent calculations tied to California sources
National publishers	Broad search coverage	California specificity, maintained evidence and local economics
Therapist Support	Checked California information and browser-only tools	Persistent workflows and connected statewide data

Core finding

> **The whitespace is not another professional association, directory, EHR or content publisher. It is the connective tissue between the BBS, schools, employers, payers, tax rules, vendors and the therapist making a real decision.**

Market source: California Board of Behavioral Sciences, Agenda Item 15, August 2025, FY 2024-25 licensing data. CAMFT publicly reports more than 39,000 members. Full URLs appear in the source note.

The foundation is strong; the system is not yet connected.

The repository scan found breadth, depth and a clear editorial identity. The highest-leverage work is now connective rather than additive.

Asset	What exists now	Strategic implication
Content depth	321 public source HTML pages across education, associates, licensure, insurance, practice, money and specialty training	Enough coverage to support a platform, not merely a publication
Interactive utility	17 explicitly catalogued browser-only calculators	A proven reason to return; needs a common framework and shared inputs
California specificity	Programs, employers, county portals, BBS rules, payers, tax and practice structures	A narrow scope with high defensibility
Trust language	Primary-source citations, review dates, evidence-depth labels and named gaps	Ready to become a formal evidence registry
Lifecycle coverage	Career consideration through group-practice ownership	A latent longitudinal relationship spanning decades
Navigation	Topic families plus audience-stage entrances	Needs a stronger decision-first discovery model
Inventory governance	Homepage counts and repository counts do not currently reconcile	Create one canonical resource inventory and counting policy

Case diagnosis

- The site has enough pages. It does not yet have enough shared state.
- The site has calculators. It does not yet have a common decision model.
- The site has citations. It does not yet have a source-impact graph.
- The site has audiences. It does not yet have a persistent professional path.
- The site has local datasets. It does not yet have a statewide market atlas.

Create a category competitors are not organized to serve.

Competing for article volume would weaken the differentiation. The value innovation is a privacy-first California decision system.

Eliminate	Reduce	Raise	Create
Generic wellness content	Chronological browsing	Source freshness	Private professional path
Unsourced salary claims	Repeated boilerplate	Geographic resolution	Connected Decision Labs
SEO-only variants	Isolated calculator inputs	Explicit uncertainty	Compliance calendar
Tools with unexplained outputs	Bay Area concentration	Comparability	California market atlas
Commercial ranking influence	Account dependence	Expert review	Public data and embeds

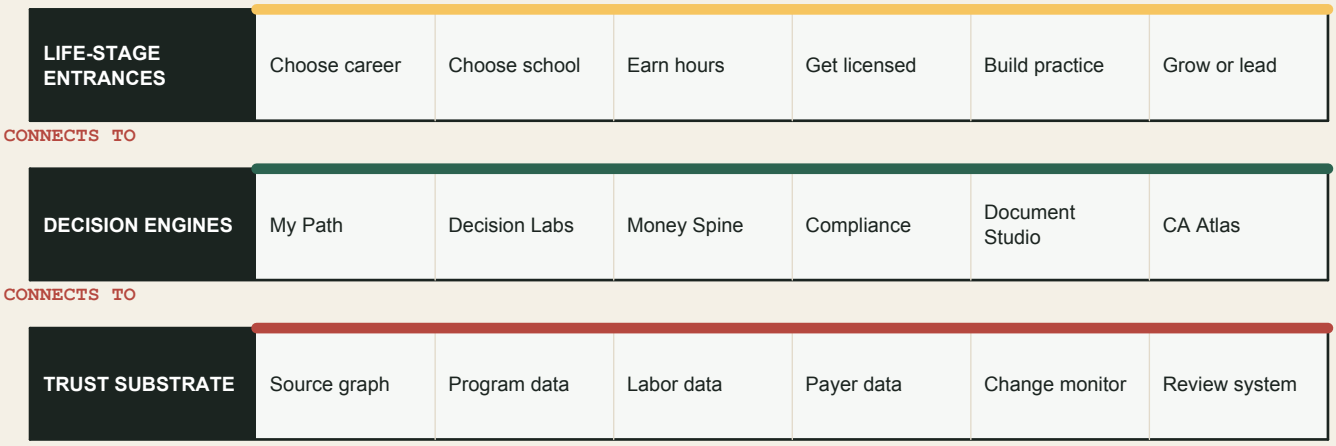
Strategic principles

- California difference test: build only where the answer materially changes because the user practices in California.
- Local-first by default: personal scenarios stay on the device; the site does not need client information.
- Evidence before automation: every conclusion exposes its assumptions, authority and effective date.
- Decision before dashboard: show the consequential tradeoff, not a wall of vanity metrics.
- Free public core: the information and essential arithmetic remain available without an account.

The result is not "more content for therapists." It is a new utility category: a public-interest professional operating layer.

Three layers, one continuous user journey.

People enter through a decision. Shared engines turn their circumstances into useful outputs. A maintained evidence substrate keeps those outputs trustworthy.



Outcome	What the user experiences	What the platform must provide
Find	The right answer for the current career moment	Decision taxonomy, search and audience context
Decide	A comparison using personal circumstances	Shared inputs, scenario logic and transparent assumptions
Complete	A checklist, worksheet, calendar or next action	Completion-oriented product surfaces
Return	A reason to revisit when facts or milestones change	Local profile, change monitoring and alerts

06 / SIGNATURE PRODUCTS

Seven products that transform the existing advantage.

Each concept begins with an important question and ends with a defensible action.

1 / MY CALIFORNIA PATH

What should I do next?

A local-only professional journey connecting milestones, deadlines, hours, economics and nearby opportunities.

2 / SCHOOL DECISION LAB

Which degree has the lowest true cost?

Tuition, living cost, lost earnings, debt, program length, practicum structure and break-even.

3 / ASSOCIATE OFFER LAB

More pay, or a faster license?

Real hourly compensation, benefits, cancellations, qualifying hours, supervision and projected license date.

4 / PAYER CONTRACT LAB

What is this contract worth after friction?

Code-level rates, administration, denials, payment delay, concentration risk and aggregator alternatives.

5 / COMPLIANCE CALENDAR

What must I do next - and why?

License, CE, tax, entity, payer and supervision deadlines linked to controlling sources.

6 / GROUP PRACTICE LAB

When does the first hire pay back?

Payroll loading, supervision capacity, owner displacement, space, billing support and cash flow.

7 / CALIFORNIA OPPORTUNITY ATLAS

Where does my license create the best opportunity?

All 58 counties across pay, cost, license density, jobs, schools, practicum, payers and language demand.

Design rule

> **Every lab should make the tradeoff visible in one sentence: "Offer B gets you licensed six months sooner, but costs $6,840 a year" or "The third clinician, not the first, is where this staffing model breaks even."**

An 800-hour build in four independent releases.

The hours are directional planning estimates. Each phase ships a complete user outcome while accumulating reusable infrastructure.

Release	Hours	Principal deliverables	User-visible outcome
1. Foundation	160	Canonical inventory; decision taxonomy; common calculator framework; source registry; task analytics	A coherent platform with one evidence and interaction system
2. Career engine	210	School cost lab; statewide practicum atlas; multi-license hours planner; offer lab; application center	A student or associate can plan the whole path to licensure
3. Practice engine	245	Launch workspace; payer lab; unified money spine; compliance calendar; group-practice model	A licensee can design, operate and grow a California practice
4. Network moat	185	Change intelligence; anonymous benchmarks; expert council; public data; community evidence loop	The platform improves as the profession uses and cites it
TOTAL	800		Approximately 20 full-time weeks; recommended delivery window: 6-9 months

Suggested staffing model

Capability	Indicative allocation
Product and editorial architecture	0.5-0.75 FTE
Full-stack/product engineering	1.0-1.5 FTE
Data research and verification	0.75-1.0 FTE
UX, accessibility and visual design	0.25-0.5 FTE
Subject-matter review	Fractional, scheduled by release

The constraint is not coding capacity alone. The defensibility comes from disciplined research, structured source ownership and review operations.

Treat evidence maintenance as a product capability.

The costliest strategic failure would be building dozens of impressive tools on unowned, aging assumptions.

Every consequential record should carry

Field	Purpose
Controlling source and jurisdiction	Shows what actually governs the statement
Effective and superseded dates	Prevents old rules from silently remaining current
Applicable licenses and career stages	Determines who should see the information
Checked date and next review date	Turns freshness into an operating commitment
Evidence classification and uncertainty	Separates official facts, market observations and conventions
Downstream dependency map	Identifies every guide and tool affected by a changed figure
Owner and correction history	Creates accountability and visible learning

Sustainable content economics

Approve a new collection only after estimating its annual maintenance burden. A useful internal metric is current-value hours created per annual maintenance hour. This favors reusable datasets and tools over fragile one-off pages.

Distribution flywheel

- Search question → checked guide → Decision Lab → useful result → checklist or action.
- The milestone creates a return visit; the return visit reveals the next unmet decision.
- Rule and rate changes flow through the source graph to affected pages, tools and alerts.
- Public datasets and embeds make schools, chapters and journalists distribution partners.

Protect trust first; monetize infrastructure second.

The editorial position is more valuable than short-term lead generation or sponsorship revenue.

Recommended revenue sequence

- Free public information and core calculators.
- Clearly disclosed affiliate revenue where commercial relationships cannot alter rankings.
- Sponsored public-interest datasets with a visible editorial firewall.
- Institutional licensing of embeds, aggregate tools or implementation support.
- Optional paid workflow conveniences only after the free public layer is dominant.

Risk	Why it matters	Control
Scope dilution	Generic therapist content weakens the California advantage	Apply the California difference test to every initiative
Maintenance debt	A large structured estate can become stale	Budget annual review hours before launch
False precision	Pay, rates and timelines contain uncertainty	Show ranges, assumptions and evidence strength
Legal or tax boundary	Decision support can look individualized	Keep outputs educational; embed escalation boundaries
Privacy creep	Persistent profiles can invite sensitive data	Local-first state, no PHI, portable deletion
Affiliate influence	Commercial pressure can erode credibility	Publish methodology; separate revenue from ranking
Benchmark misuse	Rate data can create privacy or competition concerns	Minimum cohorts, suppression rules and legal review

Authorize the foundation and the associate-path wedge.

The first investment should prove that connected decisions create repeat utility before scaling every lifecycle stage.

North-star metric

Monthly completed California therapist decisions.

First 30 days	Days 31-60	Days 61-90
Canonical inventory and content model; 12-18 lifecycle interviews; source registry schema; task analytics baseline	Prototype My Path; common input framework; transform the Associate Job Advisor into the first Decision Lab	Ship private local state; statewide employer-data pilot; launch deadline/checklist flow; measure completion and return use

Why associates first

- Their decisions are urgent, repeated and unusually California-specific.
- Mistakes have measurable consequences: lost income or delayed licensure.
- The existing site already has hours, employment, supervision and pay assets.
- A successful relationship can persist as associates become licensees, owners, supervisors and employers.

Twelve-month decision gates

Gate	Evidence required to continue
After foundation	Users can find the right tool faster and complete a task without assistance
After associate release	Repeat use, scenario completion and reported decision value exceed article-only baselines
Before benchmark collection	Privacy, suppression and competition-law review are complete
Before account system	Cross-device research proves local-only storage is materially insufficient
Before broader monetization	Editorial independence controls are public and operational

Recommendation: approve the 160-hour foundation plus a 90-hour associate-path vertical slice as the first funded tranche. Use completion, repeat utility and evidence-maintenance cost to decide whether to release the remaining portfolio.

A / SOURCE NOTE

Evidence used for the strategic case.

This proposal combines a repository-wide product audit with current public institutional information. Product concept values are illustrative unless separately sourced.

Source	Use in proposal
Therapist Support repository audit	Local source scan, 26 August 2026. Inventory, navigation, calculators, content clusters, validation rules and publishing architecture.
California Board of Behavioral Sciences - Agenda Item 15	FY 2024-25 licensing data and four-year comparison. https://www.bbs.ca.gov/pdf/agen_notice/2025/20250821_22_item_15.pdf
California Board of Behavioral Sciences - Applicants	Applicant programs, requirements and forms. https://www.bbs.ca.gov/applicants/index.html
California Board of Behavioral Sciences - Manage License/Registration	Renewal, status and license-management requirements. https://www.bbs.ca.gov/licensees/manage.html
California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists	Public description of statewide membership and professional resources. https://www.camft.org/

Important boundary

This is a product and investment proposal, not legal, tax, financial or clinical advice. The proposed tools should preserve the site's existing practice of linking controlling sources, naming uncertainty and telling users when professional review is appropriate.

THERAPIST SUPPORT

California-specific. Free at the core. Checked to source.