

Kansas Roundup

Kansas Stepping Up Technical Assistance (TA) Center

The Kansas Stepping Up TA Center is excited to introduce this Kansas Roundup as a way for counties to learn about the latest news, upcoming events, and announcements from the TA Center. We will share highlights from Stepping Up counties in Kansas, along with opportunities for peer-to-peer connections and links to key resources to continue to advance your Stepping Up efforts. We hope you will find this to be a useful resource to stay up-to-date on not only the work of the TA Center, but also the exceptional and innovative work happening in Kansas counties.

TA CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

KS TA Center in Action

The KS Stepping Up TA Center continues to network and build relationships with county leaders and local and state agencies across Kansas. Last September, the TA Center was invited to speak with the KS Sentencing Commission to provide education on Stepping Up efforts happening across the state and on trends identified through the TA Center. The common themes noted across the state include efforts to enhance crisis response systems and competency to stand trials

processes, including by implementing mobile competency restoration programs in local jails and using jail navigator services.

TA Center staff also attended the annual KS Sheriffs' Association Conference in November 2023 in Mulvane, KS, to network, share resources, and listen to presentations.

Strengthening the KS Stepping Up Innovator Network

At the national level, the Stepping Up initiative is striving to strengthen and grow the network of Stepping Up Innovators. The overwhelming success and enthusiasm of the KS Innovator counties led to these counties playing a special role as a feedback group advising the larger initiative. In January 2024, the KS Stepping Up Innovators cohort began working on a shared definition of serious mental illness aligned with Stepping Up's four key measures. Having a shared definition will make it easier to aggregate data collected from Stepping Up counties across the state. This collection of data will demonstrate the impact of Stepping Up in Kansas and serve as a concrete way to tell the story to local, county, and state leaders.

By The Numbers



22

KS Stepping Up counties



9

Innovator counties



19

Counties using a validated tool to screen for mental illness



30

Counties consistently and actively engaged with the TA Center

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

Crosswinds Counseling and Wellness Is Stepping Up!

Crosswinds Counseling and Wellness serves as the local community mental health center and certified community behavioral health clinic for Lyon, Coffey, Chase, Greenwood, Morris, Osage, Wabaunsee counties. Of these counties, Lyon was initially the only Stepping Up county. In recent years, leadership at Crosswinds has expanded their vision of the local Stepping Up commitment. Through Crosswinds' efforts, five of the seven counties in their catchment area are now Stepping Up counties. This makes them the first community mental health center to advance the Stepping Up initiative across several of the counties they serve. Since 2019, these counties and Crosswinds have made significant strides:

- ▶ Lyon County passed a Stepping Up resolution on February 19, 2019, followed by Greenwood, Osage, Morris, and Wabaunsee counties joining the Stepping Up initiative between October 2022 and January 2023.
- ▶ In March 2021, Crosswinds participated in the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services COVID-19 Supplemental Block Grant, implementing three jail liaison positions in their catchment area.
- ▶ Lyon County became the sixth Kansas Stepping Up Innovator county in November 2023. Since then, Morris and Wabaunsee counties have also been recognized as Stepping Up Innovator counties, bringing the total to eight in the state.

STEPPING UP FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE IN KANSAS

In November 2023, Governor Laura Kelly, in collaboration with the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC), launched the nation's first juvenile justice-focused Stepping Up initiative to address the prevalence of behavioral health needs among youth in Kansas. Through this project, Kansas will receive technical assistance from The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center to identify, implement, and expand best practices centered on reducing the use of detention and increasing connections to care for young Kansans with serious behavioral health needs who are at risk for or currently involved in the juvenile justice system. This project is intended to strengthen cross-system collaboration, improve outcomes for youth and families, and enhance community safety.

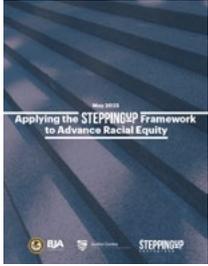
Stepping Up counties played a key role in making a case for the expansion of Stepping Up to the juvenile justice system. It is through your insights and partnership with the TA Center that this project was made possible. The TA Center will work alongside additional CSG Justice Center staff to support this project, which will culminate in policy recommendations geared toward the behavioral health and juvenile justice systems in Kansas and the eventual launch of a juvenile justice-specific Stepping Up TA center.



Welcome, Meredith Butler!

We are excited to introduce Meredith Butler, who will lead the juvenile justice-focused Stepping Up initiative in Kansas as the new senior policy analyst at the CSG Justice Center. Previously, Meredith was the project director of the 4-H Military Partnership Project at Kansas State University, where she ensured that military-connected youth, families, and service-branch program professionals worldwide had access to research-based, positive youth development opportunities. Meredith also served as the Kansas 8th Judicial District Community Corrections Director for 11 years. There, she provided leadership and oversight of intensive community-based probation programs for high-risk, high-need adults and youth. She earned her BS in criminology from Kansas State University and her MLS in organizational leadership from Fort Hays State University.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Applying the Stepping Up Framework to Advance Racial Equity

Individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) have long advocated for addressing disparities in the behavioral health and criminal justice systems. Such pervasive inequities can be complex to understand and overwhelming to counties that are just starting to confront them. The Stepping Up framework offers a solid foundation to effect more racially equitable outcomes, specifically among individuals with serious mental illnesses in the criminal justice system. This brief shows Stepping Up counties how to apply the tools they already have in place to incrementally build policies, programs, and practices that increase racial equity and mitigate disparities.



Stepping Up to Elevate the Voices of Lived Experience

The CSG Justice Center partnered with C4 Innovations and the Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP) to elevate the voices of people with lived expertise, conduct focus groups, and gather recommendations for how counties can reduce the overincarceration of people with mental illness. The LEAP members also reviewed foundational Stepping Up documents and developed recommendations for how the Stepping Up framework can include and amplify the voices of lived experience to achieve the goals of Stepping Up. In this webinar recording, C4 and the LEAP provided an overview of the LEAP's work, offered key takeaways from their focus groups, and explored strategies for effectively integrating individuals with lived expertise to meaningfully engage in and be included in the execution of the goals of Stepping Up and reducing the overincarceration of people with mental illness.



Building State and Local Partnerships to Support Familiar Faces

States are critical partners with local service systems in using data to identify and coordinate care for community members who have frequent contact with criminal justice systems, crisis and health care services, and housing systems. States can uniquely help local partners accelerate learning about implementing evidence-based practices and remove barriers and scale successful approaches across jurisdictions and geographies. This webinar hosted by the CSG Justice Center and Arnold Ventures addressed how New Mexico and Georgia draw on the strengths of multidisciplinary state and local practitioners and leaders to create sustainable collaboration, drive meaningful system change, and measure the impact of their efforts to inform future decisions.

New Research Shows Mobile Methadone Units Are Most Impactful in Rural Areas

The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus released a news story on research involving mobile methadone treatment units and their impact on individuals living in rural areas.

STAY INFORMED



Join our June Peer-to-Peer Connection Hour

Thursday, June 27, 2024 | 10 a.m. CT.

Stepping Up is currently conducting strategic planning to determine priority issue areas, TA models, metrics of success, and overall vision for the initiative as we move into our 10-year anniversary next year. To gather feedback, we're leveraging our next peer connection hour for a listening session with Kansas counties facilitated by Orleny Rojas, senior manager at the Center for Effective Public Policy. Stepping Up staff will not be on these calls so that participants can be as forthright as possible. Please join this important session on Thursday, June 27, 2024, at 10 a.m. CT.

To stay informed on the latest news and upcoming events, please visit the [Kansas Stepping Up Technical Assistance Center](#) webpage. If you would like to be added to the email distribution list, email Audra Goldsmith at agoldsmith@csg.org.