

2024 Pennsylvania Bulletin

Pennsylvania Stepping Up Technical Assistance (TA) Center

Introducing the Pennsylvania Bulletin

The PA Stepping Up TA Center is excited to provide this bulletin as a way for counties to learn about the latest news, upcoming events, and announcements from the TA Center. The bulletin will share highlights from Stepping Up counties in Pennsylvania, along with opportunities for peer-to-peer connections and links to key resources to continue advancing your Stepping Up efforts. We hope this resource helps you stay updated on not only the work of the TA Center, but also the exceptional and innovative work happening in counties across Pennsylvania.

TA Center Highlights

PA TA Center in Action

The PA Stepping Up TA Center continues to connect and build relationships with county leaders and local and state agencies across Pennsylvania. This past December, the TA Center was invited to speak with the Pennsylvania Reentry Coalition to provide an overview of Stepping Up. The following month, we presented to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts Magisterial District Judge

(MDJ) Ops Workgroup on the role judges play at the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice, screening and assessment tools to provide information needed for judges to make decisions, and best practices and programs at those intersections.

TA Center staff also participated in the annual Criminal Justice Advisory Board Conference in April 2024 to network, share resources, and present on the Stepping Up initiative, TA Center offerings, and how counties can meaningfully engage people with lived expertise in their Stepping Up efforts and related work.

Strengthening the PA Stepping Up Innovator Network

In 2023, two additional Pennsylvania counties, **Bucks County and York County**, became Stepping Up Innovators by demonstrating that they have accurate, accessible data on the prevalence of serious mental illness at their county jails. Below are some programmatic highlights for each county:

By The Numbers



36

PA Stepping Up counties



8

Innovator counties



19

Counties using a validated tool to screen for mental illness



20

Counties consistently and actively engaged with the TA Center

Bucks County Spotlight

1. A successful co-responder pilot program from December 2020 allowed for expansion from 1 to 15 police departments. Further expansion is in development.
2. Forensic boundary spanners work with justice partners and providers to assist with successful diversion, reentry, and reintegration.
3. The pretrial program has assisted in diverting 1,103 defendants from incarceration.

York County Spotlight

1. Conducted a feasibility study for a competency wing and acute behavioral health wing inside the York County prison to help the county make systems-level changes to the competency evaluation process.
2. Provides mental health outpatient services 6 weeks prior to release from jail.
3. Created and continues to expand co-responder program. In 2022, only 1 percent of co-responder responses resulted in an arrest. The co-responders connected 984 unique individuals to care from 2022–2023.

These counties now join the six existing Innovators—Berks, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Montgomery, and Philadelphia—in mentoring other counties, connecting with the peer network of Innovators across the county, and providing their expertise to advise and support the TA Center and the Stepping Up initiative on a national level.

The PA Innovators meet regularly for discussions as they begin or expand implementation of various programs, policies, and practices that support people with behavioral health needs in the justice system. The PA Innovators are currently diving deeper into their data to discuss collected metrics, compare definitions, and examine barriers to data collection and tracking. These conversations will help us explore the possibility of aggregating data provided from Stepping Up counties across the Commonwealth. This process would help demonstrate the impact of Stepping Up in Pennsylvania and provide a concrete way to tell the story to local and state leaders.

If your county is interested in becoming an Innovator and would like to see if you currently qualify or are on track, [complete this brief survey](#).

Other County Highlights

Lehigh County passed a Stepping Up resolution in May 2023.

- ▶ This article from [Lehigh Valley Press News](#) outlines some of their related work, including Crisis Intervention Training; partnering mental health professionals with the county's police departments to provide follow-up care; a specialized probation unit to serve those with mental illness; and their CARE (Corrections Assessment Re-entry Endeavor) program, which provides individuals in jail with a menu of mental health and other services, such as peer services through PeerStar.

Carbon County is stepping up to increase collaboration, assess county needs, and take action.

- ▶ The public defender's office hired a social worker in 2022 through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Crisis Intervention and Pretrial Diversion grant opportunity. The chief public defender and social worker established the biweekly Carbon County Correctional Facility (CCCF) Interagency Meeting, which brings together nine entities: PrimeCare (jail medical provider), Warden's/CCCF representation, County Mental Health Office, County Drug and Alcohol Office, Pinebrook Family Answers Leaving Jail Women's Re-Entry Program, Pathstone Pathway 2 Home Men and Women's Re-Entry Program, District Attorney Office, Adult Probation, and Public Defender. Together, they discuss people in the jail with serious mental illnesses and other behavioral health conditions to ensure they receive appropriate care and to explore possibilities for diversion.

- ▶ Carbon, Monroe, and Pike Mental Health and Developmental Services sponsored Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) sessions for each individual county in the network, facilitated by Policy Research Associates. Following the mapping in July 2023, Carbon County developed subcommittees to focus on each of the identified priorities and began working to address them, including creating a repository of existing resources and expanding reentry programming. Other priorities include increasing mental health, substance use, and trauma services in the jail; improving the housing continuum of care for people in the justice system; and integrating and collaborating with 911 and crisis lines to transfer calls and provide training.

The Latest

[Getting to Your Data: Guiding Principles and Lessons Learned from Pennsylvania](#)

Many counties encounter the same challenges in working with their Stepping Up data, including leveraging data to assess the behavioral health needs of their jail populations and inform the identification of policies, practices, or programs to create systems-level change. This brief guides counties through practical tips for how to access, analyze, and leverage their data, whether they are just getting to their data for the first time or planning to set their baselines, measure their progress over time, and achieve results—the three core components of Stepping Up’s [Set, Measure, Achieve \(SMA\)](#) framework.

[Pennsylvania Stepping Up TA Center: Invitation for Short-Term, No-Cost Data Support in 2024](#)

With support from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center is currently offering virtual training and technical assistance through the TA Center to a limited number of PA Stepping Up counties looking to develop or enhance Stepping Up data collection strategies to (1) better understand how people with serious mental illnesses and co-occurring disorders are moving through their system and (2) use that information to inform planning and implementation efforts. We will be partnering with our Research Division to provide this support, which will involve up to three formal TA contacts focused on data

collection, tracking, and analysis. TA can include, but is not limited to, training, consultation, data protocol/procedures review, and peer connections depending on the county’s needs. See the invitation and let us know what you are seeking assistance with through form.

[Centering Lived Expertise: How to Meaningfully Elevate the Voices of People Directly Impacted by the Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Systems](#)

Integrating the voices of people with lived experience in processes that evaluate policy, programming, and practice is essential to championing equity in general and racial equity in particular. This brief summarizes guidance developed by a panel of people with direct experience in both the criminal justice and behavioral health systems about how to meaningfully engage and partner with people with lived experience to advance policies and practices at this intersection. The accompanying checklist narrows in on advisory panels as one method of engagement and provides key steps and considerations for organizations to successfully establish a lived experience advisory panel.

[Reducing the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jail](#)

This new edition of *Reducing the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jail: Six Questions County Leaders Need to Ask* advances the original Stepping Up framework published in 2017 by embedding a racial equity lens and uplifting the voices of people with lived experience. It provides six guiding questions for county leaders, offers tips gleaned from counties across the country that answered the call to action, and addresses ongoing challenges.

[Zero Returns to Homelessness Resource and Technical Assistance Guide](#)

This is a self-service resource designed to help cross-systems partners expand housing in their communities and move toward a vision where every person returning from incarceration has a safe, stable place to call home. This guide details best practices and strategies around reentry housing and is best used by state and local leaders who have authority to convene partners, affect policy and practice changes, and help facilitate cross-systems conversations.

[Justice and Behavioral Health Strategy Lab](#)

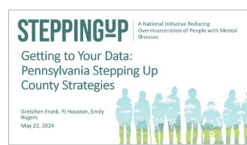
The Stepping Up Strategy Lab has been expanded to become the [Justice and Behavioral Health Strategy Lab](#). This is an interactive library of programs, policies, and practices that jurisdictions across the country have implemented to help reduce the prevalence of community members with unmet behavioral health needs in their jails. With these interventions in one place, Stepping Up planning teams can explore, identify, and pursue those that are most likely to address local drivers of the problem.

Some examples from PA:

- ▶ Berks County's [integrated data warehouse](#)
- ▶ Philadelphia County's [behavioral health navigators embedded at the 911 call center](#)

If you would like to submit a local example from your county or have a suggestion for an intervention that is not currently included in the database, please [complete the submission form](#).

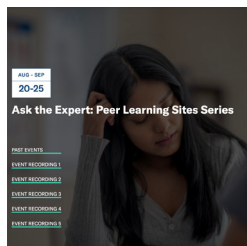
In Case You Missed It



[Getting to Your Data: Pennsylvania Stepping Up County Strategies](#)

Watch the recording of the facilitated panel discussion to learn about three Pennsylvania counties' Stepping Up data collection and tracking efforts and their lessons learned. County panelists discussed how they began their collection processes, approaches they used to access and share needed data, and how they use the data over time, including challenges they have faced and different strategies they use and are exploring to navigate those challenges.

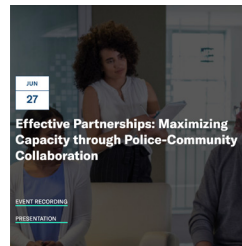
[Ask the Expert: Community Response and Its Place in the Crisis Continuum](#)



June's Ask the Expert session featured representatives from Madison, WI, and Denver, CO, discussing their community

response teams and how those teams fit into the larger

public safety landscape. The Community Alternative Response Emergency Services (CARES) team in Wisconsin and the Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) in Denver are crisis response teams that do not include law enforcement and connect people in crisis with supportive services. As community response teams become more popular, it is useful to hear from teams that have successfully implemented the model about how they addressed questions regarding safety, dispatching, and data collection with other emergency crisis service providers.



[Effective Partnerships: Maximizing Capacity through Police-Community Collaboration](#)

This webinar examined how to effectively engage partners to foster and sustain positive outcomes. A representative from the New Jersey Transit Police Department walked through the department's outreach program that addresses the needs of individuals through its successful partnerships with mental health services, substance use services, housing services, and more. Learn about the process the New Jersey Transit Police used to start their program and the key elements you need to know to start a program in your own community.

Stay Informed

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



Justice Center
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