

Kansas Roundup

Kansas Stepping Up Technical Assistance (TA) Center

The Kansas Roundup

The Kansas Stepping Up TA Center Roundup provides the latest news, upcoming events, and announcements from the TA Center. To help you stay connected, we include highlights from Stepping Up counties across 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 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

A Shared Definition

In February 2024, the KS Stepping Up Innovators—Barton, Lyon, Osage, Shawnee, Douglas, Morris, Wabaunsee, Greenwood, and Johnson counties—agreed upon and adopted a statewide shared definition of serious mental illness (SMI). A shared definition provides consistency for identifying the target population, streamlining data collection and reporting across the state.

Serious mental illness is defined as a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.

Strengthening the KS Stepping Up Innovator Network

To support the growth and coordination of KS Innovator counties, we're partnering with the [OMNI Institute](#), a nationally recognized organization known for their research and cross-systems expertise, including an array of work at the intersection of behavioral health and the justice system. The partnership aims to assist counties in building data capacity and to identify areas of needed support. The goal is to develop a data-sharing process and reporting mechanism that can be used by KS Innovator counties and the TA Center to inform decision-making, TA provision, and resource mobilization.

By The Numbers



22

KS Stepping Up counties



10

Innovator counties



20

Counties using a validated tool to screen for mental illness



30

Counties consistently and actively engaged with the TA Center

The first phase of work concluded in June 2024, after which OMNI provided a set of recommendations to the TA Center outlining key priority areas and suggested activities that could further strengthen the KS Innovator network. Guided by these recommendations, the TA Center will work in tandem with KS Innovator counties to:

- ▶ Formulate clearer communication around the definition of SMI and specific tracking processes for data collection;
- ▶ Provide individualized support and trainings around data and forming successful collaborations and community partnerships to advance county Stepping Up efforts; and
- ▶ Coordinate opportunities for peer connections to increase their knowledge on successful processes for implementing programs, policies, and workforce enhancement strategies.

To find out more information or to see if your county is on track to become a Stepping Up Innovator County, visit stepuptogether.org and complete a [brief survey](#).

County Highlights

In this edition of the KS Roundup, we are highlighting a few counties who submitted recent entries into The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center's [Justice and Behavioral Health Strategy Lab](#). This online resource contains county examples on a variety of topics, including service implementation, program enhancement, and sustainability. Counties across the country can submit entries showcasing strategies they provide at the intersection of behavioral health and the justice system.

Shawnee County's Mobile Access Partnership

The [Mobile Access Partnership](#) (MAP) is a collaborative approach to providing mobile access to medical, social, and behavioral health services for Topeka's unsheltered homeless population, serving the city of Topeka and Shawnee County. MAP specifically provides mobile bathrooms, showers, laundry facilities, health clinic, food pantry, and kitchen. These services are available in the community twice per week. MAP consists of several local service providers who serve as the Executive Committee for this coalition, including the Topeka Rescue Ministries, Valeo Behavioral Health Care, Inc., the Stormont Vail Health System, Shawnee County Health Department, and the Topeka Police Department, among others.

Learn more: [Mobile Access Partnership | TRM Ministries \(trmonline.org\)](#)

Sedgwick County's Integrated Care Team (ICT-1)

Comcare, the local Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), is the lead agency for the [Integrated Care Team](#) (ICT-1), serving the Wichita metro area and Sedgwick County. ICT-1 is a multidisciplinary, co-responder program aimed at providing resources to those in the community experiencing suicidality, substance use issues, psychosis, delusions, and other mental health issues. The team consists of a mental health professional, a law enforcement officer, and a paramedic who respond to emerging mental health crises in the community, identified through the 911 and COMCARE Crisis systems. ICT-1's participating agencies include COMCARE, Sedgwick County EMS, and the Wichita Police Department, among others. This year, ICT-1 has responded to over 380 calls for services and avoided the need for emergency response in over 30 percent of those cases. Learn more: [ICT-1 | Sedgwick County, Kansas](#)

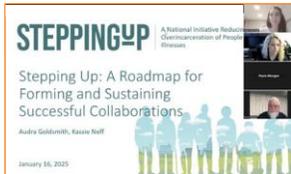
Stepping Up for Youth in Kansas

With strong support and participation from state and local leaders, the CSG Justice Center has completed the first year-long phase of work on this project. Key activities completed to date include facilitating system-mapping conversations and conducting a series of listening sessions with key stakeholders to identify pressing needs and challenges among systems working to identify and address the behavioral health needs of youth who are at risk of involvement or are currently involved in the juvenile justice system.

Findings from these activities have led to the development of initial state-level recommendations that were vetted by agency leadership, the Governor's Office, the State Task Force, the Juvenile Justice Stepping Up (JJSU) Workgroup, and the legislature in late 2024 into early 2025. In addition, with insights from state leaders and the JJSU Workgroup, we have drafted an outline for the [Stepping Up for Youth](#) framework, which is being reviewed and refined by key stakeholders in Kansas and the broader Stepping Up network. The KS Stepping Up for Youth Technical Assistance Center is anticipated to launch in early 2025.

Through these efforts, Kansas is working to strengthen policies and practices as it becomes the first state in the nation to establish the Stepping Up for Youth model approach. The initiative is designed to bolster a county's infrastructure and resources utilization to more successfully divert youth with behavioral health needs from secure detention. By better serving the unique needs of youth in the community, the Juvenile Justice Stepping Up initiative strives to improve community wellness, public safety, and outcomes for our youth.

In Case You Missed It



Stepping Up: A Roadmap to Forming and Sustaining Successful Collaboration

Hosted by the Kansas Stepping Up TA Center funded by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), this webinar provides counties with a roadmap for successfully establishing and sustaining collaborative working groups where initiatives like Stepping Up can function. We discussed how collaboratives can help create cross-system-based approaches to community issues, identifying effective ways to improve community wellness and public safety while reducing duplicative services. We also provided recommendations to county decisionmakers to guide policy changes and fiscal allocations.



Best Practices to Promote Scene Safety During Mental Health Crises

Ensuring the safety of law enforcement and mental health professionals who respond to mental health crises is essential yet challenging. Taking proactive steps can minimize risk of harm and foster trust and rapport with the person experiencing the crisis. Individuals who feel safe and supported are more likely to engage in collaborative efforts and accept assistance. This approach ultimately allows for better coordination of efforts and the implementation of appropriate interventions to de-escalate crises and provide the support needed to ensure positive outcomes. This webinar, hosted by the CSG Justice Center in partnership with 21st Century Policing, reviewed best practices to promote scene safety and featured an ask-the-expert hour with the presenters.



Getting to Your Data: Lessons Learned and Guiding Principles from Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Stepping Up TA Center provides free technical assistance to Stepping Up counties in PA working to reduce the overincarceration of people with SMIs and co-occurring substance use disorders in their county jails. Through providing technical assistance, CSG Justice Center staff recognized that counties were encountering many of the same challenges in working with their Stepping Up data. This brief compiles lessons learned and successful strategies for navigating these challenges, guiding counties through practical tips for how to access, analyze, and leverage their data.



Partnering with Community Colleges to Grow and Strengthen the Community Responder Workforce

Community responder programs, which position trained professionals to respond to behavioral health crises and social disturbances, have expanded rapidly across the country. As these programs continue to be implemented, it is crucial that training and workforce development opportunities are available so that community responder teams are properly staffed with trained professionals. One way to expand this training is through partnerships with community colleges, which provide similar workforce development opportunities in other sectors. During this webinar, staff members from the Evanston Department of Parks and Recreation's Crisis Alternative Response Evanston (C.A.R.E.) team and Oakton College spoke about the development and implementation of their C.A.R.E. community responder program. Additionally, researchers and national experts explained why workforce development programs are vital to the success of community responder programs and how partnerships between these programs and community colleges are mutually beneficial.

Upcoming Events



KS Peer-to-Peer Connection Hour

Our peer-to-peer connection hours have been a successful platform to connect counties; share information on policies, procedures, and practices; and promote what's happening across the state. These informal, lightly facilitated connection hours provide a space for counties to collaborate and learn from one another on topics related to current projects, policy implementation, process improvements, data collection, and more. You will also hear highlights on county progress and news from Stepping Up and KDADS. Please join these recurring meetings held on the third Tuesday, every third month. The next meeting will be on June 17, 2025, at 10 a.m. CT.



The 2025 Stepping Up KS and KDADS Mobile Crisis Symposium

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) and the [Kansas Stepping Up Technical Assistance Center](#) have joined together to host a **FREE** two-day event for all KS counties on May 13 and 14, 2025, in Great Bend, KS. This symposium is an opportunity for KS counties to learn more about the impact of the new Medicaid requirements on young people who are involved in the justice system; traumatic brain injury and its impact on the justice system; the first ever Stepping Up for Youth initiative and pilot site work; and other topics related to Stepping Up, including topic-specific breakout sessions. On the second day, KDADS will provide information and facilitate discussions to support the continued development and expansion of mobile crisis response in Kansas. The summit will feature sessions on the new service model of Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS), with conversation, collaboration, and interchange about MRSS implementation and service expectations. Aspects of the state's Crisis Continuum of Care will also be discussed along with the vision for its future.

Share Your County Stories: Celebrating 10 Years of Stepping Up

As we approach the 10th anniversary of the Stepping Up initiative in May 2025, we're gathering stories, data, and other types of information from counties and partners to highlight its impact. The Stepping Up partners—the CSG Justice Center, the National Association of Counties, and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation—want to demonstrate the depth and breadth of Stepping Up counties' work over the years. Your insights will help us share this journey with the public and key stakeholders via social media campaigns and web-based products. The more details you provide, the stronger our collective story will be. Thank you for your work in advancing Stepping Up in your county and for helping us celebrate our 10-year milestone!

Get Connected

The TA Center will be offering targeted outreach to counties across the state. TA will focus on building rapport and gaining buy-in around Stepping Up, as well as identifying opportunities for collaboration and support with their ongoing efforts, which may include TA focused on strategic planning and cross-systems collaborations, data collection and capacity, screening and connection to care processes, and support with identifying high-impact strategies to implement. We are particularly interested in hearing from counties on the western side of the state to see how we can best support you in your work.

Don't miss out on this opportunity! To get more information or inquire about being selected as a participating county, email kssu@csg.org.



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