

2026 Pennsylvania Bulletin

Pennsylvania Stepping Up Technical Assistance (TA) Center

Delivering the latest news, resources, and upcoming events from the TA Center while highlighting the exceptional and innovative work happening across Stepping Up counties.

As the Pennsylvania Stepping Up TA Center continues supporting counties in reducing the number of people with behavioral health needs in jail, this newsletter provides updates on county progress, opportunities to stay connected through peer learning, and shared tools and resources to continue to advance your Stepping Up efforts. We hope these updates help strengthen partnerships, spark new ideas, and keep you informed of not only the work of the TA Center, but also the exceptional and innovative efforts happening throughout Pennsylvania counties.

TA Center Highlights



In the past year, the Pennsylvania Stepping Up TA Center has continued to connect with counties across the Commonwealth. Often this communication has been through

individual calls with sites as well as statewide calls—including PA Innovators calls and peer connection hours—to share progress, exchange strategies, and surface emerging needs such as data sharing challenges, housing gaps, and diversion opportunities.



The TA Center **hosted engaging webinars** to equip counties with practical tools to advance their work—including a session highlighted later in this bulletin that explored how counties

can better leverage data to drive sustainable, system-level change. A separate webinar brought together approximately 45 county partners to learn about real-world examples of housing interventions that support people with behavioral health needs and are already underway. Beyond group learning, the TA team also **provided hands-on support**, helping counties reengage local stakeholders, build peer connections, advance data planning, and pursue Innovator status.



Counties were also invited to complete an online survey designed to gather feedback and insights to inform future technical assistance and strengthen cross-system data practices statewide.

Insights from the **statewide survey** highlighted some shared priorities—including data capacity, funding sustainability, and peer learning—and are shaping upcoming webinars, resources, and continued hands-on support designed to meet counties where they are and advance locally driven Stepping Up initiatives. For example, feedback from the survey directly led to the decision to organize a data-focused webinar and continues to influence future TA Center presentations.



In 2026, Pennsylvania TA Center staff partnered with Stepping Up counties and Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) specialists to present at the annual **CJAB Conference** to share

the benefits of cross-systems collaboration. In 2025, Pennsylvania TA Center staff also partnered with Stepping Up counties to present at the annual **CJAB Conference and the Pennsylvania Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Conference** to share successes and lessons learned. These in-person presentations create opportunities for building connections with local county leaders and key stakeholders and allow us to hear directly from you about what matters at the local level and how we can best support you.

By The Numbers



45

PA Stepping
Up counties



8

Innovator
counties



21

Counties using
a validated tool
to screen for
mental illness



20

Counties
consistently
and actively
engaged with
the TA Center

County Highlights

Connections Emergency Behavioral Health Crisis Walk-in Center Offers 24/7 Crisis Services | Dauphin, Cumberland, & Perry Counties

A regional behavioral health crisis center, Connections Emergency Behavioral Health Walk-in Center, serving Dauphin, Cumberland, and Perry Counties opened in Harrisburg, PA in December 2024. This center offers 24/7 walk-in and mobile crisis services for people ages 14 and up. Operated by Connections Health Solutions, the center provides urgent mental health

and substance use care, including crisis stabilization and post-acute support, regardless of insurance status. It is funded through county partnerships and opioid settlement dollars and aims to reduce reliance on emergency rooms and jails by offering compassionate, trauma-informed care in the least restrictive setting.

As of January 2026, the center has served an average of



255 adults

and



70 adolescents

per month, with volumes continuing to grow.

Program analytics show strong crisis response performance, including a 23 minute average mobile crisis response time, a 3 minute average law enforcement drop off time, and timely “door to doc” access for both youth and adults. One hundred percent of walk in referrals are accepted, and observation stays

average 15.75 hours. Collectively, these data points highlight the center’s continued focus on timely care delivery and strengthening working relationships with Public Service Answering Points (PSAPs) and law enforcement partners across the region.

Data-Focused Stepping Up Work Builds Momentum for Diversion and Reentry Planning | Chester County

Chester County is working with the Pennsylvania Stepping Up TA Center to strengthen and refocus its Stepping Up initiative by improving how data is collected, shared, and used across systems. Recent efforts have centered on refining core Stepping Up measures, supporting development of a new integrated data system, and facilitating

cross-department discussions among mental health, human services, probation, the courts, jail, and law enforcement. Through ongoing TA and subcommittee work, the partnership is helping clarify data priorities, identify system barriers, and lay the groundwork for more consistent, actionable reporting that supports diversion, jail reduction, and reentry planning.

Grant Awarded to Implement Medication-Assisted Treatment in the Jail | Centre County

In December 2025, Centre County received a competitive grant to launch a medication-assisted treatment (MAT) program within the county jail—an important step toward expanding access to evidence-based care for people with opioid use disorder. This new initiative will allow the jail to provide FDA-approved medications, support continuity of care

during incarceration, and strengthen connections to community-based treatment upon release. The investment positions Centre County to address substance use more effectively within its justice system and supports broader statewide efforts to reduce overdose risk, improve health outcomes, and enhance reentry success.

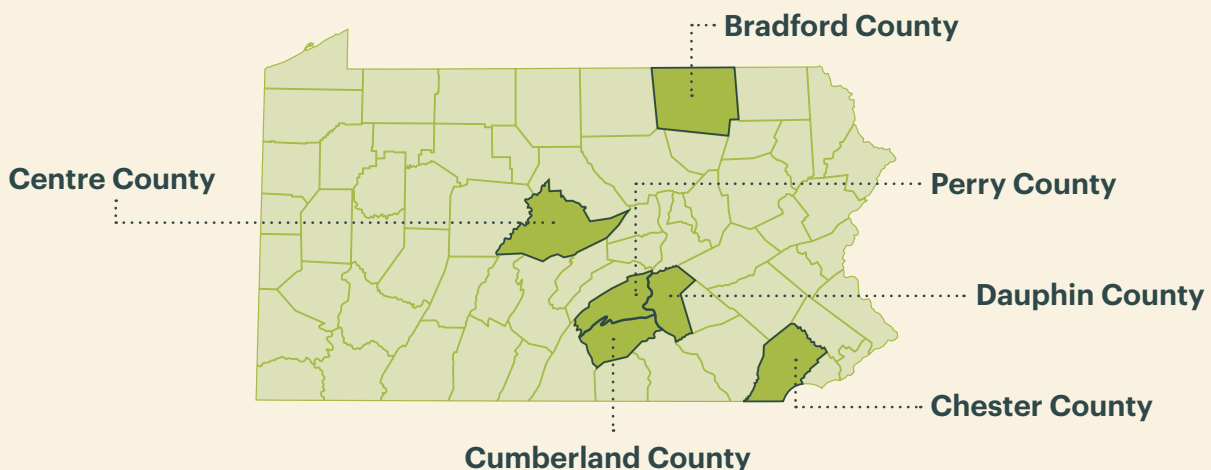
Annual Housing Conference Looks to Strengthen Regional Partnerships | Bradford County

Each year, Bradford County Human Services organizes a countywide housing conference designed to build stronger relationships among local providers, share critical updates, and collaborate on strategies to address housing challenges. The event draws a wide range of partners—from shelter providers and county agencies to behavioral health services and community organizations—creating a dedicated space for problem-solving and resource sharing. Bradford County also extends invitations to neighboring counties interested in learning from their efforts, helping to foster a broader network of collaboration and knowledge exchange. The annual

convening has become a valuable regional touchpoint for strengthening housing responses and supporting cross-county partnerships.

This year, Bradford County Human Services hosted the free, full-day conference *Stronger Together: Partnerships for Service & Safety* on May 21, 2026. The event brought together community partners to strengthen collaboration around housing, mental health, safety, and employment through keynote speakers, targeted breakout sessions, and networking—supporting inclusive, community-based solutions for vulnerable populations across the region.

Pennsylvania County Highlight Map



Events

Pennsylvania 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 virtual meetings 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 staff and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). To stay informed on an upcoming peer-to-peer connection hour, please email pasu@csg.org.

In Case You Missed It

CJAB Conference Presentation | April 21, 2026

From Silos to Coordinated Systems: How to Leverage and Connect Parallel Justice Initiatives to Advance Local Priorities

Counties across Pennsylvania are investing in Stepping Up, crisis response, and other justice initiatives to connect more people to treatment, but too often these efforts run on parallel tracks, creating silos, duplication, and missed opportunities. In April, the Stepping Up team presented at the CJAB Conference and led a session focused on how counties can braid initiatives into a unified, strategic

system. Presenters shared practical strategies and examples, joined by guests from Dauphin County in Pennsylvania and CJAB specialists, on aligning goals, streamlining efforts, and connecting the dots across systems. Participants left with clear insights on reducing redundancy, strengthening collaboration, and improving outcomes for people with behavioral health needs in the justice system.

STEPPINGUP A National Initiative Reducing Overincarceration of People with Mental Illnesses

Stepping Up Your Data: Unlock Your County's Data to Make Sustainable Changes

February 11, 2026

Dr. Jolynn Haney, Stepping Up Data Manager and Analyst, Berks County, PA
Emily Rogers, Research Project Manager, CSG Justice Center
Lahiz Tavarez, Project Manager, CSG Justice Center

Feb 11

Stepping Up Your Data: Unlock Your County's Data to Make Sustainable Changes

Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Time: 1:00–2:00 p.m. ET

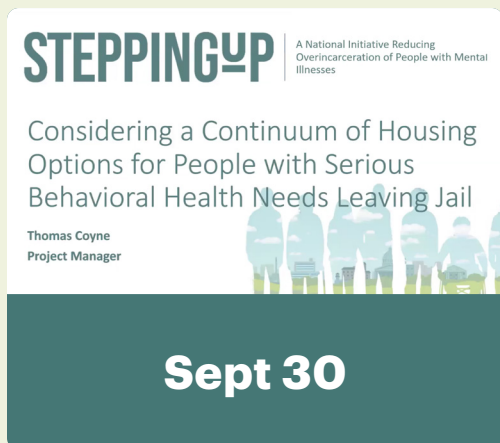
Timely, reliable access to trustworthy data is essential for applying for grants, developing budget requests, answering media inquiries, and more. Yet, many Stepping Up counties struggle to collect, report, and use the data needed to inform decisions and drive progress. *The Stepping Up Readiness Toolkit*, developed by Omni Institute in partnership with the CSG Justice Center, was created to assess a county's data capacity and readiness and to provide tailored recommendations aligned with Stepping Up's Four Key Measures. This webinar discussed tips from the toolkit and used real-world examples from a Pennsylvania county to highlight practical, scalable strategies for expanding data capacity and supporting sustainable, data-informed change. Participants learned how to identify their county's current data capacity, determine where they fall on the spectrum from entry level to high capacity, strengthen their data capacity through tangible next steps, and leverage technical assistance to drive long-term, sustainable, data-informed improvements.



Webinar | Behavioral Health and Justice: Helping Counties “Step Up” at Every Stage

Timely and reliable access to trustworthy data is essential to applying for grants, developing budget requests, answering media inquiries, and more. Many Stepping Up counties struggle with collecting, reporting, and leveraging the data needed to inform decision-making and drive progress. However, the new Stepping Up Readiness Toolkit developed by Omni Institute in partnership with the CSG Justice Center was created to assess a county’s Stepping Up data capacity and readiness. It also provides tailored recommendations for building data capacity aligned with Stepping Up’s Four Key Measures. This webinar featured discussion on many of the tips outlined in the tool, using real-world examples from Berks County in Pennsylvania to highlight practical, scalable strategies for expanding data capacity and supporting sustainable, data-informed change.

Explore the toolkit at <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/stepping-up-readiness-toolkit/>.



Considering a Continuum of Housing Options for People with Serious Behavioral Health Needs Leaving Jail

Date: Thursday, September 30, 2025

Time: 1:00–2:00 p.m. EST

The number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night increased 12 percent in Pennsylvania from 2023 to 2024. At the time, the Commonwealth had only 40 affordable housing units for every 100 renters with low incomes. Yet, Stepping Up counties, with broad partnerships and cross-sector capacity, are well-positioned to use innovative, evidence-based housing interventions for people with serious behavioral health needs experiencing homelessness who also cycled through jails. This webinar introduced counties to a continuum of housing options to address jail-to-homelessness cycling. Participants learned about statewide resources to expand housing opportunities and heard from the Clarion County Housing Authority and Beaver County on their housing interventions for people leaving incarceration.



The 10-Year Impact—and Future—of Stepping Up: Facing the Behavioral Health Crisis in Jails and Communities with Real Solutions

Stepping Up marked 10 years of progress in 2025, as more than 500 counties and 50 Innovator counties have advanced strategies to meet the behavioral health needs of people cycling through jails. Over the past decade, the initiative has clarified what works, where to focus, and how to move from isolated efforts to broader transformation across justice and behavioral health systems.

[View Stepping Up’s 10-year anniversary page](#) for more on the lessons we’ve learned, the impacts counties have had, the priorities for the next decade, and how you can help your community.

The Pennsylvania CIT Technical Assistance Center

PCCD's **FY 2024 Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) Funding Plan** was approved in September 2024, paving the way for the launch of a first of its kind statewide CIT Training and Technical Assistance Center in the Commonwealth. Following this approval, the CIT TA Center was formally introduced to counties and partners in fall 2025, marking a significant milestone in expanding coordinated crisis response efforts statewide.

Led by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, developed in collaboration with the Department of Human Services' Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), the CSG Justice Center, and CIT International, and serving

as a "one stop shop" for counties, this TA Center has a simple goal to help local and state agencies start, strengthen, or expand CIT programs and related crisis response efforts. The CIT TA Center provides free consultation, peer learning, development, and training opportunities designed to align local efforts with national best practices, including the Memphis Model, and to support consistent, high-quality crisis response across Pennsylvania.

Interested in learning more? Visit **the Pennsylvania CIT TA Center webpage** to set up a first meeting. If you have any questions, please reach out to **pacit@csg.org**.

Contact Us

Schedule a TA call and learn more about all the FREE resources available to you!

As part of our commitment to Stepping Up, we provide TA, expertise, and guidance to support your Stepping Up efforts and help you achieve your Stepping Up goals. We can also help coordinate peer connections to create opportunities for counties to learn from one another. Additionally, we would appreciate an update on your progress toward your objectives, including any challenges we can help you navigate and any successes we can help you highlight and share.

This is the perfect time to reconnect and learn more about all the **free resources** available to you. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you. Additionally, we can schedule recurring calls to work on your Stepping Up goals and provide ongoing support.



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, have questions, need support, or have resource requests, email **pasu@csg.org**.