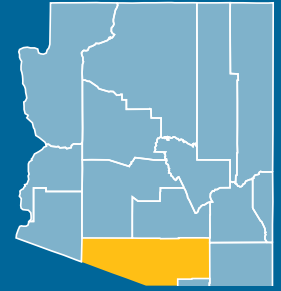


PIMA COUNTY, ARIZ.

Meeting Needs Along the Behavioral Health and Justice Continuum



POPULATION:
980,263

In collaboration with the *Stepping Up initiative*, the *Data-Driven Justice initiative* and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's *Safety and Justice Challenge*, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) convened a Best Practices Implementation Academy to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses and Substance Use Disorders in Jails (BPIA) in April 2018 in Alexandria, Va. At the BPIA, delegations from 24 jurisdictions involved in one or more of the three initiatives met to showcase best practice strategies and advance implementation efforts to prevent or reduce the jail involvement of individuals with mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

This case study is part of a series highlighting the six counties that constituted the "Best Practices" teams representing the *Data-Driven Justice initiative* and the *Stepping Up initiative* at the BPIA.

Pima County became part of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) in May 2015 when it was awarded a \$150,000 planning grant to develop a strategy to reduce its jail population. With this planning grant, Pima County stakeholders identified pretrial diversion for people with behavioral health treatment needs as a key priority for reform. As a follow-up, the county applied for and was awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the SJC to implement policies and practices to address this priority. Additionally, the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to join the national *Stepping Up* initiative in November 2015.

The Community Collaborative

Pima County formed its Community Collaborative to help implement its SJC reform priorities. The 33-person group is composed of 15 public agency partners (e.g., the city mayor, pretrial and courts leaders, behavioral health, sheriff's office and tribal leaders) and 18 community representatives, including formerly incarcerated men and women, victim advocates, academics, clergy and others. Members meet regularly to review data and propose adjustments to the strategies as needed. The Collaborative also started the Leadership Institute, an innovative program to develop leadership skills of formerly incarcerated individuals and/or their family members, and is participating in a qualitative study of its programs with the University of Arizona.

Prioritizing Pretrial Services

As part of its justice reform efforts, Pima County expanded pretrial screenings to everyone booked at the jail. Prior to implementing this reform, only people charged with felonies and a small number of people that were being brought in from a single law enforcement agency were being screened. Pretrial Services is also implementing a specialty case load for people identified through this process as having mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The intention is that individuals are identified early through the new universal screening process and can then be connected to community-based treatment and services. This new process involves screening everyone booked on misdemeanors or felonies for pretrial risk using the Public Safety Assessment (PSA), as well as mental health and substance use disorders using the Brief Jail Mental Health Screen, before the initial appearance to increase post-booking releases.

Law Enforcement Mental Health Support Team

In 2013, the Pima County Sheriff's Office started the Mental Health Support Team (MHST), a dedicated team of law enforcement officers to respond to calls for service involving people experiencing a mental health crisis. The sheriff's office trains many of

its law enforcement officers in the Memphis Model of Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT), but only a select few are part of the MHST, and MHST officers only respond to mental health calls. Shortly after the sheriff's office started MHST, the Tucson Police Department joined the effort.

The MHST is composed of both officers and detectives who play distinct roles. Officers have specialized training to work with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and focus on the safety and service of people who are already in the civil commitment system, including transporting people to crisis services. Prior to the MHST, only 30 percent of civil commitment pick up orders were served before they expired, which meant that people were not getting the services they needed. In 2016, the Tucson Police Department had a 98 percent success rate on these orders with zero uses of force.

Taking a more proactive approach, MHST detectives investigate nuisance calls to help recognize patterns in individuals' behavior, allowing them to connect people to service before the situation escalates to a crisis. MHST now also takes responsibility for suicide barricade calls, resulting in less use of force and reduced use of the resource-intensive SWAT teams.

Linking with the Community Crisis Response System

The success of these programs would not be possible without a robust, community-based crisis response system in the county. The county provides crisis services through a variety of mechanisms, including a crisis line and mobile crisis team, a process for making urgent appointments with treatment providers and community stabilization centers, including the 24-hour Crisis Response Center. In addition to serving the public, the Crisis Response Center now caters to law enforcement by accepting anyone who is dropped off at the center and getting the officer back on the street in an average of seven minutes.

The county also has a mental health co-responder program in partnership with MHST where a mental health clinician will accompany the MHST officer to a call for service. This program allows law enforcement to serve more than double the usual cases due to increased information sharing with the behavioral health system that leads to faster triaging of individuals, fewer hospitalizations and increased connections to community-based care. Prior to the co-responder program, about half of calls for service resulted in a trip to the hospital compared to only 12 percent with the program in place.

Building on this momentum, the Assistant County Administrator created a Criminal Justice Reform Unit to expand the county's efforts. The county is now engaged in a number of projects to help reduce its jail population while improving public safety and serving community members.

SAMHSA contracted with Policy Research Associates (PRA), which operates SAMHSA's GAINS Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation, to facilitate the BPIA. Additional partners included the lead organizations of the **Stepping Up initiative** (the National Association of Counties, the American Psychiatric Association Foundation and The Council of State Governments Justice Center), the **Data-Driven Justice initiative** (the National Association of Counties and the Laura and John Arnold Foundation) and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's **Safety and Justice Challenge**.

For more information on this county's efforts, please contact:

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