

Six Questions Case Studies



Stepping Up is a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails. In January 2017, the Stepping Up partners released *Reducing the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jail: Six Questions County Leaders Need to Ask (Six Questions)*, a report outlining a framework for counties to assess their existing efforts to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails. With the release of the report, the initiative hosted a series of webinars and network calls to outline some of the key strategies within the report and feature counties that have been working through the *Six Questions* process. The Stepping Up *Six Questions* Case Studies serve as a quick reference to the counties highlighted in this series. More information on the *Six Questions* and the webinar recording featuring this county are available on the **Stepping Up Resources Toolkit**.



Question 4

Have We Conducted a Comprehensive Process Analysis and Inventory of Services?

An opportunity exists at every step along the criminal justice continuum to improve responses to a person's mental health needs. Completing a comprehensive process analysis helps county leaders determine where improvements can be made to better identify needs and share information. Some counties choose to conduct an initial analysis through a system mapping exercise. It is important that an inventory of community-based services and supports also be conducted as part of this process, and data to support this analysis should be included at all possible points. For example, knowing the current number of people who have mental illness who are booked into jail helps county leaders determine the scale of the problem they are working to address and can be used to compare arrest rates of people who have mental illness to people who do not.

QUESTION 4 IN ACTION

CHESTER COUNTY, PA.

POPULATION: 499,146



Chester County has had a collaborative partnership between the courts, corrections and human services agencies for decades and completed a Sequential Intercept Model mapping exercise in 2010. Through this exercise, county leaders from these different sectors developed a comprehensive picture of how individuals with mental illnesses moved through the system from initial contact with law enforcement or emergency services through to the initial detention and court hearings, jail, court processes and reentry and community supervision. The county's mapping helped to identify gaps, resources and opportunities at each point and then use this information to develop priorities for how to address them.

At that time, the county decided to prioritize changes to its jail intake processes, what happens while a person is in jail and release processes. Leaders developed systems to better identify individuals with mental illnesses at intake using screening and assessment and cross-referencing records with mental health providers. They also added specialized probation and parole officers to help with reentry planning prior to release and hired forensic peer specialists to engage individuals in need of services.

The Chester County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution to join the Stepping Up initiative in October 2015 to revisit and reevaluate its efforts. To start, a working group was convened to review data on every point of the justice system: emergency services, 911 calls, crisis teams, corrections, mental health, courts and parole and probation. The working group also worked with a third party to host a focus group with individuals who had direct experience with the criminal justice system and their family members to get perspectives on their interactions with the system. A local foundation worked with the county to investigate best practices in crisis models. And the county's police chief's association developed a mental health subcommittee to work collaboratively to create common language and priorities.

The working group decided to prioritize activities related to diversion and law enforcement. The county obtained a grant from the state for crisis intervention team training for law enforcement. The working group also participated in community outreach and education on mental health first aid, as well as hosting community conversations to educate citizens on mental health to reduce stigma. The county is looking to expand peer support services in the jail and in the community and to set up processes for ongoing evaluation to continue improvement efforts.

QUESTION 4 IN ACTION

FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

POPULATION: 1,163,529



Franklin County passed a resolution to join the Stepping Up initiative in May 2015. Prior to joining the initiative, the county had already established a Criminal Justice Planning Board that meets quarterly. The planning board includes representation from the largest city in the county, county commissioners, the city council, the sheriff and police, the prosecutor and the city attorney, the public defender, city and county courts, adult and juvenile probation departments and key human services agencies such as the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board.

The planning board met as a group to create a strategic plan using the Sequential Intercept Model as a guide. For each intercept within the model, the county asked two questions:

- What data should be considered?
- Who should be at the table to move recommendations?

These two questions have been integral to helping the county identify gaps in the system and who needed to be part of the solutions. The county created lists of key data points to help identify challenges and gaps at each intercept and worked with partners to get access to that data. For example, the county noted that only a small portion of patrol officers across the 29 law enforcement agencies was trained in Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT). Since police departments and the Sheriff's Office were at the table for these conversations, they led the efforts to increase training for their officers. The Sheriff's Office also made significant investments in training its correctional officers in CIT and mental health first aid, which has led to a safer jail environment and reduced use of force. The county also used data to identify the highest utilizers of emergency services and law enforcement resources so providers could offer comprehensive wraparound services such as benefits connections, workforce services, mental health treatment and supportive housing to these individuals. The combination of data review and strong leadership has led to significant changes in policy and practice to improve how the county responds to people experiencing mental health crises.

Stepping Up is a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails and is the result of a partnership between the National Association of Counties, The Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation. For more information, visit www.stepuptogether.org.



Justice Center
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