



Community Justice Services

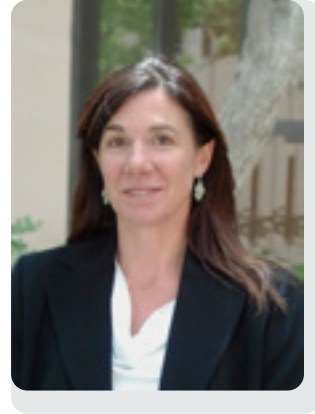
2024 SPOTLIGHT

The mission of Boulder County Community Justice Services (CJS) is to address core stability, provide hope, support, and safety, inspire continual growth, collaborate, and empower community.

CJS is committed to core values of courage, compassion, and connection in developing our workforce to provide effective community services.



From our Division Manager



Happy Winter, Community Justice Services stakeholders, colleagues, and community!

The work completed at Community Justice Services (CJS) spans the justice system. This is our first “Spotlight Report” to focus on a portion of our work in the pretrial area. This report focuses on elements of work that CJS is collaboratively engaged in, to improve services provided to the pretrial population that present with behavioral health challenges residing in our community. Efforts include solutions that have been shown to improve public safety outcomes, as well as improving the quality of life for those that struggle. This work is complex and nuanced, and a collaborative endeavor with all our partners. I want to give a huge shout out to our partners in the Boulder County Sheriff’s Office, 20th Judicial District Attorney’s Office, Boulder Probation Office, Boulder Public Defenders Office, and the 20th Judicial Bench.

I want to also acknowledge our appreciation to the Boulder County Commissioners and the staff of CJS, without whose efforts and support, this work could not happen.

Sincerely,
Monica Alix Rotner, LCSW
Division Manager
Community Justice Services

Jail Crowding Study

Justice System Partners (JSP)

In October 2016, Justice System Partners presented an assessment and recommendations to address overcrowding at the Boulder County Jail. Many of the recommendations in this report relate to reserving jail beds for those who pose the highest risk to community safety, such as the use of risk assessment tools and programming to divert individuals with behavioral health needs into treatment.

Some of these recommendations were:

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| To the greatest extent possible, use the Jail primarily to incapacitate high-risk offenders and limit its use for other purposes. | Assess the risk of every pretrial defendant in Jail with the CPAT and provide that information to the judge at first appearance. | Offer gender-specific, evidence-based transition programs for higher-risk female offenders to address the higher level of female offenders with mental health and criminogenic needs. |
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Since the release of the study, CJS has been working on several areas including:

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| Implementation of revised pretrial risk assessment tool designed to promote court appearance and public safety while reducing bias. | Intensive case management support for high system utilizers with behavioral health needs. | Behavioral health programming implemented across system decision points to support early diversion for low-risk clients. | Risk and behavioral health assessments in jail-based programming. |
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Research Findings

Research supports that low-risk individuals that are placed on substance use monitoring (SUM) are less likely to be successful during the pretrial period.

The Pretrial Research Summary cites:

The two main pretrial outcomes that jurisdictions seek—and the only two outcomes that can legally be considered when deciding whether to detain or release a person pretrial—are to maximize court appearance and maximize community well-being and safety (i.e.: minimize the likelihood of a person’s rearrest).

Key Findings:

1.

Research

Research does not support an association between substance use monitoring and improved pretrial outcomes.

2.

Noncompliance

The impact of noncompliance with substance use monitoring on the likelihood of pretrial failure is uncertain.

3.

Cost

Cost–benefit considerations must be made to ensure the best use of public dollars.

4.

Drug Testing

Substance use monitoring can worsen pretrial outcomes for individuals who are assessed as low-risk and likely to succeed.

Source: Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research. (2021).
Pretrial drug testing [Pretrial Research Summary](#)

Legislation

Board of Boulder County Commissioners 2025 State Legislative Priorities

Legislative priorities guide the development of the positions the county takes on state legislation, some of these related to CJS work on pretrial are:

Support legislation and adequate funding for effective pretrial practices and efforts such as preventive detention implementation to limit pretrial detention only to individuals that pose a high risk to public safety.

Support efforts that minimize the financial impact of justice system involvement such as elimination of cash bond and reduction of monetary bond conditions like substance use monitoring.

Support funding for the continuum of behavioral health care for Coloradans living with behavioral health conditions who interact with the criminal justice system to improve positive health outcomes, prevent recidivism, and maintain public safety.

Support reform efforts and funding to address the Coloradan's competency system waitlist and impacts to people served by the system.

Programs & Services



Bond Commissioner's Office

The Bond Commissioner's Office provides initial assessment of individuals after arrest to recommend or set bond, as well as non-monetary conditions, such as pretrial supervision. Bond Commissioners make recommendations for release conditions such as substance use monitoring (SUM) when drugs and alcohol are a factor in the allegations.



Further Bond Assessment

The Bond Commissioners Office identifies clients who have been in custody for 30 days or more on low level charges to be considered for release. The Further Bond Assessment group, which includes representation from the Boulder County Sherriff's Department, Community Justice Services, District Attorney's Office, Mental Health Partners, and Probation, evaluates these cases and develops a plan for safe and successful release to the community.



PR Bond Group

CJS continues to collaboratively facilitate system-wide bond reform efforts by regularly meeting with partner agencies to make data-informed decisions regarding pretrial reform.

The 2024 goals of this group are to reduce the percentage of jail population with Mental Health and Incompetent to proceed (ITP) status and increase access to Mental Health Services on reentry and release from jail. In 2025, this group will be absorbed by the Criminal Justice Management Board.

Currently over half of the jail population is identified as having some form of mental health issue



Programs & Services



Pretrial Services Navigator

The resource navigator program works with the pretrial criminal justice population who present significant mental health issues, co-occurring disorders, who are also possibly homeless to obtain intensive behavioral health and wrap-around services through navigation support.

Participants of the program are identified via assessments using the Colorado Criminal Justice Mental Health Screen, substance use disorder screener, immediate needs assessment and other information collected during jail intake processes.

The Pretrial Services Navigator actively builds a network of community referral sources for behavioral health treatment and support. A care plan is developed with each client to ensure continuity of care beyond the pretrial period, including warm handoffs to Probation to prevent interruptions in the client's care plan after pretrial completion.

Client participation in the program is voluntary and client focused. When completing an intake with the Pretrial Resource Navigator, the client's reason for referral and the immediate needs assessment are reviewed. The client can identify the type of assistance they feel is most needed.

The goals of the program include:

Increased client access and connection to stabilizing housing resources.

Engage clients who have not contacted Pretrial Services or have lost contact with Pretrial Services.

Work to build a network of behavioral health resource connections within the community for referral during the pretrial period and ensure continuity of services as clients move through the criminal justice system.

Programs & Services

Client Story

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A 30-year-old incarcerated male with co-occurring disorder was released with pretrial supervision as a bond condition. Social Security Disability Insurance was terminated while he was incarcerated, and he was behind on his rent.

The client reached out to his Pretrial Case Manager and hesitantly asked if there was a chance of financial assistance. After a referral to the Pretrial Resource Navigator and collaboration with a community partner, the program was able to work with his landlord to get his rent current so he wouldn't face eviction. Additionally, the program paid his past due cellphone bill which accrued during his incarceration.

With his housing stability intact and having his phone so he could comply with his pretrial and mental health treatment appointments, this client was able to successfully transition back to the community. His response to this assistance was “Thank you and good God almighty for all the assistance.”

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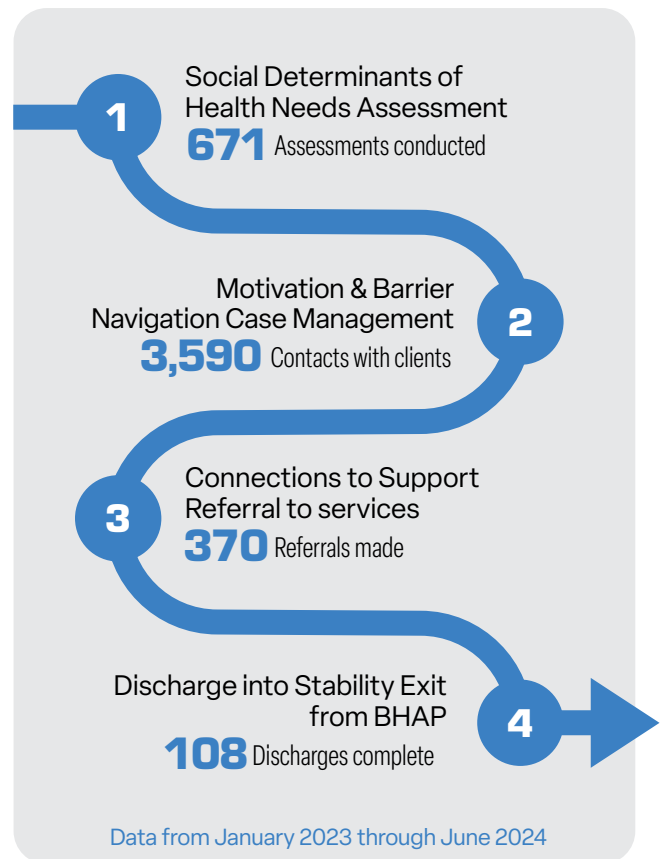
Programs & Services



Behavioral Health Assistance Program (BHAP)

BHAP's goal is to identify and support individuals in the Boulder County Jail, and those with frequent interaction with law enforcement, who have behavioral health needs. BHAP offers long-term case management, peer support, and counseling services; these services are provided through a partnership between BHAP and Mental Health Partners (MHP). MHP staff are embedded within the BHAP team and work directly with clients.

BHAP provides a pathway to stability in the community, connecting clients to behavioral health care and to services related to Social Determinants of Health. With BHAP's support, clients navigate systemic barriers and successfully engage with supportive services, both in the justice system and throughout Boulder County.



250 Clients served since program implementation

Programs & Services



Behavioral Health Assistance Program (BHAP)

BHAP goes beyond traditional behavioral health interventions by addressing the broader social determinants of health, which are especially critical for the high-utilizer, high-need population we serve. Many of our clients face complex challenges, including housing instability, lack of income, poor physical health, and limited support systems, in addition to mental health and substance

use issues. By connecting clients to services that address these comprehensive needs, BHAP provides a more holistic approach that promotes stability in their lives. This helps break the cycle of reoffending, reduces recidivism, and supports long-term reintegration, improving both individual outcomes and community safety.



Programs & Services

Client Story



While in jail, a client was initially found incompetent to proceed. After a period of stability, she was found competent and referred to BHAP and the jail's transitional housing program. Determined to maintain the stability she'd achieved, she asked for re-entry assistance in many areas, including finding stable housing and maintaining sobriety.

With the help of her BHAP case manager and the jail's transitional housing program, she was able to access temporary bridge housing, then use a housing voucher to find a permanent place to live, which provided her safety and stability needed to focus on recovery. The client also got help to access mental health treatment, addressing the underlying issues that contributed to her incarceration.

Through counseling and consistent effort, she re-established trust and reconnected with her family, gaining a supportive network that bolstered her commitment to sobriety. Currently, she maintains her sobriety, regularly attends her mental health appointments, and continues to strengthen her bond with her family.



Programs & Services



Jail Education & Transition Program (JET)

JET is a jail-based therapeutic community program providing assessment-based and trauma-informed services to meet individual client need. The program goal is to support individuals with mental health and substance use disorders to gain insight into thinking and behavior patterns that lead to incarceration. This program is currently looking at restructuring by looking at needs, best practices, and capacity.

The program is increasing groups based on client pre-surveys to address identified needs. It is currently offering, or in the process of implementing groups on:

- Relationships
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Money management
- Mindfulness groups
- Building re-entry group with community partners
- Music Therapy
- Re-Entry groups

Following Risk Need and Responsivity (RNR), the program screens participants and serves those who fit the JET level of care.

JET partners with the Jail, especially Jail-Based Behavioral Health Services (JBBS) and Jail Support Services, to provide coordinated programming to clients.

In the first half of 2024, JET provided:


GED/ESL support to 53 individuals

Services to 146 individuals

Facilitated 234 group sessions


Programs & Services

Client Story



A client was supported through the JET program, receiving individual therapy and reentry case management for months in the jail, in preparation for success after release. Released to the halfway house, the client was able to gain stability by having housing and finding employment. They met with JET reentry coordinator regularly, attended a JET community reentry group, and worked with the jail housing coordinator to secure housing upon going nonresidential at the halfway house. This person has been chronically homeless, and housing was never successful during the active addiction.

The client identifies that the support from JET and jail programs provided with the confidence needed to make a life-change and maintain sobriety. Now, this client is almost one year sober, successfully housed, and being considered for early release from their sentence, providing hope that can break the cycle and create a new future that includes being a part of their children's lives.



Programs & Services



Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program (COAP)

COAP is a jail-based therapy program that screens participants to assess opioid use disorder and risk for overdose. It provides timely linkage to services, including safe withdrawal management, ongoing treatment, and recovery support. The program offers Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) groups and individual therapy specifically for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder.

Case management services are focused on harm reduction and facilitate access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and substance use treatment services. COAP collaborates closely with the Jail Medication Assisted Treatment (JMAT) program to support individual recovery goals.

In June 2024, COAP expanded its team by hiring a bilingual Spanish-speaking case manager, enabling the program to better serve monolingual Spanish-speaking participants.

In the first half of 2024 COAP:



Served 71 clients

Programs & Services



Juvenile Assessment Center Clinician

The Juvenile Assessment Center clinician provides supportive behavioral health services to detained youth who are housed short-term at our Boulder County facility, or longer-term at a State of Colorado regional facility. The JAC clinician also provides treatment and on-going care coordination services to a caseload of outpatient clients, who have returned to the community and may be residing at home or in local shelter, foster care, and residential program settings.

Working within the Boulder County IMPACT partnership, which collaboratively links our local court system, school districts, behavioral health, and social service providers, the JAC clinician assesses safety, mental health, and substance use needs, offers consultation to caregivers and partner agencies, and makes referrals to connect youth and families with additional resources and pro-social opportunities, like family therapy, psychiatry, mentorship, recreation, employment, or volunteering.

Travelling between locations throughout the County to meet clients, the JAC clinician works creatively to identify and overcome barriers to engagement. The role calls for adapting a variety of treatment modalities to fit unique kids in unique circumstances. Youth may face social, cultural, and family challenges, and can sometimes be impacted by significant underlying attachment, trauma, or intellectual/developmental needs. The JAC clinician supports youth and families to address needs, develop strengths, build natural supports, and create a positive path forward.



Programs & Services



Boulder Enhanced Supervision Team (BEST)

BEST provides services, supervision, and support for youth involved in the early stages of the justice system who are at high risk of being detained in a locked facility. BEST provides opportunities for youth to return home with the support and structure needed to maintain safety for both the juvenile and community.



Family Navigator

Family navigator supports families with questions about their child's involvement in the juvenile justice system. It serves as a one-time liaison between community agencies and families (Track 1), or a long-term support that increases self-efficacy as families navigate the system (Track 2). Family Navigators connects families to important services such as:

- Housing
- Community services
- School
- Public health
- Public defenders
- Probation
- Legal clinic
- Mental health partners
- EFAA (Emergency family assistance)
- Child support
- Food bank

These connections empower families to make informed decisions and advocate for themselves.

Looking Back



Bridges Court Liaison Program

Court liaisons serve defendants in the criminal justice system who have significant mental health needs. Bridges facilitates collaboration between the criminal justice and mental health systems by partnering with providers, courts, and often families to provide wraparound care for participants.

Liaisons provide person-centered care, such as mental health, disabilities, housing, or transportation, identify needs and address barriers, and broker services for participants with community partners. The Bridges Liaison Program had two grant funding streams and the program transferred to the state Bridges independent agency in July 2024.

First half of 2024:



Looking Back



Bridges Court Liaison Program

Client Story



A participant was detained for non-compliance on pre-trial services where the participant's competency was raised by the Court. The participant's mother researched and contacted the then Bridges program manager from an online list. Immediately, the program manager requested a Bridges appointment, and it was granted by the Court. With the strong collaboration between the Jail mental health staff, Public Defender's office, and the District Attorney, the participant was released from custody to a mental health facility for treatment and restoration. The participant spent a total of 252 days in custody, only serving 19 days in custody from time of response to hospital. The District Attorney's office and Public Defender agreed that once restored, all charges will be dropped with continued aftercare services in place.

This success story is an example of the work that can be achieved with quick recognition and response times to reduce the number of days spent in custody and into services.



Looking Back



Five Years of Diversion Efforts for Clients with Mental Health Issues

Originating in July 2019 as the **Mental Health Diversion Program (MHDP)** and later transitioning to **Diversion Opportunity for Resources and Stabilization (DORS)**, this program was a collaboration between CJS, Boulder County Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's office with the goal to identify individuals who are accused of low-level criminal offenses, and who are struggling with mental health issues.

Now managed under the District Attorney's Office, DORS works to divert clients out of the justice system and to the appropriate mental health and social service resources/services to reduce the risk of further contact with the justice system.

After March 2020, the program expanded eligibility to include:

- All drug misdemeanor charges
- Non-VRA (Victim Rights Act) Petty Offenses and Misdemeanors
- Past Criminal History alone, will not automatically disqualify someone

Community Benefits:

- Reduced jail overcrowding
- Incarceration and prosecution cost savings
- Increased community safety

Participant Benefits:

- Access to treatment
- Dismissed charges
- Employment, housing, and family stability

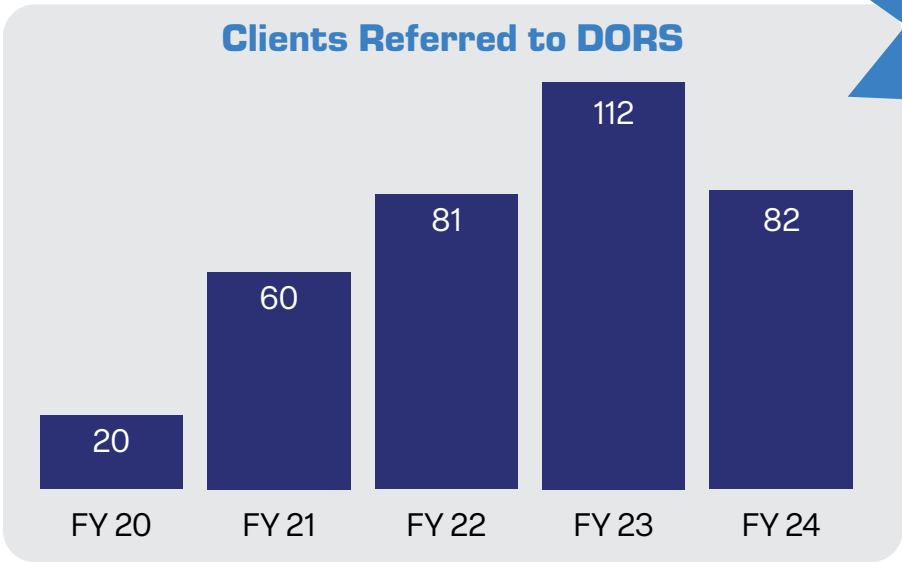
Looking Back



Five Years of Diversion Efforts for Clients with Mental Health Issues


Accomplishment of DORS:

- Strong partnerships with Law Enforcement and Community Providers
- Expanded criteria for inclusion over the course of implementation
- 355 participants referred to DORS between Fiscal Years 2020 and 2024




Looking Back

Client Story



DORS worked with an individual who was experiencing their first behavioral health struggles which resulted in their arrest. They were referred to DORS while in custody and were able to begin receiving individualized support for their needs. While working with DORS they were able to access mental health treatment and connect with a therapist, case manager, and psychiatrist. They connected with Workforce Boulder County to achieve educational and employment goals as well as budgeting support. They were able to also receive support and referrals for members of their family who were in need of support but unsure where to go.

At the completion of DORS the client was employed, had ongoing support for their mental health, and was able to gain an awareness of the supports available in the community. They shared that DORS allowed them to be able to gain structure in their life and focus on their future with the needed supports in place.



Looking Ahead



Next Steps and Best Hopes

CJS will continue to focus on JSP recommendations with a particular focus on the following:

Every high-risk offender in the Jail should undergo a case management process that includes specified assessments and case reviews.

Revise or eliminate the use of secured money bonds to comply with Colorado law and avoid unnecessary incarceration of pretrial defendants.

Additional efforts in the works:

CJS staff are serving on the Competency Docket Work Group to support system partners by identifying gaps and connections to services while the State Bridges program is preparing for implementation.

CJS will be exploring opportunities to provide supportive services to the Pretrial population at the Alternative Sentencing Facility (ASF) once it is fully functional. This could include options like substance use treatment, pretrial supportive services such as cognitive behavioral programming, or connections to stabilizing resources in the community. The goal of these potential services would be to reduce the jail population and increase public safety through enhancing client stability and community engagement.



Community Justice Services

