



2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan:
Improving Justice & Behavioral Health Services in Mesa County
(Colorado)

“Leading Change, Improving Services to Our Community”

November 30, 2022

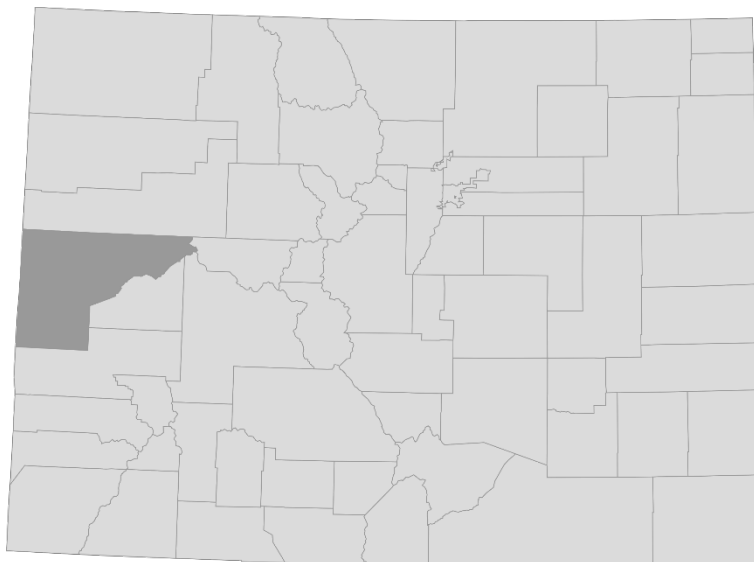


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Letter from County Commissioner/Chief Judge



November 30, 2022

On behalf of our collaborative effort in Mesa County, we are happy to share with you our ambitious initiative aimed at enhancing behavioral health services for justice-involved individuals.

Over the years, our community has faced a growing demand for these crucial services, while grappling with limited resources and a smaller workforce. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, Mesa County officials took proactive measures to address the challenges and gaps in our behavioral health landscape. These measures will also help to reduce the competency need within Mesa County.

In 2021, Mesa County conducted a comprehensive behavioral health assessment utilizing the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) as further outlined in this plan. Simultaneously, we scrutinized the intersections of the criminal justice and behavioral health systems, evaluating policies and practices to identify priority areas for collaboration and improvement.

A pivotal moment for Mesa County occurred in 2022 when we were chosen to participate in the National Association of Counties' County, Court, and Justice Leaders Initiative—a transformative training and technical assistance program. This initiative enabled us to lay the groundwork for a justice system strategic plan.

Our Mesa County/21st Judicial District team is unwavering in its commitment to spearhead change that will significantly improve services for justice-involved individuals. Our focus areas include reducing the number of individuals with mental health and substance use disorders in jail through enhanced diversion opportunities, increasing support services for those reentering the community from jail, and fostering community trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Flynn'.

Honorable Bryan Flynn
Chief Judge, 21st Judicial District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet Rowland'.

Janet Rowland
Mesa County Commissioner

***Strategic Planning Retreat Participants
October 3, 2022***

The Honorable Brian Flynn
Chief Judge, 21st Judicial District

Commissioner Janet Rowland
Mesa County Board of Commissioners

Martha Amos, Ph.D.
Clinical Director
Amos Counseling

Matt Lewis
Director
Mesa County Criminal Justice Services

Pete Baier
County Administrator
Mesa County Administration

William Riebel
Chief
Mesa County Probation

Michael Cooley
Director
Community Corrections

Todd Rowell
Sheriff
Mesa County Sheriff's Office

Micah Espinoza
Executive Director
Life Development Institute

Dan Rubenstein
District Attorney
21st Judicial District

Aaron Jimenez
M.A. CAC II
Foundations 4 Life LLC

William Sightler
Court Executive
21st Judicial District

Leslie Kent
Behavioral Health Strategies Coordinator
Mesa County Administration

Art Smith
Captain, Detentions Division
Mesa County Sheriff's Office

Gary Marak
Deputy Chief of Police
Grand Junction Police Department

Kara Smith
Office Head
CO Public Defenders – 21st Judicial District

Shawn McNamara
Manager
Mesa County Criminal Justice Services

Rich Tuttle
Chief Deputy District Attorney
21st Judicial District

Lisa Mills
Behavioral Health Strategies Manager
Mesa County Administration

Dan Weller
Clinical Services Director
Mesa County Criminal Justice Services

Dr. Brenda J. Wagenknecht-Ivey
Consultant
PRAXIS Consulting, Inc.

Rebecca M. Rose
Consultant
Rulo Strategies LLC

2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan: Improving Justice and Behavioral Health Services in Mesa County

November 30, 2022

Introduction

In recent years, Mesa County has experienced an increase in the need for behavioral health services for justice-involved individuals while dealing with the challenge of limited resources for treatment and other support services and a smaller workforce. In response to these trends, in 2021, county officials spearheaded a community wide behavioral health assessment to identify gaps and opportunities. The evaluation included a community survey, a series of focus groups, and Round Table, culminating in a comprehensive action plan focused on increasing access for all residents to a continuum of behavioral health services. In addition, the county began to look closely at the behavioral health and the criminal justice systems to assess the needs/gaps in policy and practice and identify priority areas for collaboration and improvement.

In 2022, Mesa County was selected to participate in the County, Court, and Justice Leaders Initiative which is a training and technical assistance initiative to support communities to establish local priorities and align resources to achieve their justice and public safety goals. Under this project, Mesa County began the process of developing a justice system strategic plan. County, court, and justice leaders in Mesa County worked throughout the year to identify gaps in services, greatest barriers to addressing those gaps and the long-term vision for the county for supporting justice involved individuals with behavioral health needs.

On October 3, 2022, the Mesa County team, represented by various government agencies and community partners, gathered for a strategic planning retreat. The team participated in facilitated discussions to identify the top priorities and strategies for the county. This document provides a summary of the discussions throughout the year and the priorities the county team selected to focus on for the next 3 years.

The Mesa County team is committed to leading change to improve services for justice-involved individuals and is focusing on areas such as reducing the number of individuals with mental health and substance use disorders in jail through enhanced diversion opportunities, increasing support services for those reentering the community from jail, and enhancing community trust.

Vision for the Future (for Justice and Behavioral Health Systems in Mesa County)

Strategic Planning retreat attendees described the following vision for the justice and behavioral health systems in Mesa County. That is, ideally in the future, Mesa County's justice and behavioral health systems will have the following:

1. A humane process for all experiencing behavioral health issues (e.g., fair, compassionate, and respectful treatment)
2. Needed services/treatment for people experiencing behavioral health issues (mental health, substance use)
3. Reduced incarceration of people with mental health issues
4. Multi-agency collaboration aimed at developing solutions to complex systems issues
5. Seamless information sharing among all organizations involved in delivering justice and behavioral health services; information is used to drive changes/solutions
6. Is using proven/evidence-based programs and services
7. Solutions to significant resource gaps in Mesa County (e.g., housing, workforce, behavioral health services, etc.)

Trends Analysis

Retreat participants reviewed myriad external and internal trends affecting Mesa County. External trends included: (1) pandemic; (2) social/demographic; (3) economic; (4) technological; (5) policy/political; and (5) national justice system trends. Internal /Mesa County trends included: (1) crime; (2) behavioral health/co-responder; (3) diversion; (4) jail; and (5) criminal justice services department (CJSC).

After discussing the trends, retreat participants identified the following implications of the many trends. Planning for the future will entail developing goal and strategies that take the following into consideration.

Implications of External Trends

1. Mesa County's struggles will only worsen unless partners collaborate to find system-wide solutions.
2. The people who need services is only likely to increase in the future. Many people are suffering in silence and may need services in the future.
3. Long-standing institutions are breaking down (e.g., schools, churches). This is having a destabilizing effect on families.
4. Mesa County needs to be more proactive in tackling the issues (and less reactive).
5. Mesa County must continue to change its practices and collectively work to improve the systems. Mesa County must implement fair and equitable practices and use evidence-based programs and services.
6. Technology is changing rapidly. Justice system and behavioral health organizations must use existing and invest in new and emerging technologies (AI, data collection/data sharing).
7. The staffing shortages are challenging. Mesa County/partner organizations must be creative to attract and retain qualified staff and providers.
8. Mesa County must prepare for challenging and/or lean economic/fiscal times ahead. It must establish a sustainable system building on the current momentum. Organizations cannot just throw money at the problems; instead, they must fundamentally change and improve practices.

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9. Siloes must be eliminated. Justice system and behavioral health organizations must develop system-wide solutions to the complex issues facing Mesa County. There are opportunities to reduce silos by increasing collaboration, sharing data/information, etc.

System Assessment – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and Summary of SIM Mapping – Gaps and Resources

The Mesa County team participated in a series of presentations to prepare for the strategic planning process during the summer of 2022. The presentations covered the following topics and were intended to raise awareness of evidence-based models and initiate discussion about the Mesa County justice system needs: (1) Crisis Response Drop In and Stabilization Centers; (2) Diversion Models; and (3) Court Diversion and High Frequency Utilizers. These presentations culminated in a discussion to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Mesa County justice system.

Additionally, local behavioral health and justice system leaders completed Sequential Intercept Mapping in late summer/early fall. Sequential Intercept Model mapping is a way to critically examine the justice system from beginning to end of the process. SIM mapping helps communities identify resources and gaps in service at each step of the process (i.e., intercept) and develop local responses to fill gaps and enhance services.

Summaries of both discussions are provided below.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Discussion Summary

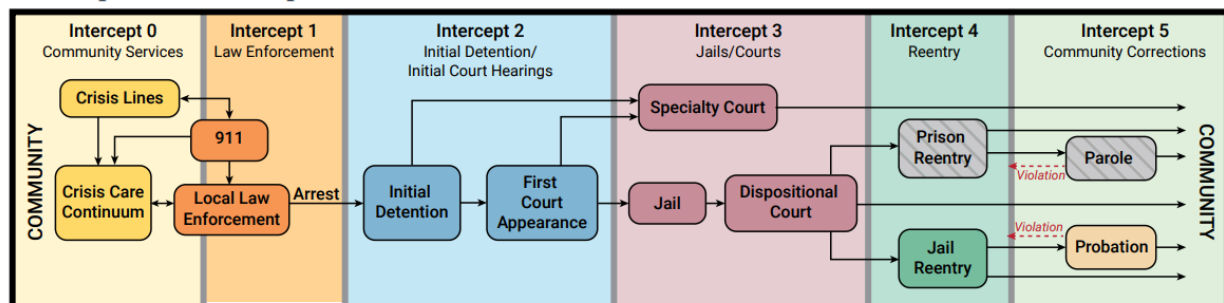
Greatest Strengths	Weaknesses/Areas for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Collaboration among key criminal justice and behavioral health system2. Willingness to look beyond what currently doing to improve services and the systems3. Have a lot of talented people working in the systems currently4. Mental health program in the jail – OBH, Restoration, MAT, general MH, Competency Program, JBBHS, etc.)5. Growing awareness between the 2 systems (CJ / BH); there seems to be a strong desire to improve	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Some key partners are not at the table2. Continue to be siloed; silos get in the way3. Different computer systems; not integrated; lack of data sharing4. Workforce availability (e.g., difficult getting people to Mesa County to do the work; challenges with Mind Springs, etc.)5. Lack a common vision among agencies that oversee offenders (e.g., state probation, CJ services (local); state parole)

Future Opportunities	Potential Threats (to making improvements/achieving opportunities)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a comprehensive, evidence-based crisis response system – works for /responsive to law enforcement 2. System that keeps law enforcement interaction to a minimum; community wide effort 3. Opportunity for state and federal funding; national and state level desire 4. Increase collaboration/eliminate silos 5. Expand professional scope – invite smaller agencies to the table; mentor smaller agencies who want to build out capacity/add scalable services 6. Invest in/expand electronic exchange of information 7. Increase needed behavioral health services (e.g., psychiatrists for competency evaluations) 8. Implement programs/services across entire intercept map (e.g., specialty/problem solving courts) 9. One stop shop for care; triage to correct places 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inability to attract people to fill positions; shortage of mental health/medical workers, etc. 2. Inability to sustain programs/services long-term (once initial funding is used up) 3. Inability to maintain focus/keep all players committed to goals/making improvements 4. Overcoming stigma/bad reputation in the community re: mental health services; need to build trust in the system 5. Inability to provide people with the right level of care – transients, MH, etc.; lack of transition/wrap-around services such as housing, education, employment, transportation, etc. 6. Inability to get smaller MH / substance use agencies feeling welcomed and at the table

Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Summary

In 2022, Mesa County officials participated in a process to map the justice system, focusing on each intercept as displayed below, to support their community in identifying resources and gaps in service along the Sequential Intercept Model. A summary of the findings from that process is included below.

The Sequential Intercept Model



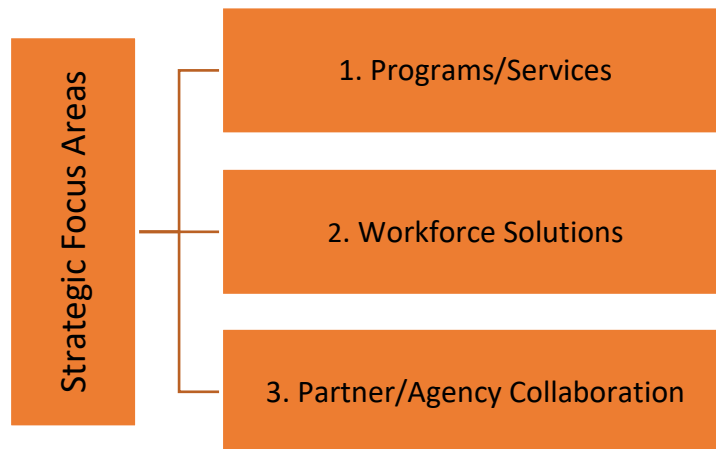
Source: [Policy Research Associates](#)

GAPS: Intercept 0 and Intercept 1	GAPS: Intercept 2 and Intercept 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado Crisis Line – long response times, not trained clinicians, and misrouted calls • Local 911 manages 100 Warmline calls themselves resulting in longer call times • No current Co-Response team for PD or SO. In process of restarting Co-Response programs • Workforce shortages in 911 dispatch, Police & Sheriff's, and community clinicians for programs • No current local walk-in center • Limited programs and capacity for local mental health and substance use treatment and recovery • No place for Law Enforcement or Co-Response to take community members who need MH/SU treatment (Observation Unit , ATU or CSU) Montrose CSU with limited capacity (8/3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to identify individuals that could benefit from a mental health or substance use assessments • Once identified, someone/someplace to provide MH & SU assessments • Once assessed, creating a resource & treatment plan • Need for housing for justice involved individuals (transitional, sober living, long-term, and family) • Better communication between systems (DA, Defense, CJSD) • Increased capacity for case management (expansion of MAC Team) to support transitions and connection to MH, SU, and psychiatry services upon release

GAPS: Intercept 4 and Intercept 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment for all individuals to look at MH, SU, and stability factors • MH & SU Assessment and planning for individuals • MH & SU Diversion Program • More Assessment providers (DUI, Sex Offender, Competency) • Access to MAT and psychiatric medications • Expand capacity for case management (MAC Team) • Expand SUD treatment options (CJSD programs that might include Medicaid billing options (Summit View, partial hospitalization

Strategic Focus Areas, Goals, and Strategies

County, Court, and justice system and community partners are committed to improving justice and behavioral health services in Mesa County. This section presents the strategic focus areas, long range goals, and strategies for making improvements.



1. Programs and Services

Long Range Goals and Strategies

Long-Range Goals	Strategies:
1. Mesa County justice and behavioral health systems will effectively and safely intercept and divert non-violent people with behavioral health disorders from the criminal justice system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement effective / evidence-based crisis response programs (e.g., crisis response centers, crisis stabilization centers, mobile crisis response, co-responder team, etc.). b. Increase the number of options and capacity for mental health and substance use treatment and recovery. c. Implement and expand law enforcement and district attorney diversion programs/services. d. Assess and strengthen prosecution diversion standards and increase available mental health resources/treatment services? e. Integrate clinical teams into the diversion programs throughout the criminal justice system. f. Seek long-term, sustainable financial resources for crisis response and diversion programs.
2. Mesa County will establish coordinated and integrated services (community/wrap-around, treatment) for people involved in the criminal justice system with behavioral health needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand / increase capacity of multi-agency collaboration teams (MAC) to provide single entry referral process for case management. b. Expand the number of mental health and substance use assessments conducted on individuals and create resource and treatment plans. c. Secure / enhance housing options for justice involved individuals including transitional, sober living, long-term, and family. d. Assess service needs to ensure adequate community resources (e.g., Behavioral health/mental health, housing, wrap-around, schools, jobs, etc.). e. Pursue innovative and creative solutions to service gaps. f. Pursue grants /other resources to augment existing and new services.

Mesa County is currently working on several initiatives in this key area. 2022 – 2023 implementation priorities, which include ongoing efforts, are listed in the table below.

Programs and Services: 2022-2023 (First Year) Implementation Priorities
Related to Goal 1 above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementing MCSO Co-Response Team with Mesa County Clinic Team (in progress)
Related to Goal 2 above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using a portion of a new federal grant through MCSO to add a MAC team ● Using \$200K of Rocky Mountain Health Plans funding to address housing needs for MAC Team clients (in progress)

- Adding 1 FTE in Mesa County to proposed 2023 budget for a grant writer for Mesa County Behavioral Health

2. Workforce Solutions

Long Range Goals and Strategies

Long-Range Goals	Strategies:
1. Justice system and behavioral health organizations will have the workforce needed to serve and meet the needs of people in Mesa County (e.g., law enforcement, clinicians, case managers, probation officers, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Determine current and anticipate future workforce needs. b. Develop and implement creative and effective recruitment strategies, including exploring the option of consulting with professional recruitment consultants and/or marketing experts. c. Develop appealing employment packages (pay, benefits, and perks) within and across agencies. d. Market/promote Mesa County as a great place to live and work. e. Improve the image/perceptions of Mesa County/Justice System agencies. f. Develop sustainable solutions to housing and pay issues.

Workforce Solutions: 2022-2023 (First Year) Implementation Priorities

Related to Goal 1 above:

- Adding 1 FTE to Mesa County 2023 proposed budget for an HR person to work exclusively on recruitment

Related to Goal 2 above:

- Using a portion of a new federal grant through MCSO to add a MAC team (in progress)
- Using \$200K of Rocky Mountain Health Plans funding to address housing needs for MAC Team clients (in progress)
- Adding 1 FTE in Mesa County to proposed 2023 budget for a grant writer for Mesa County Behavioral Health

3. Partner/ Agency Collaboration

Long Range Goals and Strategies

Long-Range Goals	Strategies:
1. Mesa County justice system and behavioral health organizations will have quality and integrated data to make informed decisions about treatment, support, and other services for people with behavioral health disorders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Identify data that needs to be collected, noting gaps in data for future data collection enhancement efforts.b. Develop seamless data/information sharing including create data sharing agreements with all relevant partners.c. Develop data quality/integrity standards for all reporting agencies.d. Train staff in data entry, standards, and reporting.e. Identify/enhance tools (i.e., software) for collecting and accessing data.f. Use data to inform program and service enhancement and/or implementation decisions.
2. Mesa County will improve outcomes for people with behavioral health disorders through collaboration among county, justice system and behavioral health leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Continue to track and report on key, system performance metrics such as incarceration rates of people with mental health issues.g. Develop a governing and coordinating body of county and system leaders that meets regularly (e.g., a Criminal Justice Coordinating Council) to create a better understanding of system wide issues, foster cooperation among agencies and units of local government, establish priorities, share and allocate resources, and develop improved/effective responses and outcomes.

Implementation and Sustainability