CONVENING A WORKGROUP TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN YOUR COUNTY

Yolanda L. Lewis, District Court Administrator
Superior Court of Fulton County
What Mental Health Looks Like

8X

Individuals with untreated mental health and substance abuse disorders are 8 times more likely to be incarcerated, often due to lack of access to appropriate crisis services and ongoing care.

50%

Of prison and jail inmates in the United States have been diagnosed with a behavioral disorder.

17%

Of adults entering jails and state prisons have a serious mental health illness.

40%

On any given day, there are approximately 2,500 offenders in Fulton County jail, of which 40% to 70% are mentally ill.
Fulton County Justice and Mental Health Task Force

Bureau of Justice Assistance/DOJ

$250,000

Planning & Technical Assistance

- Carl Vinson Institute of Government at UGA
- Policy Research Associates
- Council for State Governments

Stepping Up Initiative

Convene Justice & Mental Health Task Force

Comprehensive Analysis & Mapping

Data Collection

Identify System Gaps

Collaboratively Develop Recommendations
Five Helpful Considerations

1. Assessing the Community Problem
2. Identifying Targets and Agents of Change
3. Creating the Catalyst
4. Making the Most of State and National Connections
5. Investing in the Issue
Consideration 1: Assessing the Community Problem

- Large Homeless Population
- No Community Service Board
- Complicated Justice System
- Historical lack of collaboration among stakeholders
- Largest feeder to state prison and forensic beds
- General Lack of Data & Data Sharing
- 32,000 bookings annually in County Jail/2,500 in City Jail
Two-day workshop to map the flow of people with mental illness through the criminal justice system

- **Intercept 1**: Law Enforcement and Emergency Services
- **Intercept 2**: Initial Detention and Initial Court Hearings
- **Intercept 3**: Jails and Courts
- **Intercept 4**: Reentry
- **Intercept 5**: Community Corrections & Community Supports

Five workgroups were created to work on the priorities the Task Force identified to help safely reduce the prevalence of people with mental illness in jail

Solid foundation for next steps of analysis
Consideration 2: Identifying Targets & Agents of Change

- Atlanta City Detention Center
- Atlanta Police Department
- Atlanta Public Schools
- Atlanta/Fulton Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative
- Behavioral Health Link Mobile Crisis
- Centers for Disease Control
- Central Atlanta Progress
- City of Atlanta Public Defender’s Office/Solicitor’s Office
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
- Department of Community Supervision
- Emory University, Psychiatry and Law Services
- Fulton County Board of Commissioner’s
- Fulton County District Attorney’s Office
- Fulton County Manager’s Office
- St. Jude’s Recovery Center
- Georgia Council on Substance Abuse
- Georgia Mental Health Consumers Network
- Georgia Public Defender Council
- Grady Health System
- Intervention Education Programs
- Magistrate Court of Fulton County
- MARTA Police
- Mary Hall Freedom House
- Mental Health America of Georgia
- Mercy Care
- Morehouse School of Medicine
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Georgia
- Southern Center for Human Rights
- St. Jude’s Recovery Center
- Trinity Community Ministries
Collaborative Change Agents

Commissioner Joan P. Garner
Project Organization

Fulton County Justice and Mental Health Task Force

The Fulton County Justice and Mental Health Task Force includes local and state partners from the judiciary, law enforcement, community corrections, consumers, advocates, mental health and substance abuse service providers, and other stakeholders.

Fulton County Judicial & Executive Branches

Chair/Grant Recipient
Judge Doris L. Downs
Superior Court of Fulton County

Advisory Committee
Work Group Chairs, Law Enforcement, Judges, other key Behavioral Health leaders from the Task Force to ensure system components are represented

Governance Committee
Consideration 3: Creating the Catalyst

1. Resolution
2. Apply for Funding
3. Access to Technical Assistance
4. Develop a Framework
Consideration 4: Making the Most of State & National Connections
Consideration 5: Investing in the Issue

- Fulton County Justice Reinvestment Initiative: The Board of Commissioners authorized the Justice Reinvestment Initiative in January 2017 to develop a system-wide plan to drive better outcomes across the justice agencies.

- Opportunities for future investment funding and increases include: grants, justice agencies’ budget underruns, and operational efficiency gains.
6 Tenets to Maintain Momentum

- RECOGNITION
- RESPECT
- ROLE
- RELATIONSHIPS
- REWARD
- RESULTS
A public website was created as a repository for all project documents and meeting information:

www.fultonstepsup.org