

# Bridges Program

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light-colored tank top and shorts, is sitting on the edge of a rocky cliff. She is looking down at a smartphone in her hands. The background shows a vast, forested valley under a clear sky. The image is overlaid with a large, thin blue circle and a smaller, thin blue circle. A solid yellow circle is positioned near the bottom center of the smaller blue circle.

●  
Connecting Colorado's  
Criminal Justice and  
Mental Health Systems



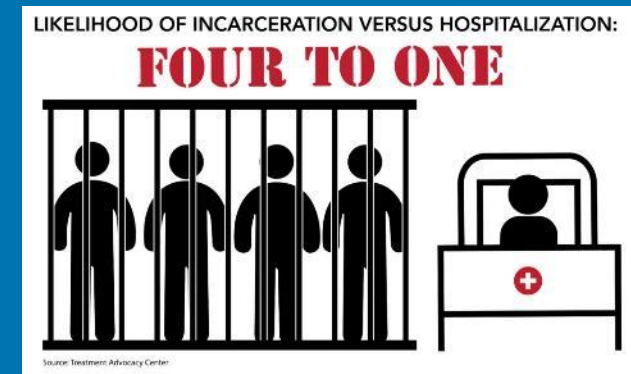


# OVERVIEW

# Mental Health and Criminal Justice

## The need

The majority of Coloradans with mental illness do not receive services, with many receiving services only through entering the justice system.



People with serious mental illness are twice as likely to be arrested again within a year of leaving prison.

# Senate Bill 18-251

## The vision

**All individuals within the criminal justice system are treated fairly and humanely, regardless of their behavioral health history or mental state.**

## The mission

**To promote positive outcomes for Coloradans living with mental health conditions who encounter criminal justice involvement by fostering collaboration between both systems.**

**Twenty-nine liaisons across Colorado's 22 judicial districts are court appointed to serve approximately 1,700 participants and 2,500 cases annually.**

## Assess Need

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Liaisons meet with participants to identify needs for mental health and other services that will help remove barriers and offer stability.

*Intakes include assessment for services related to TBI, IDD, behavioral health, and basic needs.*

## Connect to Services

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Liaisons build rapport and a personal connection in order to support individuals with engagement into identified services.

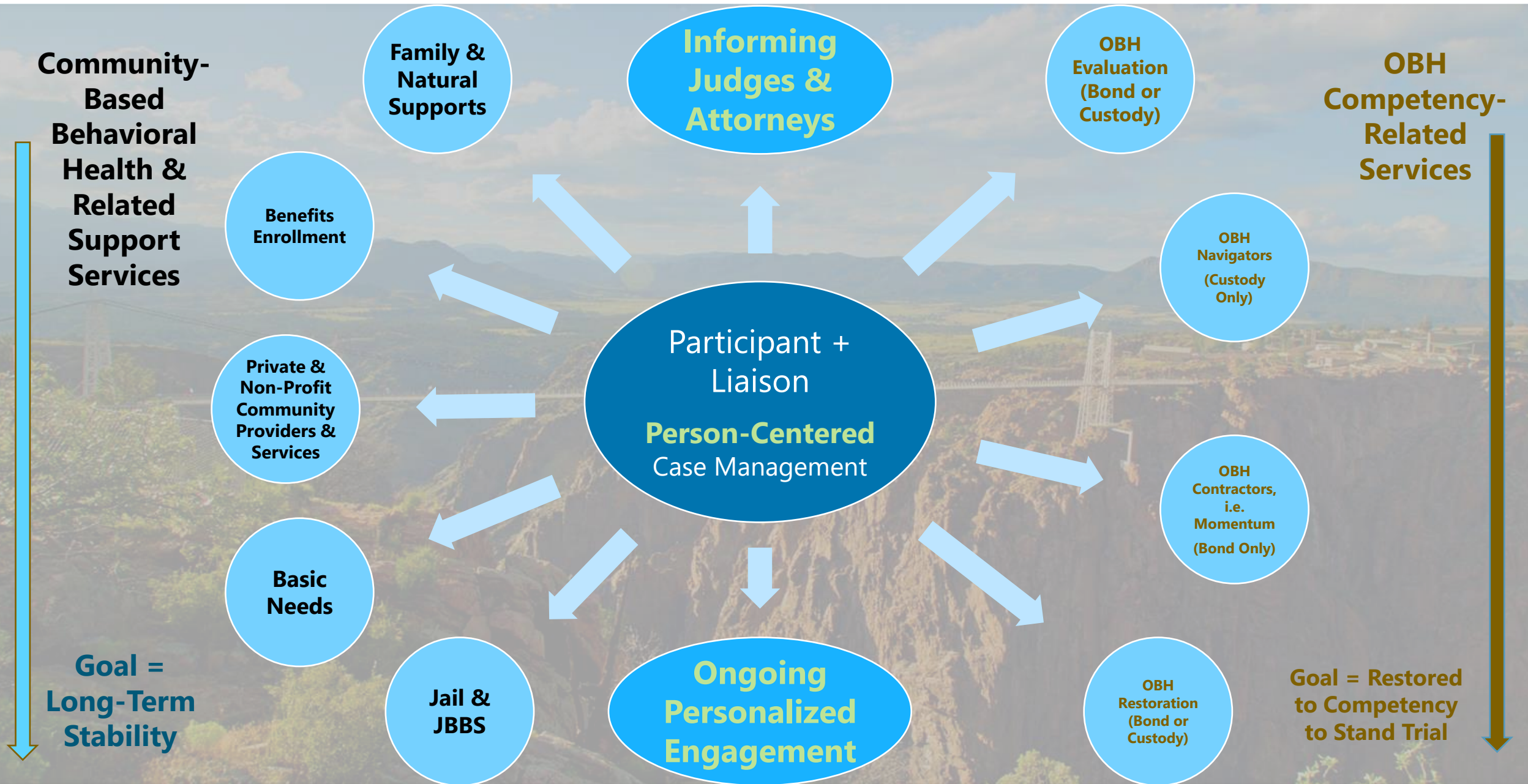
*Person-centered case management means the participant has committed support all the way through their proceedings and provides warm hand-offs when the case has reached disposition.*

## Share Information

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Liaisons keep judges and attorneys informed about available community-based services. Liaisons may outline options based on a variety of possible court decisions.

*Court orders protect the defendant's constitutional privilege against self-incrimination and right to privacy of medical information.*



# Program Utilization

*July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021*

*Twenty-nine liaisons across Colorado's 22 judicial districts are court appointed to serve individuals in the criminal justice system who have significant mental health needs. By statute, the program is designed to keep judges and attorneys informed about available community-based services.*

**1,734  
Participants**

*50% increase over  
previous fiscal year*

*~1,000 active  
participants at any  
one point in time*

**2,518  
Cases**

*82% competency-  
related cases*

*18% cases with  
general mental  
health needs*

**5,855  
Reports**

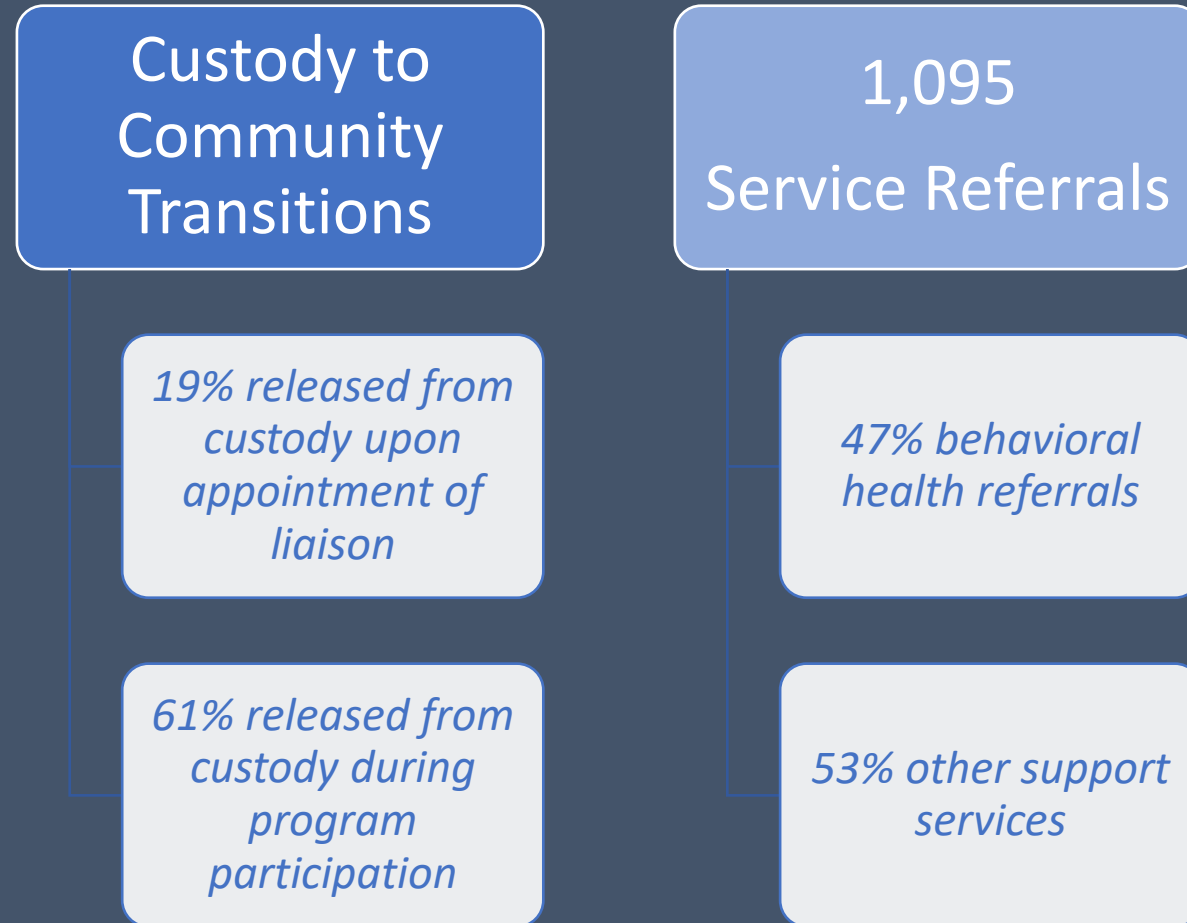
*95% increase over  
previous fiscal year*

*85% of Colorado  
judicial officers  
utilized program*

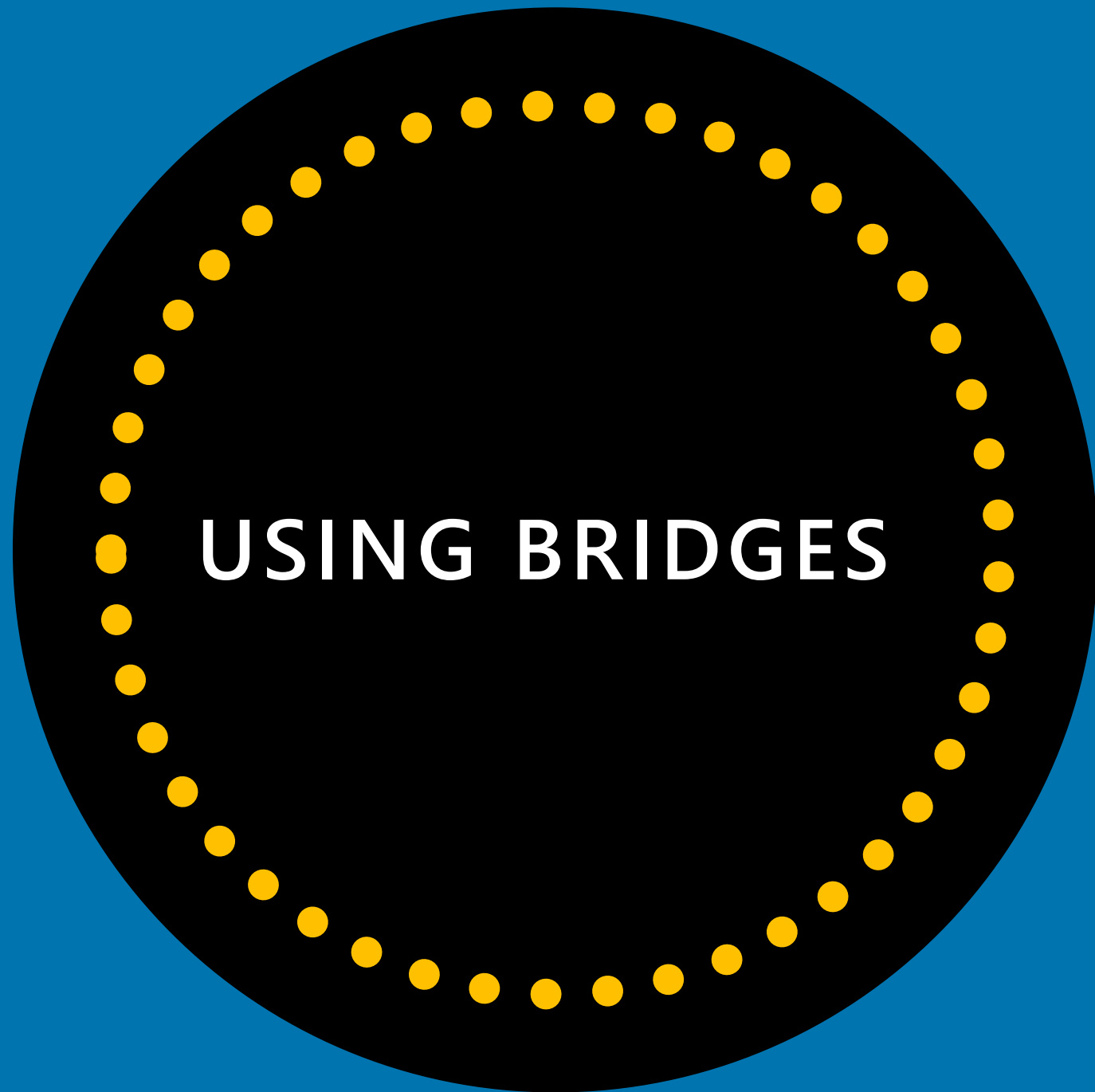
# Program Outcomes

*July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021*

*Bridges is legislatively directed to promote positive outcomes for justice-involved individuals, connecting individuals to behavioral health and other support services.*







## Who Do We Serve?

**Liaisons can be appointed to work with any individual with mental health needs who is involved in the criminal or juvenile justice systems.**

***Currently, 80% of participants are competency-related appointments.***

### Competency

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By statute, first consideration for services should be extended to those involved in the competency process.

*Can be in or out of custody.*

*Liaisons can be appointed at any point in the **evaluation** or the **restoration** process.*

### General Mental Health

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Appointing a liaison to a non-competency case has advantages as an early intervention and is especially viable in smaller districts with minimal competency filings.

*Optimal caseload for a liaison is 30-35 participants.*

### Competent to Proceed

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Re-appointing a liaison once a defendant is found “competent to proceed” provides ongoing support and stability.

Who benefits most from working with a liaison?

*The benefits of working with a court liaison are greatest when the participant is in a position to be connected with community-based services.*

#### **PRIORITY ONE**

Participants who are in custody with a likelihood of being released if stability factors are addressed.

*This includes individuals who are recommended by OBH for outpatient restoration.*

#### **PRIORITY TWO**

Participants who are out of custody.

#### **PRIORITY THREE**

Participants who are in custody, likely to remain in custody, and courts and attorneys are experiencing barriers with competency and/or jail-based services.

#### **PRIORITY FOUR**

Participants who are in custody, likely to remain in custody, and there are no barriers with competency and jail-based services.

# Best Fit Checklist for Liaison Appointments

Participant Status and Situation	Best Fit	Good Fit	Fair Fit	Poor Fit
<b><u>PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE OUT OF CUSTODY OR LIKELY TO BE RELEASED</u></b>				
Likely to be released from custody if stability and barriers addressed.	<b>X</b>			
Currently out of custody, in contact with courts and attorney, and needs additional support to engage successfully in services.	<b>X</b>			
Currently out of custody and engaging successfully in services of own accord.			<b>X</b>	
Currently out of custody, willing to engage in services, but local gaps in services exist.			<b>X</b>	
Currently out of custody and failure to appear in court and/or engage with attorney.				<b>X</b>
<b><u>PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE IN CUSTODY</u></b>				
Have been in custody and OBH has made outpatient recommendation.	<b>X</b>			
Unlikely to be released from custody and concerns about decompensation of mental health not being sufficiently addressed.		<b>X</b>		
Unlikely to be released from custody and courts and attorneys are experiencing systemic challenges which require extra problem-solving resources.			<b>X</b>	
Unlikely to be released from custody and engaging successfully in jail-based and/or OBH services.				<b>X</b>