



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Rockingham County

Program Title: Creating Mental Health Pathways in the Criminal Justice System

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Ann Marie Freeman

Title: Director

Department: Court Services Unit

Complete Mailing Address: 53 Court Square, Suite 175, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

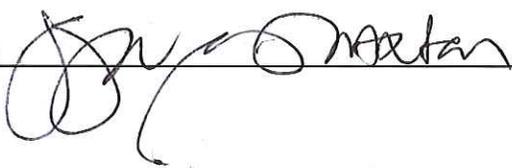
Telephone: 540-564-3143 Website: rockinghamcountyva.gov

Email: amfreeman@rockinghamcountyva.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Joseph S. Paxton

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

Creating Mental Health Pathways in the Criminal Justice System

The focus in Rockingham County is to reduce the number of inmates with serious mental illness in our local jail and provide alternative community options when indicated. Based on the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill statistics, an estimated 7,797 citizens (6%) of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham community have a serious mental illness. The Harrisonburg City and Rockingham County, Virginia community have unique features including a high multicultural population and a 40% overall poverty rate, that exacerbate increased risk factors for criminal justice involvement for the adult population. This, combined with 25,000 college age students, create challenges for both criminal justice and mental health service providers.

The Rockingham-Harrisonburg Regional Jail serves the total population for this community of 129,956 with an operating capacity of 208 beds; yet currently holds 312 detainees in double-bunked beds. In spite of the above noted challenges, the community has enjoyed a long-standing, collaborative partnership around providing services to persons with serious mental illness that are justice-involved. Various agencies collaborated together to implement the following programs through local funding and grant funds to assist individuals with mental illness and substance abuse problems that have come in contact with the Criminal Justice System, including: a) Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Program which is funded by local and grant funds; b) mental health services in the jail funded locally; c) CIT Assessment Center, funded by the Department of Behavioral Mental Health Services; d) Mobile Crisis Team funded by the Bureau of Justice Administration grant initiatives; and e) designated as a member of the Stepping UP Initiative. It is the collective efforts by this community that has prompted this application for the Achievement Award in 2016.

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham community began the planning process by engaging in a Cross Systems Mapping 2-day event back in 2012. The goal of mapping the intersections of the mental health and criminal justice system include both identifying gaps and resources and develop an action plan to address them. As a result, the top three action steps were identified by this comprehensive stakeholders group and include: a) the development of systematic training through the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model and further established Drop-off Center; b) development of comprehensive re-entry services for persons being released from the Rockingham-Harrisonburg Regional Jail (RHRJ); and c) design and implementation of a mandated reporting and information sharing system via a central law enforcement database. In March 2013, we hired a CIT Coordinator and began the CIT trainings. Over the last 24 consecutive months, 150 attendees from local Law Enforcement Agencies, Magistrate's Office, Rockingham-Harrisonburg Court Services Unit; and James Madison University Police Department have completed the CIT training.

Currently, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Community Services Board provides 33 hours per week of mental health services in the regional jail that include assessments, supportive counseling, re-entry/transitional planning for persons with serious mental illness, and medication management services. Detainees are identified for services by self-referral, the Brief Jail Mental Health Screen and jail staff in Booking, Medical Services and Correctional Officers in the pods. Some detainees can fly under the radar and be delayed in receiving services if their psychiatric behavior is 'quiet' or subtle in nature. In collaboration with Rockingham County and City of Harrisonburg officials, funds have been allocated to increase working hours of a mental health clinician at the jail from 10 to 30 hours, in addition to the three hours per week of prescriber time. This increase allows for inmates to be assessed in a timely manner and for those inmates

to receive the necessary mental health treatment in a manner that benefits the individual. Additionally, the regional jail was able to create a mental health pod approximately six months ago; thus allowing grouping of persons in the same location of the jail for more efficient monitoring of inmates and delivery of mental health services.

In December 2015, we opened a Crisis Intervention Team Assessment Center (CITAC) in the emergency department of our local acute care hospital. Our community has demonstrated a strong interest in diversion activities using their public voice in advocacy and on-going enthusiasm for diversion planning. The CITAC team consists of a mental health clinician and a law enforcement officer. This allows for an exchange of custody during the emergency custody order by the officer out in the community, in addition to a more expedited psychiatric assessment to determine the appropriate level of care; thus 'diverting' persons that might have ended up in jail who could benefit from treatment for their mental illness. We will continue to pull together stakeholders to formalize planning larger systems outcome measurements and program design for our next initiatives.

The implementation of a Mobile Crisis Team is projected for mid-year 2016. This team of a part-time law enforcement officer and mental health clinician will be located at the "front door" of the jail. The purpose is to expedite a risk assessment for persons with serious mental illness that are in, or being released from, custody. The mental health assessment will inform the Magistrate of issues and options during the process of charges and final disposition. Further referrals to in-patient, community or jail resources will occur with hand-off communication at the time of final disposition. The Mobile Crisis Team has the latitude to follow-up with individuals as a means of support and transitional services for those persons released from the regional jail that have been determined as having a mental illness and are high risk for further

decompensation and justice involvement. Re-entry into the community can significantly increase the stress and risk of maladaptive behaviors, placing persons with serious mental illness at greater risk.

On January 1, 2016, Rockingham County, the City of Harrisonburg and the Gemeinschaft Home collaboratively opened a Day Reporting Center. The goal of the program is to reduce recidivism rates and to become a productive citizen in our community. This 18-month pilot program is designed to provide individualized, evidence-based programming to eligible clients; including mental health and substance abuse counseling, maintaining employment to group topics ranging from Self-Awareness, Relapse Prevention, Emotional Control, Relationships, Communication and Conflict Resolution, Change Management, Professionalism, Staying Organized, Personal Health and Cognitive Development. The Day Reporting Program provides services to clients with participant levels from residential to a minimum of once or twice weekly, three to four times weekly, to daily check-in. The program is a 90 day minimum which can be extended, if needed, for further services. The program is structured for the client to become a productive citizen in our community.

As is evident by the collective programming initiated and growing over the last 12 months, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham community has infused both time and financial resources into building and sustaining an array options for persons with serious mental illness that are involved in the criminal justice system. At multiple points in the criminal justice system, there are teams of mental health and criminal justice professionals trained to assess and redirect the course of events when appropriate. Thus allowing for our citizens to continue to access mental health treatment as needed throughout their coinciding involvement with the criminal justice system. The model is designed to support engagement by the individual with mental health

services by positioning the bulk of the mental health services at transition points along the continuum – for example at the initial call with Emergency Communications Center, contact with the Magistrate’s Office, at the local emergency department, upon release from the regional jail, etc. We believe that these transition points are times when an individual is at greatest risk of getting separated or dropped from the supports most needed to ensure stability of their mental illness. This collective thought and movement towards strengthen our community response to our most vulnerable citizens makes the Harrisonburg City and County of Rockingham an ideal recipient of the 2016 Achievement Award.

Thank you for considering our application.

Creating Mental Health Pathways in the Criminal Justice System - Overview

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Creating Mental Health Pathways in the Criminal Justice System – Brief Summary

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