



MEDIA RELEASE

Lincoln County Board of Commissioners

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Sequential Intercept Mapping Exercise Moves Stepping Up Initiative Forward

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More than three dozen people from across Lincoln County took part in a two-day Sequential Intercept Mapping Exercise Aug. 29-30 in Newport. The focus was on finding better solutions to the issue of a growing number of people with mental illness in the criminal justice system.

Nationally, about two million people are estimated to be behind bars because of mental illness, substance abuse, or both. In Lincoln County, it's estimated that about 30 percent of the 161 people in the jail at any one time have been diagnosed with a mental illness, and about one of three of them are severely and persistently mentally ill.

"This was a really productive workshop, for a lot of reasons," said Commissioner Bill Hall, who spearheaded the county's effort to join the Stepping Up effort. There was tremendous energy in the room, and great eagerness to make further progress."

The workshop was led by two facilitators with Policy Research Associates, and funded through the federal government's GAINS center, part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Lincoln County was one of seven communities to receive these services this year in a competitive grant process. Fifty-four communities applied for this assistance.



"The preparation for this workshop was well orchestrated with the GAINS Center facilitators, said, Steve Sparks, Project Consultant. "Participants came ready for an intense working agenda." Participants first completed a detailed mapping exercise of the six points in the current system where people experiencing mental illness can become engaged, and what services and supports are available to divert them from the system.

Next, the group voted on a set of top priorities among the unmet needs to be addressed. Finally, the large gathering broke into smaller work groups to develop detailed action plans on the four top priorities. Those priorities were: establishing stronger pre-arrest community diversions, including mobile crisis services; setting up pre-trial services to support and hold accountable people who are released pending trial; a more formalized re-entry system; and increasing peer-delivered services at every stage of the system.

The consulting team will produce a final report on the workshop, which will be used by a series of committees that have been assigned the task of moving these projects forward.

Lincoln County Sheriff, Curtis Landers said, "The workshop was a great start to addressing this important community need. There is still a lot of work to do, but now we have a roadmap to lead the way."

More details: **The Stepping Up Initiative**

<http://www.co.lincoln.or.us/boc/page/stepping-initiative>

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