



# news

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***UPDATED to include scheduling information for additional meetings***  
**Bridges Program sets meeting series on potential expansion**

DENVER – The Bridges Program, which facilitates collaboration between the criminal justice and mental health systems, will hold a series of meetings this summer and fall to engage stakeholders in exploring a possible expansion of the three-year-old program.

Bridges has placed 29 court liaisons throughout Colorado’s 22 judicial districts since it was established by the General Assembly. Liaisons are appointed to cases through a court order and work directly with participants to identify their needs and connect them with services. They report to judges and attorneys on services available in the community and facilitate communication and coordination of care with competency programs of the state Behavioral Health Administration.

About 82 percent of Bridges Program cases involve an individual’s competency to proceed in the criminal justice process, with the remaining 18 percent involving individuals with general mental health challenges. Bridges began serving participants in 2019. In the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2021, 1,734 participants entered the program, 50 percent more than in the previous fiscal year.

The General Assembly’s Joint Budget Committee has requested that program leaders, in collaboration with stakeholders including the Office of the State Public Defender, the District Attorneys’ Council, Office of the Attorney General, the Behavioral Health Administration and others report by Jan. 1, 2023, on any recommendations for expansion to help reduce a backlog of competency evaluations in the criminal justice system.

The first meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2022, and several other meetings are scheduled through October to discuss potentially expanding the program.

The meeting on July 15 will be held at the Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center in the Colorado Room on the second floor from 10-11 a.m.

Additional meetings will be held in the Colorado Room on Aug. 4, Aug. 25, and Sept. 15; and on Oct. 6 in Room 2A of the Carr Center. Each meeting will have an in-person component from 10 a.m. to noon, and a virtual component from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Anyone interested in attending in-person, or who wants to obtain information to attend virtually, should RSVP to Jennifer Turner, Bridges Program Statewide Coordinator, at [jennifer.turner@judicial.state.co.us](mailto:jennifer.turner@judicial.state.co.us).