



Bridges of Colorado

§§ 13-95-101 – 13-95-109, C.R.S. (2023)

Annual Legislative Report Fiscal Year 2023

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Bridges of Colorado

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I just wanted to tell you about some amazing work that [Court Liaison] did on a case for a young man with considerable medical, cognitive, and psychological issues. It is nothing short of miraculous and life changing. [Court Liaison] only got on this case a couple weeks ago. I asked for her to be appointed knowing this client would just go on her waiting list but because of the acuity of his situation, she moved him off of her waiting list. She then somehow succeeded in less than two weeks in getting this client placed from the jail to an acute in-patient health care facility—something about ten other professionals (including myself) had not been able to do in the past several months as this client remained in jail w/o the level of skilled nursing he needs. [Court Liaison] cut through loads of red tape so creatively, gracefully, and diplomatically. She figured out long term Medicaid, momentum funding, guardianship, placement, transportation, [and] bonds. [Court Liaison's] work on this case (and many others) is outstanding.

~Local Public Defender

Bridges of Colorado, established in 2018, facilitates collaboration between the criminal justice and behavioral health systems through the placement of dedicated Court Liaisons in all 22 judicial districts. Liaisons serve defendants (referred to as participants) with mental and/or behavioral health needs, prioritizing individuals undergoing competency evaluations and restoration. One of the primary intentions of the enabling legislation was to mitigate the critical delay defendants experience in accessing competency services, often leading to significant decompensation of mental health, especially in jail settings.

Court Liaisons address the comprehensive needs of a defendant well beyond competency, thereby supporting long-term stability and positive outcomes for the defendant, while simultaneously reducing the burden on the court system and on the jails, which often serve as a repository for individuals struggling with unmet mental and/or behavioral health needs. This means that liaisons work with participants to address barriers including disabilities, housing, and transportation, among many others. To coordinate this person-centered wraparound model of care, liaisons partner with

myriad providers, attorneys, and often families, ensuring that all necessary and relevant parties are included and informed.

Liaisons also function as court appointed experts, providing judicial officers a broader context for legal problem solving and decision making through regular reports to the court and attendance at hearings. Their reports detail participant needs, available community-based services, and individual and systemic barriers and related solutions. While liaisons are a neutral non-party to the case, they advocate for the best interests of the participant's behavioral health. Liaisons are integral when participants transition from in-custody to community settings and continue to support participants' engagement into identified services once a participant is released and is re-establishing into the community.

Due to the success of the program and the rapidly growing need for liaison services, Bridges of Colorado was legislatively established as an independent state office within the Judicial Department in April of 2023 (SB 23-229). The transition has provided the opportunity to build on what is already working well within the program and to lay important groundwork for continued and sustainable growth. Meanwhile, Bridges continues to exhibit high utilization by court partners and strong indicators of success as evidenced by the following outcomes and progress toward legislative goals:

Program Utilization

- 29 Court Liaisons were appointed to **4,592 new cases¹**, which represents a **62% increase** over the previous year and an **average 158 new cases/liaison**.
- Liaisons served **3,191 participants²**, which represents a **57% increase** over the previous year and an **average 110 participants/liaison**.
- In FY22, **91% (248) of Colorado's 274 judicial officers¹** with criminal dockets made referrals to the program, a 6% increase from the previous year.

Informing Judges and Attorneys

- Liaisons provided **14,210 reports¹** and attended an estimated **10,556 hearings²**, informing courts and attorneys of participants' individual needs, available services, and case planning for release from custody.
- The numbers represent a **78% increase in reports** and a **76% increase in hearings** over the previous year.

Competency Cases

- Approximately **82% of Bridges cases are competency-related¹**, and the remaining 18% represent participants with significant behavioral and/or mental health challenges but for whom competency has not been raised.

Custody Status

- Of the 2,022 participants entering the program, 42% were in custody² and 58% were on

bond in the community².

- **For the 1,029 participants whose cases closed in FY23², only 31% remained in custody² while 69% were in the community².** Ultimately, these outcomes point to a **37% rate of release²** for participants who enter the program while in custody.

Referrals and Crisis Interventions

- With the support of their liaison, participants on bond connected to approximately **1,600 community-based services²**. 42% of referrals were to behavioral health services², and 58% were to other support services², such as housing, social support programs, and healthcare.
- Court Liaisons collaborated in **239 mental health crisis interventions²**, representing a **157% increase** over the previous year, and facilitated cross-agency responses that resulted in **116 successful suicide interventions²**, representing a **158% increase** over the previous year.

The Bridges Program looks forward to continued evaluation and development of resources and best practices to connect the behavioral health and criminal justice systems in ways that promote positive outcomes for individuals with mental and/or behavioral health challenges.

¹ All case-related data obtained from Judicial database (COGNOS)

² All participant-related data obtained from Court Liaison reports and carries a possibility for a larger margin of error.

OVERVIEW OF STATUTORY REPORTING REQUIREMENT

You gave me my son back by not giving up on him and helping him when we didn't know how. I want to just say thank you so much for everything, you really have been amazing, and I don't know what we would have done without you.

~Father of Participant

Reporting Requirement

As outlined in §13-95-109(1)(a-b), C.R.S. (2023), the Bridges Office must report annually to the Joint Budget Committee, “about the Office’s work and administration of the Bridges Program during the prior year.” The report must include:

“(a) the number and competency status of cases in the past year when a court liaison was appointed and outcomes in those related to the legislative intent and statewide goals of the program, as set forth in this Article 95, including data related to alternatives to competency services, alternatives to custody, and alternatives to criminal justice system involvement;” *NOTE: reporting data regarding alternatives is a new reporting requirement as of April 27, 2023, and therefore was not collected in FY23.*

and

“(b) information concerning the use of money from the bridges program participant service fund, including a summary of how money from the fund is being used to alleviate system gaps and barriers to services.” *NOTE: the participant service fund is not appropriated until FY25, so there is no related information in this report.*

The Legislative declaration and intent in the enabling statute, §§ 13-95-101 - 13-95-109, C.R.S. (2023), further recognizes that, “Colorado’s citizens who are living with mental health and substance use disorders are over-represented in the criminal justice system, and they are at a significantly greater risk of incurring criminal justice involvement, longer terms of involvement, and harsher consequences of that involvement when compared to the general public.”

Bridges' primary outcomes and statewide goals aim to address the issues articulated in the legislative intent and are summarized below (see also Attachment A, *Bridges Mission Statement*, and Attachment B, *Bridges Logic Model*).

Primary Outcomes

- Participants' time of involvement with the criminal justice system is brief, barriers are reduced, and stability factors are increased.
- Courts and attorneys are well-informed on the needs of the participants and the availability of community-based services.
- Court, attorneys, providers, and jails collaborate so that services for the target population are readily accessible.
- Ancillary outcomes of the program are also assumed to positively impact public safety, alleviate waits for hospital beds at the Office of Civil and Forensic Mental Health [OCFMH], and reduce criminal justice and behavioral health costs.

Statewide Goals

- Liaisons identify participants' individualized needs and both advocate for and connect them to appropriate and meaningful community-based, residential, and/or jail-based services.
 - Measured by: number of intakes, number of referrals
- Liaisons provide judicial officers and attorneys with information on the needs of the participants and the availability of community-based services.
 - Measured by: reports to the court, attendance at hearings
- Participants have an equitable opportunity to engage in services that appropriately and meaningfully meet their needs.
 - Measured by: demographics
 - Note: with the implementation of its first case management system in FY24, Bridges will begin to track participant services and outcomes broken down by demographics.
- Participants' time of involvement with the criminal justice system is brief, barriers are reduced, and stability factors are increased.
 - Measured by: various liaison-reported data points
 - Note: with the implementation of its first case management system in FY24, Bridges will begin to track participant outcomes reflective of this goal.
 - Note: This goal could be further measured by longitudinal, cross systems data from Judicial and BHA.
- Participants are treated fairly, regardless of their behavioral health history or mental state.
 - Measured by comparative legal outcomes through the Judicial database

- Note: Judicial has not been able to provide this data with sufficient specificity.
- Participants have a reduced risk of criminal justice involvement in the future.
 - Note: this necessitates an evaluation design that would identify meaningful measurements and analysis from cross-systems data points.
- Participants have a fair chance of living a healthy and productive life.
 - Measured by an analysis of the above data points.

Data Collection Methods

The Bridges Office has contracted with a provider to establish a case management system which will be used by all liaisons. In conjunction with data from the Judicial database, this system will enable the Office to assess the impact of Bridges programming more adequately on participants, courts, and community partners.

In the interim, the Bridges Office has utilized provisional means of collecting data and analyzing outcomes through the direct reporting efforts of court liaisons. Liaisons provide data to the program on a monthly basis regarding participant demographics, custody status, and service referrals. For purposes of this report, it is important to note that participant-level data reporting relies on liaisons to accurately track and report their daily activities and inherently carries a larger possibility for margin of error. Case-level data in this report is compiled from the Judicial database (COGNOS).

Ultimately, because of the collaborative nature of the program model, comprehensive analysis of outcomes for Bridges will best be served by a robust evaluation design that examines the intersection of data across multiple systems.

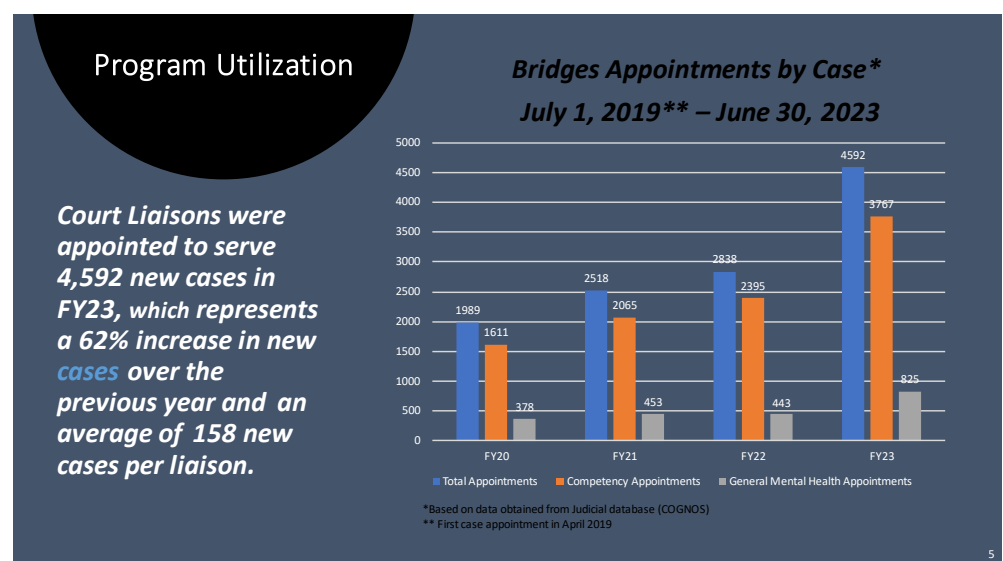
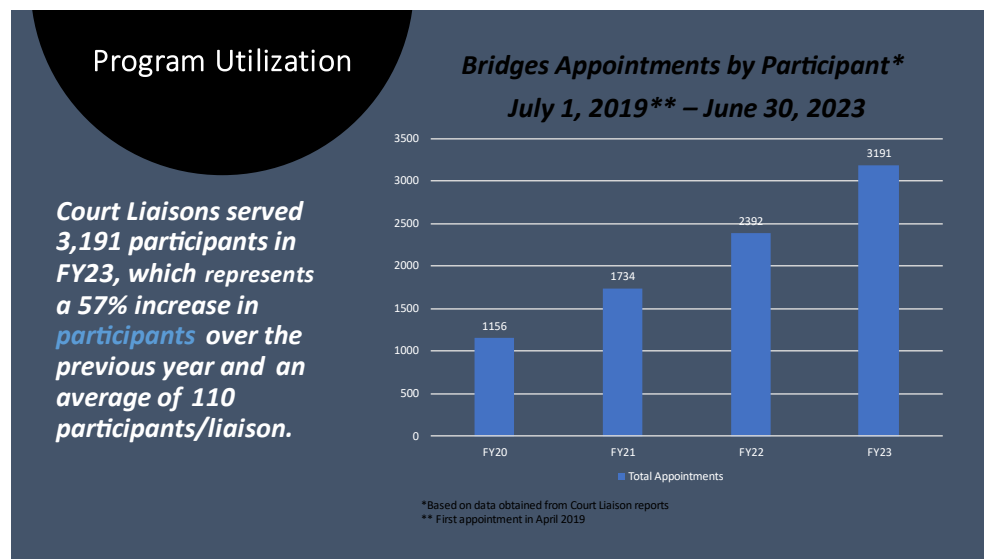
The quantitative and qualitative data on the following pages are illustrative of Bridges' continued progress toward its goals and the legislative intent for the Office.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Program Utilization

Liaisons served 3,191 participants in FY23, with 2,022 of those being new appointments and 1,169 carried over from the previous fiscal year. These numbers represent 4,592 cases, a 57% increase in the number of participants served by the Bridges Program over the previous year, and an average of 110 participants served by each liaison. At any one point in time, there are approximately 1,200 active participants in the program, served by a total of 29 liaisons throughout the state.

(See also Attachment C, *Bridges Liaisons and Participants by District.*)



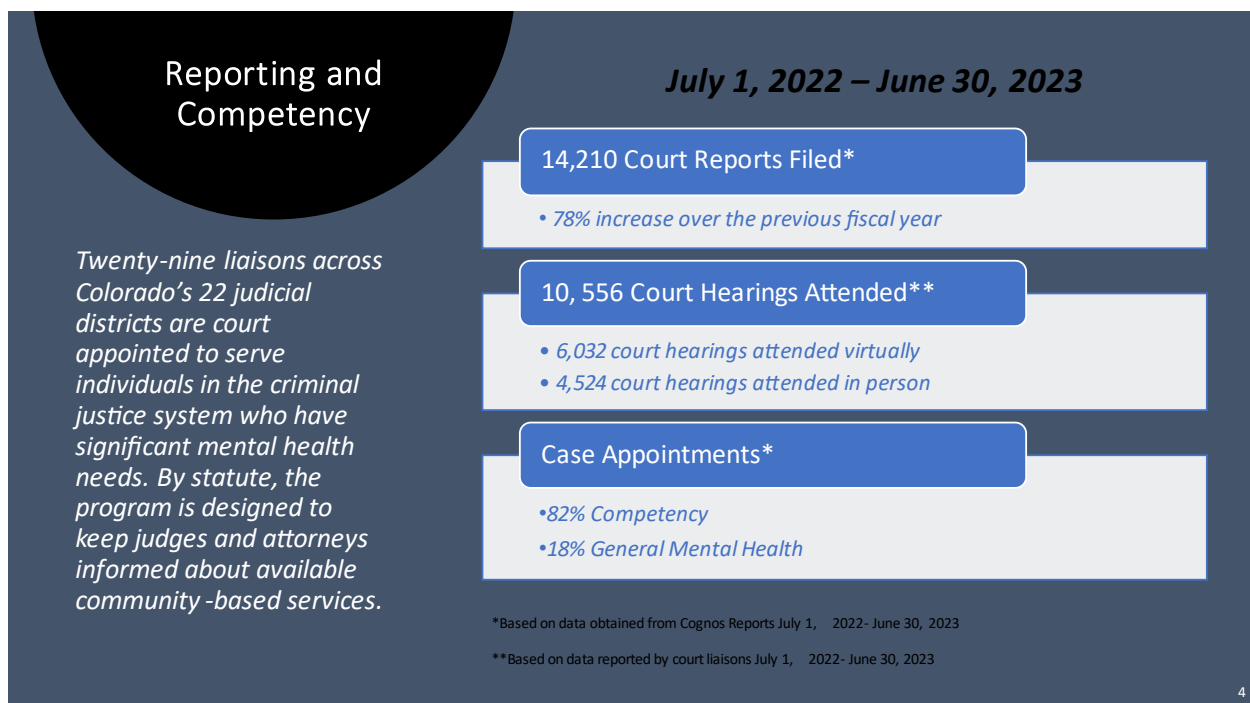
Informing Judges and Attorneys

In communicating with judges and attorneys, liaisons provided 14,210 reports and attended an estimated 10,556 hearings informing the courts and attorneys of the participant's individual needs, available services, and case planning for release from custody. These numbers represent a 78% increase in reports and a 76% increase in hearings over the previous year. Among other things, these reports and appearances help inform the decision making regarding whether to release a defendant from custody, which is more likely if stability factors are addressed and supported.

In FY22, **91% (248) of Colorado's 274 judicial officers¹** with criminal dockets made referrals to the program, a 6% increase from the previous year. (Note: the State Court Administrator's Office [SCAO] did not provide Bridges with annual data for reporting. In the absence of reporting year data, the information in this paragraph is from FY22. It is anticipated that SCAO will provide annual reporting data in future years.)

Competency Cases

Of the 4,592 cases served in FY23, approximately **82% are competency-related¹**, and the remaining 18% represent participants with significant behavioral and/or mental health challenges but for whom competency has not been raised.

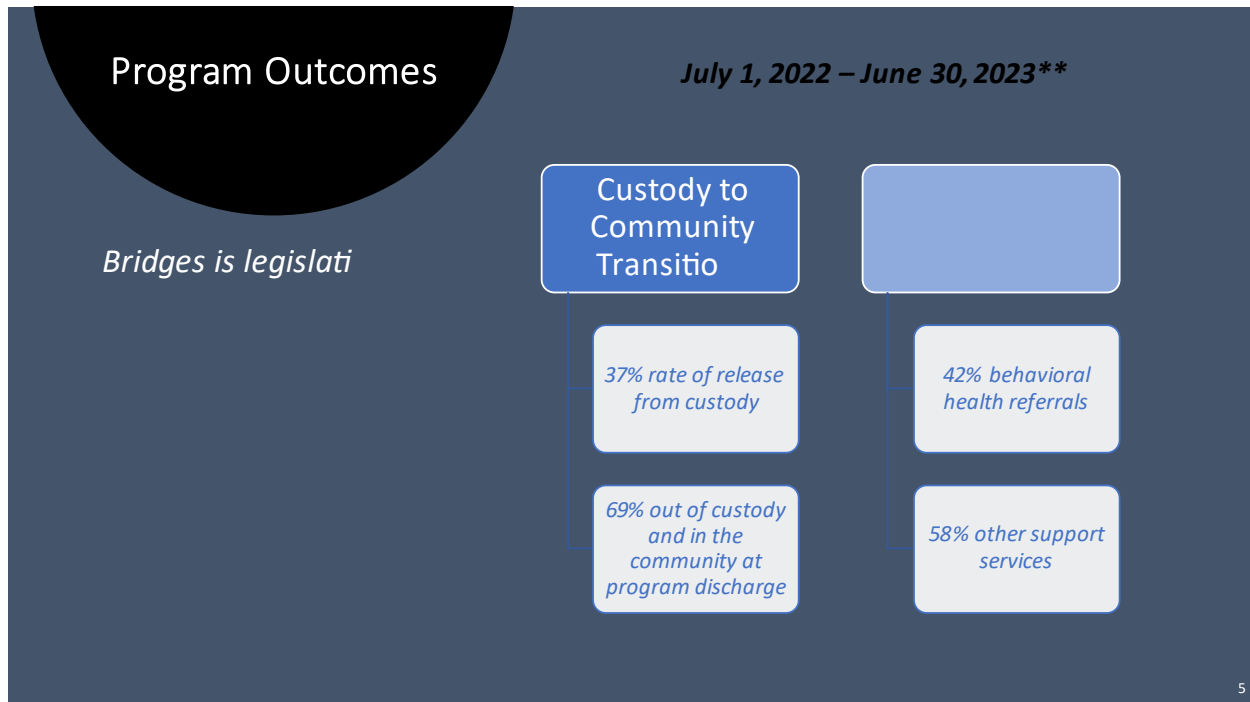


Outcomes

Of the 2,022 participants entering the program in FY23, 42% were in custody and 58% were on bond in the community. Not all participants who enter the program will close in

the same fiscal year. However, for the 1,029 participants whose cases closed in FY23, only 31% remained in custody and 69% were in the community. Ultimately, this data points to a 37% rate of release for participants who enter the program while in custody.

With the support of their liaison, out-of-custody participants connected to approximately 1,600 community-based services. Forty-two percent of those referrals were to behavioral health services, and 58% were to other support services, such as housing, social support programs, and healthcare.



As illustrated in this data, the use of the program by judges and attorneys and the subsequent efforts of liaisons and participants positively impacts outcomes by moving individuals out of custody and into supported settings in the community. When liaisons support participants to engage with services, participants are more likely to attain stability, which also has the potential to positively impact community safety. It is also highly likely that stability in the community before final disposition leads to a higher probability for probation rather than incarceration at sentencing, and even dismissal in some cases. (A formal cross-agency evaluation would enable the program to formally assess these outcomes, including implications to community safety and cost savings.)

The impact on a defendant's well-being when they are served in the community, rather than in custody, is often immediate and substantial. Individuals who are experiencing severe and persistent mental illness who are in custody experience rapid decompensation in their wellness. This decompensation can lead to hunger strikes,

suicide attempts, and other behaviors that can result in solitary confinement.¹ In addition, behaviors associated with decompensation often lead to additional charges, and solitary confinement leads to further decompensation of mental and physical health. These individuals also remain in jail longer than those without mental illness. In some states, reports show individuals with serious and persistent mental illness will spend more time waiting for competency restoration than they would spend incarcerated if convicted of the offenses for which they had been charged.²

Furthermore, suicide is the leading cause of death in correctional facilities, and multiple studies indicate as many as half of all inmate suicides are committed by the estimated 15% to 20% of inmates with serious mental illness. Nationwide, a tenth of local jails had at least one suicide in 2019. Suicides accounted for 30% of deaths in local jails in 2019. Of those deaths, 75% were not convicted and awaiting adjudication of their charge. Of those who died, nearly half of suicides in jail occurred within seven days or less from the time they had been arrested.³

With these noteworthy statistics in mind, Bridges is positioned to make a tangible impact and continues to work toward mitigating this crisis for the individuals, families, communities, and systems effected. As the data shows, Bridges has had a significant impact with suicide intervention, mental health crises, and connecting participants to services in the community. Court Liaisons collaborated in 239 mental health crisis interventions, facilitated cross-agency responses that resulted in 116 successful suicide interventions (both in and out of custody), and made connections to 1,600 community-based services in the reporting year.

Anticipated Cost Benefits

Supporting participants successfully out of custody and into community-based services represents potentially significant cost avoidance across systems. The target population served by Bridges is most costly in terms of services provided in custody, in the competency evaluation and restoration process, and in terms of recidivism. Creating alternative interventions, particularly those designed to address long-term stability or divert individuals from these costly systems, can result in significant savings.

A formal economic evaluation, planned over the next two-to-five years, will enable Bridges to accurately assess the economic impact of the program by measuring cost avoidance for jails, hospitalizations, competency wait time fines, new crime arrests, new crime prosecution, failure to appear arrests, and future court involvement, compared to

¹ Suicide in Local Jails and State and Federal Prisons, 2000-2019 - Press Release, October 7, 2021, Bureau of Justice Statistics

² Suicide in Local Jails and State and Federal Prisons, 2000-2019 - Press Release, October 7, 2021, Bureau of Justice Statistics

³ Suicide in Local Jails and State and Federal Prisons, 2000-2019 - Press Release, October 7, 2021, Bureau of Justice Statistics

alternative costs of community-based services. In the meantime, research regarding jail and hospital cost avoidance helps to paint a generalized picture of positive economic impact.

According to the Colorado Department of Corrections, in FY 2021-22 it cost on average \$24,956 annually to jail one person in Colorado county jails (which breaks down to \$2,080 per month, \$480 per week, \$68 per day).⁴ In FY22, competency cases had an average case length of more than 450 days. For each Bridges competency participant who is released from custody, there is a jail cost avoidance of \$68/day, compared to an average Bridges Program cost in FY23 of less than \$3/day. Using these numbers, rough estimates show a potential jail cost savings up to \$29,000 per competency participant who is released from custody. At the program's current service levels (2,616 competency participants) and rate of release from custody (37%), the program supports approximately 968 competency participants to transition out of custody each year, projecting jail cost savings up to \$28 million annually.

Regarding hospitalizations, a 2015 study of healthcare usage in Arapahoe County showed that, "Out of 100 frequently incarcerated individuals selected from 2015, 55 visited Colorado hospitals that year. Those 55 individuals accounted for 419 ED visits, 55 inpatient days, 21 other outpatient visits, and an estimated \$1.4 million in total health care costs."⁵ While there are numerous variables to be accounted for to create an estimate of cost avoidance for hospitalizations with Bridges, these numbers point to potential cost benefits of millions of dollars.

In addition to jail savings, program interventions such as early prevention, care coordination, and case management, can result in cost benefits in medical systems and improve outcomes for justice involved individuals.⁶ A robust cost-benefit analysis conducted in Michigan found that the state spent 20 times more on emergency mental health cases than both early and moderate cases. Utilizing case management provides better access to outpatient treatment and reduces costs. Care coordination for behavioral health has been found to reduce costs to medical systems because nearly a quarter of emergency department visits are due to behavioral health issues.⁷

Demographics

Self-reported data regarding demographics for FY23 was either incomplete or exhibiting too many inconsistencies to consider reliable. In addition, SCAO did not provide

⁴ <https://spl.cde.state.co.us/artemis/crserials/cr132internet/cr13220202122internet.pdf>

⁵ Mannerings, A., Spanier, T. and Enright, K; Healthcare Usage Report: A Collaboration Between Colorado Hospital Association and Arapahoe County Criminal Justice Planning Office, 2017.

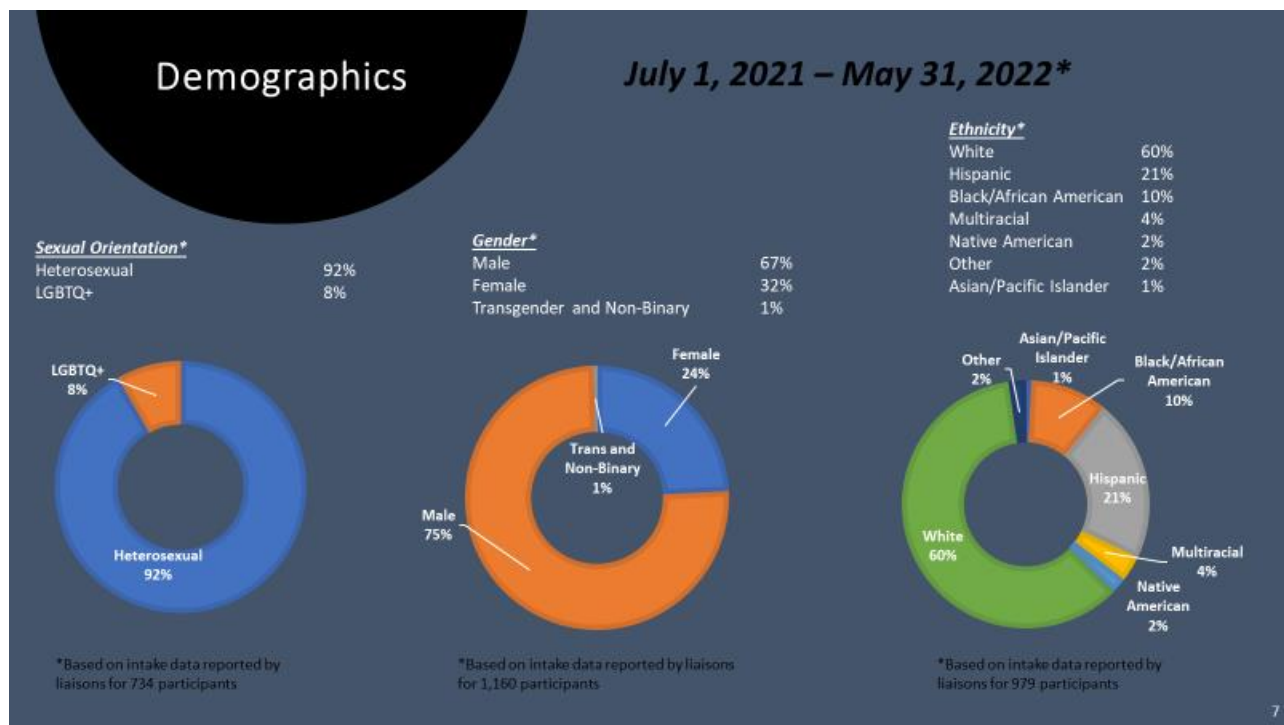
⁶ https://socialequity.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/2477046/Unfitness-to-Plead-Project-Cost-Benefit-Analysis.pdf

⁷ <https://www.hfma.org/topics/operations-management/article/care-coordination-can-reduce-89-billion-behavioral-health-cost-impact.htm>

Bridges with annual data for reporting. This combination of factors resulted in an inability to report or analyze demographic data from FY23. Bridges does not take this absence of data lightly, as addressing disparities is one of the central functions and values of the Office. The case management system that is being developed for Bridges will capture this data at a participant level for future reporting, and it is anticipated that SCAO will provide annual reporting data in future years. The Bridges administrative team will also include a data analyst working directly with the service and resource equity director, prioritizing data collection that enables a robust analysis of the Office's efforts toward promoting equitable outcomes and addressing disparities for its participants, as well as monitoring its own programming in that regard.

In the absence of reporting year data, the information that follows is from FY22.

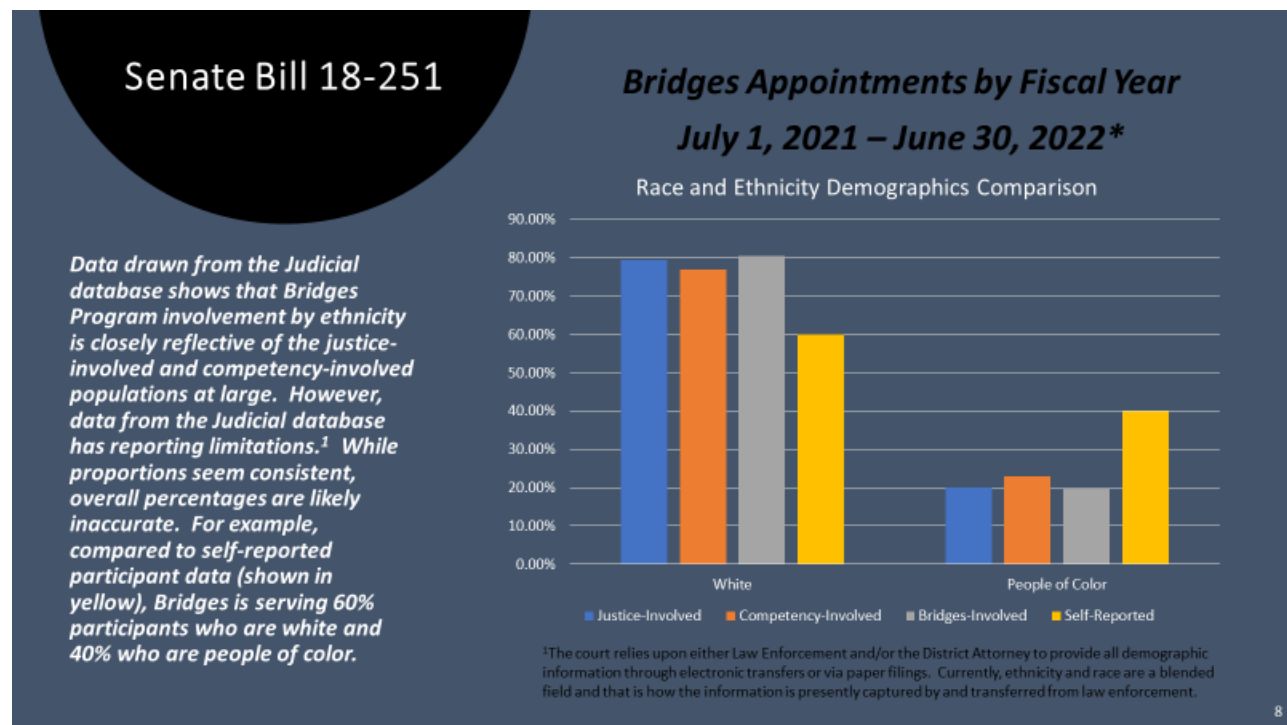
Of the participants self-reporting demographic data, 40% identify as people of color (see below for specific ethnicity breakdown), multiracial, or other, and 60% as white. Approximately 67% of participants are male, 32% female, and 1% transgender. The majority (92%) of participants identify as heterosexual, with 8% reporting as LGBTQ+.



Data drawn from the Judicial database shows that Bridges Program involvement by ethnicity and gender is closely reflective of the justice-involved and competency-involved populations at large. However, data from the Judicial database has reporting limitations, in that it is reported by law enforcement and/or the District Attorney. While proportions seem consistent (see chart below), overall percentages are likely

inaccurate. For example, according to self-reported participant data (shown in yellow), Bridges is serving 60% participants who are white and 40% who are people of color, representing a 20% discrepancy from data available through the Judicial database.

Additionally, demographics which represent individuals who traditionally experience disparities in the criminal justice system, such as ability, income level, gender, and sexual orientation are not captured by the Judicial database. Ultimately, a robust evaluation design across provider agencies, the Judicial Department, the Office of Civil and Forensic Mental Health, jails, and law enforcement agencies is necessary. This effort would allow Bridges to identify data-driven information that highlights ways the program can better address disparities and promote equitable outcomes across these multiple systems.



Promoting Positive Outcomes

Bridges was created with the intention, “to promote positive outcomes for Coloradans living with mental health conditions who encounter criminal justice involvement by fostering collaboration between both systems.” The role of the Court Liaison toward this intention is varied and reaches beyond case management and court reporting by creatively addressing systemic barriers and supporting alternatives to traditional justice involvement. Many of the ways in which Court Liaisons work toward the legislative vision for the program include:

- Advocacy: Liaisons advocate for declining individuals in the jail waiting for inpatient restoration services by collaborating and voicing the need for a higher level of care.
- Benefits Enrollment: Liaisons support the completion of the substantial paperwork required in applying for public benefits, such as SSI and Medicaid. Without this support, individuals with significant mental and/or behavioral health challenges often do not have the capacity to successfully complete applications and obtain benefits.
- Community Capacity Building: Liaisons participate in community capacity building, including addressing gaps in service, development of transitional housing, and systems advocacy.
- Competency Diversion: Bridges is partnering with three districts in the development of innovative models that provide opportunities for participants' diversion from the competency and/or justice system altogether.
- Competency Dockets: In total, 70% of Court Liaisons are supporting competency dockets in their district, with 11 liaisons serving in districts with an active competency docket and an additional 11 liaisons reporting their district is in the planning and/or discussion phase of implementing a competency docket.
- Competency Services: Liaisons consistently mitigate the complexity of the competency system on behalf of their participants, ultimately supporting faster completion of evaluation and restoration services.
- Equity: Court Liaison onboarding, education, and professional development places equity and cultural responsiveness at its center. In FY23, Bridges partnered with the University of Denver's Equity Labs to bring a year-long curriculum to liaisons specifically tailored to addressing disparities, advancing equity, and delivering culturally appropriate and meaningful service for participants.
- Families: When appropriate, liaisons work with family members to coordinate care, solutions to barriers, and housing solutions.
- Housing: Housing is cited as the most common barrier to accessing services and complying with court requests. While this remains a significant barrier, liaisons consistently work to address housing and have found solutions for participants such as reuniting participants with family, assisted living, sober living, and even contracting for beds at a local shelter.
- Judicial and Attorney Education: Liaisons provide judicial officer and attorney education, including "lunch 'n' learns" for judges and attorneys and presentations at Colorado's annual judicial and behavioral health conferences.
- Language Barriers: Because of the rapport developed, liaisons can identify and address language barriers when participants are reluctant to ask the courts or other providers for assistance.
- Medical Care: Liaisons are often involved with helping participants address

medical needs, such as eye and dental care, assisted living for dementia, and mobility devices such as wheelchairs.

- Statewide Network: When adequate services are not available in a community, liaisons work to identify appropriate services in other parts of the state. Liaisons have created a network of statewide expertise to support a broader reach of care for their participants.
- Traumatic Brain Injury: Liaisons screen participants for traumatic brain injury. In cases where participants screen positive, liaisons connect participants with Brain Injury Alliance, which can lead to improved access to relevant services and housing.
- Wraparound Care: Liaisons recognize the complexity of need their participants face and work to set-up long-term, wraparound care coordinated with multiple providers within a participant's community.

Testimonials from the Field

Bridges also serves legislative intent and accomplishes its statewide goals in ways that are often best captured by individual stories and testimonials. Court Liaisons share stories of their efforts in an annual survey, and some highlights are featured here:

Court Liaison was appointed a participant who had fallen through the cracks and had not been evaluated nor had they begun restoration in more than six months. Liaison was able to get an evaluation scheduled within a few days.

A juvenile participant had not started restoration services and the judge had given them one last opportunity to get restoration started. Upon being appointed, the Court Liaison investigated and learned that the barrier was due to paperwork errors from 2022. The Liaison worked to get the paperwork issues resolved, and the juvenile participant engaged in restoration within the week.

"I was assigned a juvenile who was currently residing in [a youth detention facility] and the option of release was present. I was appointed and asked to work with the family, attorney, and DHS regarding the participant. We all worked as a team to get him released, with intensive bond conditions. At his next court date, [the judge] gave him a one-time chance of getting released. He has been out for almost a year, has had no violations, and has stayed compliant with all court requirements. I was able to help get him back into high school...obtain a job, and stay steady on his medication. [The judge] makes statements at each court date of how well he is doing."

Many Court Liaisons are connected with their district's housing authority and participate in their coordinated entry meetings. Because of this, one liaison was able to advocate at the meeting for their participant who was chronically homeless. The participant was selected as an alternate for a voucher because the liaison was present and was able to collaborate with other community partners.

A participant was not fully engaged in outpatient restoration services due to experiencing homelessness and struggling with substance use. Participant spoke to their desire to engage in an inpatient treatment program. However, the courts and attorneys were concerned about their ability to attend successfully. Liaison continued to advocate on behalf of the participant's behavioral health needs and ultimately the liaison was given the go ahead to explore treatment options. The Court Liaison was able to get the participant into an inpatient program within days, and the participant has now been found competent and has been sober for 2 ½ years.

Liaison met with their participant while on an M1 hold at the local emergency room. The liaison recognized the vulnerability of the participant leaving hospital care without benefits and immediately worked with the participant to apply for food assistance and Medicaid. The liaison referred the participant to respite care and encouraged them to follow up with the [community health resource] for medication management. The participant was discharged from the inpatient care unit and became successfully employed within the week. The court dismissed all charges.

"I was appointed to a participant who had had an open competency case for about four years. I was able to aid in getting the participant into a program which houses and provides long-term care for individuals with TBIs, and with that placement he was able to complete testing and engage in services, which allowed the court to determine he was permanently incompetent to proceed and dismiss his case."

INDEPENDENT OFFICE TRANSITION

Expressing our gratitude for everything you're doing to help [Participant] get her life back.

~Grandparents of Participant

As Bridges Court Liaisons continue to engage with participants, address barriers to services, and keep courts and attorneys informed, the Bridges leadership team has been involved in the work of expanding the program by thoughtfully building up the administrative infrastructure required to fully step into its new status as an independent office. The transition has provided the opportunity to lean into the values of the program and to lay important groundwork for continued and sustainable growth. Highlights of transition efforts follow:

Program Expansion

With the passage of SB23-229, Bridges was appropriated to bring significantly more liaisons to every Judicial district in the State of Colorado. Between Spring of 2023 and Spring of 2026, the team will grow from 29 to 90+ liaisons and from a two-person leadership effort to a ten-person administrative team (see Attachment D, *Bridges Organizational Chart*).

Hiring is happening in strategic waves. The first wave involved the creation and hiring of a statewide Coverage Court Liaison team which serves districts during vacancies and extended leave, thereby preventing disruption in services. The second wave began in Fall 2023 and focuses on bringing on the majority of the leadership team. Hiring of regional managers (supervisors) will follow shortly thereafter, and they will then begin the year-long process of expanding our team of Court Liaisons. Some liaisons may be contracted, but most will be direct employees of Bridges of Colorado. The final administrative positions will be hired toward the end of FY24.

On average, each Judicial district will see a threefold increase in the number of Court Liaisons. However, there are a number of factors to weigh for making the allocations, including unmet competency need, geographic considerations, and district engagement with Bridges. To ensure thoughtful and collaborative decision making, Bridges is assembling a workgroup with Court partners from across the state to determine specific liaison allocations for each district.

In statewide community meetings held the Summer of 2023, community partners underscored the need to recruit and retain a highly skilled team in a challenging hiring environment. Their recommendations acknowledged the uniqueness of the Office and complexity of the roles of its employees. Members of the Bridges team must carry expertise in two complex fields, work with participants with high mental health acuity, serve as court-appointed experts, mitigate risk in both settings, engage high levels of creative problem-solving, and develop, implement, and evolve a nationally unique program model.

To ensure the development of a sustainable and highly competent workforce, Bridges has partnered with a few human resources contractors who provided expertise and guidance in the creation of 15 unique job descriptions, a compensation strategy (see Attachment E, *Bridges Compensation Strategy*), a third-party compensation analysis for all positions (see Attachment F, *Bridges Compensation Plan*), and a comprehensive recruitment campaign.

Enhancing Service to Participants and Courts

Bridges is developing the policies and application process for use of the participant services fund, which will begin in July 2024. The fund will provide various resources to address gaps in funding for individuals transitioning from the criminal justice system to community-based services. Primary focus of funding will be on temporary housing, transportation, mobile phones, food, clothing, and other basic necessities as a bridge until other public benefits can be acquired.

Bridges also has purchased tablets for each liaison to be used specifically to enable participants' virtual connections to competency evaluation and restoration services, both in and out of custody, as well as their participation in mental and behavioral health appointments.

Additionally, Bridges is finalizing partnerships to bring top of the field training programs in solution focused case management to all court liaisons. Recognizing that Bridges is the first program of its kind in the nation, this evidence-based model was selected to ensure standards of care for the case management aspect of the program are consistent and effective from district to district throughout the state.

To support meaningful and effective solutions for participants, the leadership team will also be tasked with expanding ongoing educational and professional development opportunities. These include a comprehensive, six-month Bridges University for newly hired liaisons, webinars and in-person educational opportunities for courts and attorneys, and publications on best practices for various community partners.

Finally, to better track and respond to the service needs of participants, Bridges has contracted for a statewide data management solution. The new case management system is being piloted in Fall of 2023 and will enhance both the continuity of services to participants and reports to courts and attorneys.

Commission and Advisory Councils

Bridges is first and foremost a collaborative program design, informed by its two primary client groups: participants and Judicial Officers. As an independent office, Bridges has been able to elevate the voice of its clients and community partners in the following ways:

- **Bridges Commission** - the Commission was established by SB23-229 and held its inaugural meeting in July 2023. The 11-member Commission, led by Chair Hasan Latif of the Second Chance Center and vice-chair Julie Reiskin of Colorado Cross Disabilities Coalition, includes two individuals with lived experience, representatives from five state agencies, representatives from three client advocacy/service organizations, and one elected Sheriff. The Commission is comprised of 27% people of color and 73% people who are white; 55% women and 45% men; and one individual with a physical disability. Commissioners live or work in Eagle, Larimer, and Pueblo Counties and the Denver metro area.
- **Lived Experience Advisory Council** - Bridges established this Council in FY23 to offer bring valuable perspectives and insights as we improve upon our program practices. The Advisory Council is comprised of four individuals with lived experience and two parents whose adult children are or were involved in the justice and competency systems. The Council will not only inform our program development, but members will also participate in panel presentations to community partners statewide both virtually and in person.
- **Judicial Advisory Council** - Bridges was initially guided by a steering committee that included participation by multiple judges statewide. To strengthen and maintain this partnership with the Courts, a Judicial Advisory Council is being created to ensure the voice of the bench is at the forefront of our development.
- **Court Liaison Advisory Council** - Bridges values the wisdom and expertise of those directly delivering services. Through bi-monthly in-person meetings and virtual meetings twice a month, leadership intentionally seeks input in all program development decisions and feedback on current practices. Further, as Bridges expands, a Court Liaison Advisory Council will allow in-depth access to the expertise that resides within the team.

Infrastructure and Administrative Operations

The passage of SB23-229 further allowed Bridges to begin to implement much needed technical infrastructure enabling the program to experience supported growth in many

areas. Regarding its Information Technology needs, the Office purchased hardware for new hires over the next year; entered into an IT contract to support transition and implementation of hardware, software, data transfers and a new domain; worked with SIPA to contract with third-party IT support; currently is working with SCAO IT team to support the transition; and has created a new logo and website. Bridges continues to be supported by SCAO for fiscal processes, including payroll, accounts payable, and budgeting. This support will continue until the transition to ASIA for similar services. Finally, Bridges has been receiving a robust level of partnership and legal support from the Office of the Attorney General.

SUMMARY

I can tell you actually care and want to help me.

~Bridges Participant

Bridges is moving forward in dynamic and impactful ways and anticipates increasingly more success as it continues the program build out with the support of the appropriation provided for in SB23-229. The program was born out of innovation, creativity and urgent need and its continued development seeks to maintain that original spirit and focus. Our mission, vision and values give us a solid structure from which to build and continually guide us as we make decisions, navigate complicated systems, and strive to grow in sustainable ways.

With our guiding vision that “All individuals within the criminal justice system are treated fairly and humanely, regardless of their mental health and/or behavioral health challenges,” we have established a culture of advocating for our participants with integrity and humanity.

We look to our mission - To promote positive outcomes for Coloradans living with mental and/or behavioral health challenges who encounter criminal justice involvement by fostering collaboration between both systems - to remind us of the importance of being leaders in the areas of collaboration and alliance building. Bridges strives to be a model of cross-system cooperation and to foster goodwill and respect among our partners.

Our values drive everything we do. We are Person Centered, Solution Focused, and Collaborative. These values distill our vision and mission into tangible principles which are straightforward yet hardly simple. By approaching our work being Person-Centered we remember to put people first: our participants, our court related and other partners, and each other. We return to our Solution-Focused intention to keep us moving through difficult situations with an eye toward problem solving. We start and end with collaboration, seeking to engage our participants precisely where they are and to ultimately help them achieve greater agency for themselves by working in collaboration with them. We endeavor to improve and streamline collaboration with existing and new partners across the criminal justice and behavioral health spectrum and recognize with humility that we cannot achieve any of our objectives without effective collaboration.

As evidenced in the data and narrative information outlined in this report, Bridges has a demonstrated record of improving outcomes for participants and for keeping courts and attorneys informed. We achieve this through successfully facilitating collaboration between the two complex systems of criminal justice and behavioral health. Bridges looks to the future with determination and enthusiasm and plans to use further evaluations and the development of resources to further improve the services we provide.



Bridges of Colorado

Connecting Colorado's Criminal Justice and Mental Health Systems

Vision

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

Mission

To promote positive outcomes for Coloradans living with mental and/or behavioral health challenges who encounter criminal justice involvement by fostering collaboration between both systems.

Values

We approach our work grounded in the following three values:

Person Centered. Solution Focused. Collaborative.

How We Live Our Vision, Mission, and Values

We connect to resources. We amplify voices. We shed light on situations.

We inform decision making. We offer our support. We speak up.

We provide education. We embrace equity.

What *Person Centered* Looks Like in Bridges

- Caring for the value, worth, and dignity of the participant
- Recognizing participants as experts in their own lives
- Meeting the participant “where they’re at”
- Building trust and rapport
- Addressing the whole needs of the participant
- Providing Service That Is:
 - Individualized
 - Culturally Responsive
 - Trauma Informed
 - Strengths Based
 - Empowering
 - Harm Reducing
 - Stigma Reducing
 - Non-Judgmental
 - Empathetic and Compassionate
 - Transparent
 - Educational

What *Solution Focused* Looks Like in Bridges

- Identifying effective solutions for courts, participants, and providers
- Focusing on services that support the health and well-being of participants
- Advocating for the highest quality, most appropriate resources
- Addressing the social determinants of health and other long-term solutions
- Finding individual and community solutions that increase stability and reduce barriers
- Providing service that is:
 - Resourceful
 - Creative and Flexible
 - Individualized
 - Transparent
 - Neutral and Unbiased

What *Collaborative* Looks Like in Bridges

- Navigating complex systems involvement with participants
- Acting as boundary spanners across multiple systems and organizations
- Exhibiting fluency across criminal justice and behavioral health systems
- Supporting systems accountability through partnership, communication, and transparency
- Facilitating integrated and wrap around care
- Providing service that is:
 - Responsive to multiple systems, organizations, and individuals
 - Transparent
 - Agile
 - Educational
 - Open-Minded

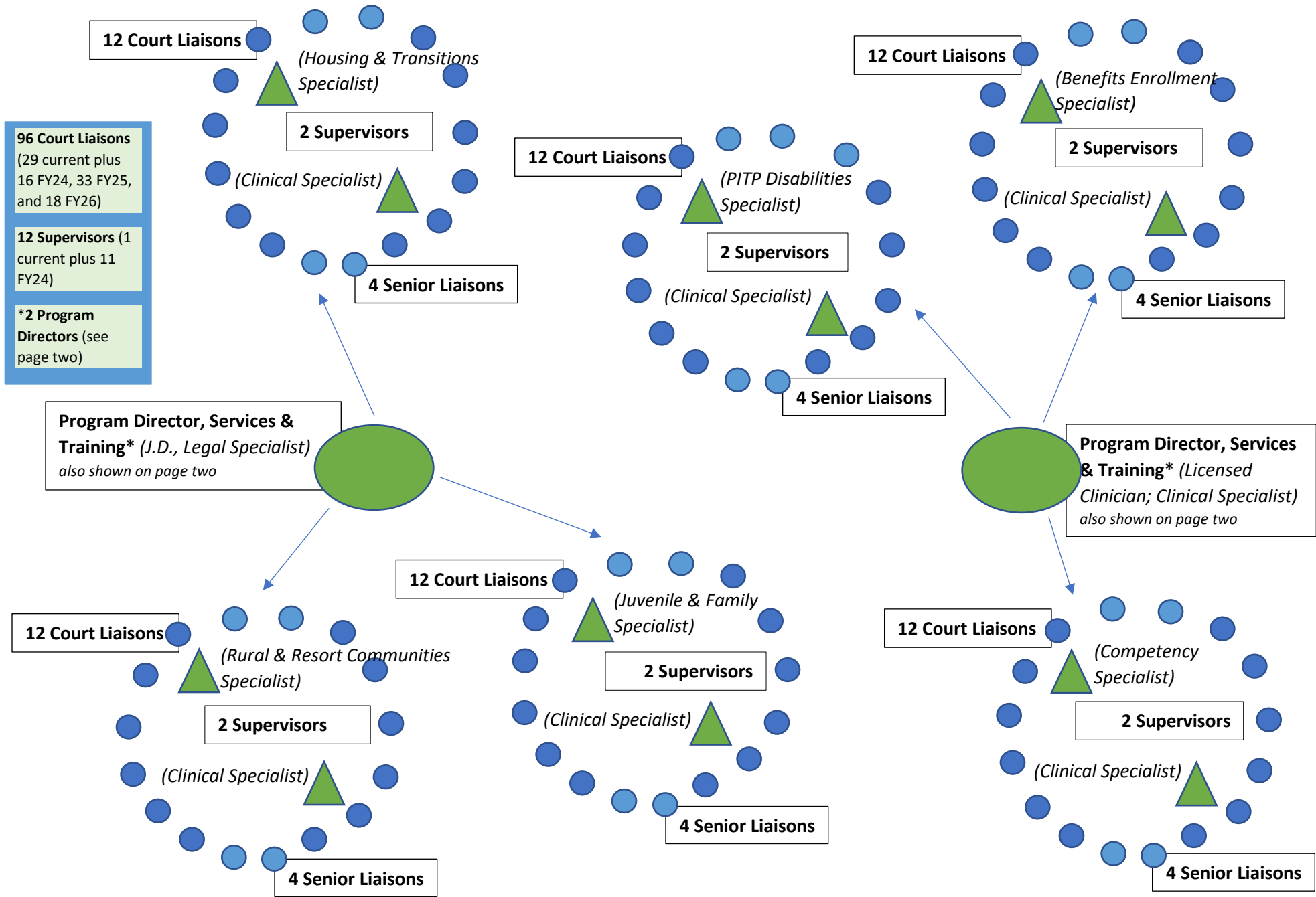
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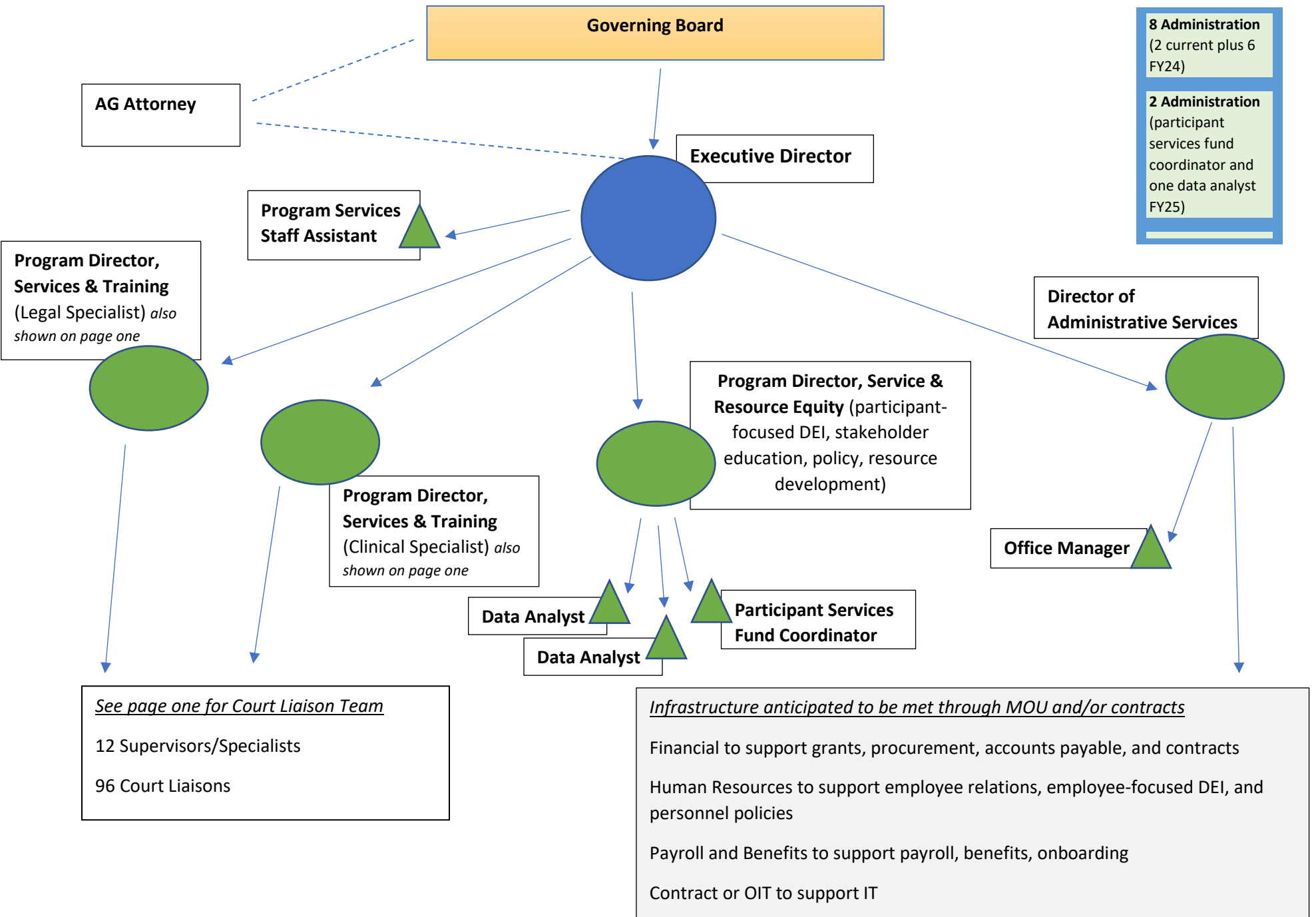


Bridges Program Liaisons & Participants by District (as of 6/30/23)

Judicial District	Counties Served	Employing Agency	# of Liaisons	# Current Participants
1 st & 5 th (Clear Creek)	Gilpin, Jefferson, Clear Creek (5 th JD)	Behavioral Treatment Services	2	41+6 = 47
2 nd	Denver	WellPower	4	128
3 rd	Huerfano, Las Animas	Health Solutions	1	22
4 th & 11 th (Park)	El Paso, Teller, Park (11 th JD)	Behavioral Treatment Services	3	100+0 = 100
5 th	Eagle, Summit	Judicial Department	1	41
6 th & 22 nd	Archuleta, La Plata, San Juan, Dolores, Montezuma	Judicial Department	1	21+12 = 33
7 th	Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel	Judicial Department	1	33
8 th	Larimer	Larimer County Criminal Justice Services	1	25
9 th	Garfield, Pitkin, Rio Blanco	Judicial Department	1	37
10 th	Pueblo	Judicial Department	1	40
11 th & 5 th (Lake)	Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, Lake (5 th JD)	Solvista Health	1	36+12 = 48
12 th	Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache	San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group	1	21
13 th	Kit Carson, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Yuma	Centennial Mental Health Center	1	64
14 th	Grand, Moffat, Routt, Jackson	Judicial Department	1	26
15 th & 16 th	Baca, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Prowers, Bent, Crowley, Otero	Judicial Department	1	6+34 = 40
17 th	Adams, Broomfield	Behavioral Treatment Services	2	68
18 th	Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert, Lincoln	All Health Network	2	70
19 th	Weld	North Range Behavioral Health	2	101
20 th	Boulder	Boulder County Criminal Justice Services	1	56
21 st	Mesa	Judicial Department	1	40
Totals			29	1,040

Bridges Program Recommended Organizational Structure







Bridges of Colorado

Connecting Colorado's Criminal Justice and Mental Health Systems

Our Total Rewards Philosophy

"I just wanted to tell you about some amazing work that [Court Liaison] did on a case for a young man with considerable medical, cognitive and psychological issues. It is nothing short of miraculous and life changing. [Court Liaison] only got on this case a couple weeks ago. I asked for her to be appointed knowing this client would just go on her waiting list but because of the acuity of his situation, she moved him off of her waiting list. She then somehow succeeded in less than two weeks in getting this client placed from the jail at an acute in-patient health care facility—something about ten other professionals (including myself) had not been able to do in the past several months as this client remained in jail w/o the level of skilled nursing he needs. [Court Liaison] cut through loads of red tape so creatively, gracefully and diplomatically. She figured out long term Medicaid, momentum funding, guardianship, placement, transportation, bonds and then made a few (very neutral) nudges towards dismissal. [Court Liaison's] work on this case (and many others) is outstanding. Please give her a raise."

~local district public defender, September 2023

Bridges of Colorado was established as a judicial program, 'The Bridges Program,' to facilitate collaboration between the judicial system and mental health system. Through critical guidance to attorneys and judges, and representation to an underserved population, the Bridges Program has resulted in bringing services and support to thousands of individuals a year and a **35% release rate** of those who were in custody.

This impact has been the catalyst for growth and a demonstration of delivering on our values. We want to share these with you.

We Deliver high-quality and effective care to participants, including engaging in community-based advocacy and problem solving for that care.

We Provide responsive and neutral delivery of both *high levels of expertise and feasible and impactful problem solving to judges and attorneys.*

We Serve the entire state of Colorado.

We Provide subject matter expertise across two complex fields (behavioral health and criminal justice), serving and collaborating with professionals in those fields who are required to have advanced education, licensure, and continuing education.

We Translate across the two fields so that professionals in both fields are able to successfully collaborate and problem solve.



We Succeed in collaborating and problem-solving with community partners and providers that have significantly differing mandates.

We Mitigate risk across the two fields and related organizations.

Looking forward, our focus is on the...

Establishment of Bridges as a statewide neutral authority on the **needs of and best practices for the target population across the two fields.**

Recognition of Bridges' **systemic change role at a local, regional, and statewide level** through providing judge, attorney, and community partner education; **promoting and advocating for positive outcomes for the target population;** and facilitating/participating in the development of **community-based resources and systemic solutions.**

Recognition of Bridges' role as a nationwide promising practice (named as such by National Center for State Courts) and **first program of its kind in the nation,** underscoring both the necessity to develop, implement, and **evolve a unique program model and its national leadership role in development of similar models.**

To be named an “Employer of Choice” in Colorado through **equitable hiring, management,** and retention practices, promoting professional development and **offering competitive pay and benefits;** the result being a **sustainable, highly trained, and competent workforce.**

Total Rewards Philosophy

We understand the value of our team members and the practical realities of providing mental health and criminal justice system related services. **Our focus is not only on the well-being and success of our clients, but also that of our team.** As a historically underpaid industry, we recognize the need for sustainable, competitive pay and benefits. Our ‘time off’ plan was created to protect the mental and physical well-being of our team members and ensure work life balance. We intend to actively address this need while providing equitable compensation to all of our team members. **We want to develop Experts in their field and give them room to grow.**

Bridges of Colorado’s Total Rewards Philosophy is driven by...

Our Competitive Pay is based on third-party compensation analysis for governmental/non-profit organizations. We are competitive with the Denver market and State of Colorado Judicial and Behavioral Health positions. Our analysis of the market related to the uniqueness of the Office and roles of the employees, especially with a necessity to carry expertise in two complex fields, work with participants with high mental health acuity, serve as court-appointed experts, mitigate risk in both settings, engage high levels of creative problem-solving, and develop, implement, and evolve a nationally unique program model.

Our Value of Equity through intentionally meeting living wage guidelines and standards and by addressing the historically disparate compensation of “helping” professionals. We demonstrate



our value of equity through alignment with the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act and our unique structure that values equity across the organization.

Our Comprehensive Benefits meet or exceed standards within the behavioral health field. In addition to the competitive Judicial Branch offerings below, Bridges of Colorado will soon be offering many unique benefits focused on improving the lives of our employees and their families.

- Health & Dental Insurance
- Basic Life & AD&D, and Short-term Disability Insurance Paid by the State
- Long-term Disability and Optional Life Insurance
- Flexible Spending & Health Savings Accounts
- Several Retirement (and supplemental) Offerings
- Colorado State Employees' Credit Union and Employee Discount Program
- Generous Paid Time Off, Eleven Paid Holidays and Extended Sick Leave
- Worker's Compensation
- Colorado State Employee's Assistance Plan

For full details visit: <http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/benefits>.

Our Career Development focus. When you succeed and grow, we succeed and grow, and our clients reap the benefit. We provide an allowance for professional development for each our team members, offer formal and informal professional development programs and no-cost clinical supervision to meet educational and licensure requirements.



Bridges of Colorado

2023 Compensation Study

Study Methodology Report

Prepared: October 2023

Prepared by

Jennifer Olson

Compensation Consulting Services

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Introduction

Bridges of Colorado asked Employers Council consultant, Jennifer Olson, to develop a compensation philosophy, conduct a salary survey market analysis of all current and newly developed jobs in their organization, develop 2023 salary ranges based on the market data collected, and compare current salary ranges with the new pay structure. This report presents the methodology we follow when designing and reviewing compensation systems. Highlights of this process are included below.

Review Strategy and Philosophy

Bridges of Colorado is newly separated from the state Judicial District and was in need of a defined compensation philosophy and compensation structure for their independent organization. Previously, pay rates were based upon similar job pay ranges within the Judicial compensation structure. Jennifer Olson, Employer's Council Consultant, met with Jennifer Turner, Executive Director, Senator Linda Newell, Business Consultant and Jori Dovey, Operations Specialist, to discuss the need to develop an innovative compensation philosophy aligned with their vision as a new organization that is the first of its kind and nationally recognized. Jennifer Turner expressed the need for benchmarking each unique position through a holistic lens and creating a pay structure that would set them apart as a well-compensating, Behavioral Health Employer of Choice. Linda Newell would manage the development of job descriptions that spoke to the acuity and expertise required of each job, which would be instrumental in achieving an accurate job match and salary benchmark.

Compare Positions to Salary Surveys

We compared the functions, qualifications, and expertise of the jobs at Bridges of Colorado to those in the salary surveys. We reviewed the job descriptions of the positions to identify matches to the job descriptions of positions in salary surveys within several industries. We do not match jobs by title, but by the duties of the role. This includes factors such as the degree of knowledge/skill, job family progression, scope of decision-making authority, and autonomy. While exact matches may not always occur, we took care to ensure that a significant degree of comparability existed before using the survey data. We strive for a 70 to 80 percent correlation between the incumbent's job responsibilities and the duties listed in the surveys. Where jobs perform multiple functions, job matches were weighted according to the time spent performing each function of the job. Where survey descriptions represented the overall function of a position, but did not represent the appropriate level or scope, we applied a differential (a premium or discount) to the data to represent the skill level or responsibility of the position more accurately. We solicited input and feedback via email and virtual meetings from Jennifer Turner, Linda Newell and Jori Dovey regarding the survey job matches to ensure accuracy and reflect appropriate survey data. Several salary survey studies were drafted to ensure a 70 to 80 percent match.

☐ Identify Appropriate Salary Surveys and Data Lines

Employers Council consultants use well-established salary surveys as the sources for market data. The specific surveys and the data lines used in this analysis are as follows:

- HR Market Analysis (Payfactors) 2023 – Denver Metro, Legal Consulting, 100 – 200 Employees data line
- Economic Research Institute (ERI) 2023 – Denver, Legal Services, 115 Employees data line
- Peer Data - 2023 – Denver Metro, Legal Consulting, 100 – 200 Employees data line
- Employers Council – Public Employers Survey 2022 – All Colorado, Denver/Boulder, Total Responses data lines
- Employers Council – Benchmark Survey 2022 - All Colorado, Denver/Boulder, Total Responses data lines

After we obtained a final job match, with approval from leadership, we collected the salary information. We made efforts to use data with 30 incumbents or more whenever possible to have a more statistically accurate average. Employers Council, Peer, Payfactors and Economic Research Institute (ERI) collect data directly from organizations, through surveys they conduct or through purchasing third-party surveys with verifiable and reliable data. Survey data is reviewed by a PhD Statistician for accuracy and significance before its release. Payfactors and ERI salary data are updated quarterly.

☐ Adjust Salary Survey Data

Since the effective dates of the salary survey data varied by survey, Employers Council aged the data and brought it forward to a common date of October 1, 2023. We used an adjustment factor that represents the annual percent of salary movement for state and local government sector workers. The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, compiles and publishes the Employment Cost Index (ECI) each quarter. The ECI reflects the percentage change in employer costs for employee compensation year over year. The ECI rate as of June 2023 was 4.7 percent for state and local government workers. We prorated this factor based on the period from each survey's information collection date to October 1, 2023.

☐ Update Salary Grades and Range Structure

Each job's salary range was based on the salary data collected and each job's progression within the organization. We used the aggregate market 50th percentile of the survey data to create the range midpoint. Minimum and maximum values were determined based on the grade midpoint using a spread of 15 percent from minimum to midpoint and 20 percent from midpoint to maximum.

As market data focuses on payment for the job, the salary range allows an organization to pay the incumbent according to organizational philosophy and strategy. This can include specific goal accomplishment, performance, length of service or any other criteria that is deemed important. The variable spread of 15 and 20 percent was used to allow for ‘growth-in-place’ movement as is aligned with Bridges of Colorado’s compensation philosophy. This promotes retention and allows employees with valuable expertise to stay within the job range for a longer period before ‘maxing out.’ To remain equitable, the spread of the range was consistent throughout the entire structure.

To be consistent, employees should be paid no lower than the minimum of the salary range. When hiring, however, employers may have to pay higher than the minimum in order to attract the best candidate. Many employers choose not to exceed the midpoint as a hiring rate. Employees should not be paid higher than the range maximum. If a pay rate approaches and exceeds the maximum, the organization can still provide an increase; it is recommended it be given as a lump-sum bonus rather than added to the base. These practices preserve the integrity of the structure.

Review Implementation

We compared Bridges of Colorado’s current salary ranges used to the updated salary ranges. It was determined that the salary range minimums were defensible and justifiable. To have a competitive, market-driven compensation system and avoid salary compression, upward adjustment of the range structure is necessary. “Salary compression” exists when an employee’s base salary is close to, or more than, a longer-service employee or supervisor within the same job family. Some causes include market pressures to pay more to hire qualified, talented employees, limited pay increase budgets, extended overtime, too much range overlap, or implementation of a new structure to play “catch-up” with labor market movement. When a large number of incumbents fall below the new minimum, the compression problem escalates. Rarely can organizations achieve external (market), as well as internal and individual equity (compression) compensation goals. They are inherently in conflict.

Final Note

Compensation is a fluid and dynamic part of human resources. We suggest that a review of the compensation plan continue to be completed periodically in order to meet the objectives of the program. An annual market review and comprehensive analysis of the compensation structure every three to five years is recommended to stay competitive within the market. Regular market studies can provide valuable information regarding high-turnover positions, and new or key roles. While salary data is a tool for helping set pay practices, operational excellence is usually driven by many variables. Balancing a variety of factors, including performance and organizational goals, along with market analysis are part of the salary decision process.

We appreciate the opportunity to support your efforts in maintaining a competitive salary structure. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about this project.

Bridges of Colorado
Proposed 2023 Pay Range Structure

Pay Market	Effective Date
Denver Government Legal Services	9/1/2023

Job Title	Min	Mid	Max
Liaison in Training	\$25.00/Hour	\$25.00/Hour	\$25.00/Hour
Court Liaison	\$72,261.00	\$83,100.00	\$97,552.00
Court Liaison (Coverage)	\$72,261.00	\$83,100.00	\$97,552.00
Senior Court Liaison	\$79,391.00	\$91,300.00	\$107,178.00
Court Liaison Supervisor (Regional Manager)	\$89,391.00	\$102,800.00	\$102,800.00
Office Manager (PM I)	\$72,609.00	\$83,500.00	\$98,022.00
Communications Manager (PM II)	\$80,435.00	\$92,500.00	\$108,587.00
Participant Services Fund Manager (PM II)	\$79,130.00	\$91,000.00	\$106,826.00
People & Culture Program Manager (PM III)	\$92,609.00	\$106,500.00	\$125,022.00
Data Analysis Manager (PM III)			
Services and Resources Equity Director	\$133,304.00	\$153,300.00	\$179,961.00
Legal Director	\$133,478.00	\$153,500.00	\$180,196.00
Clinical Director	\$133,913.00	\$154,000.00	\$180,783.00
Operations Director			
Executive Director	\$187,739.00	\$215,900.00	\$253,448.00