

Stimulus Learning Series: Behavioral Health and Housing

Developing more equitable, preventative and holistic supports

August 2, 2021



HARVARD Kennedy School
Government Performance Lab

Transforming supports to better respond to our nation's behavioral health and housing crises

Pandemic heightened preexisting challenges

The pandemic intensified stress, furthered isolation, and introduced new barriers to in-person help

Harmful, coercive, and poorly equipped systems end up as default behavioral health responses – especially for poor and BIPOC communities

Expiring eviction moratorium, spiking overdose fatalities, and patients languishing in EDs reinforcing need to quickly get dollars into communities

What you've told us...

Inaccessible supports

- Resources unevenly distributed across communities
- BH, housing, and CJ systems offer siloed interventions that are hard to navigate
- Help is not delivered in mode that is most accessible or appropriate

Narrow, reactive help

- Support emphasizes remediation rather than prevention
- Services that fail to address life circumstances or cultural differences

Outdated infrastructure

- Systems that focus on immediate crises rather than addressing underlying needs
- Workforce gaps and payment models leading to substantial waitlists

You told us about investments in BH & housing that are...

Expanding accessibility

- 1 **“No wrong door” help lines, neighborhood hubs, and cross-system navigators:** “Scattered resources makes accessing support harder than it needs to be”
- 2 **Expanding telehealth to make virtual care options universal and permanent:** “We need to meet people where they are”
- 3 **Doubling-down on overdose prevention strategies:** “Responding to the spike in overdose deaths must be part of our recovery”

Offering more effective responses

- 4 **Crisis response and diversion programs:** “Armed officers are ill-suited to respond to a MH crisis”
- 5 **Developing programming more responsive to community and client needs:** “Addiction treatment needs to serve mom as an individual and a parent”
- 6 **Concrete and flexible supports as tools for recovery and system exit:** “Food, childcare, and transportation underpin every other support we offer”

Strengthening the ecosystem

- 7 **Building the stock of affordable and supportive housing:** “Step one is getting a roof over one’s head”
- 8 **Expanding, diversifying, and upskilling behavioral health workforce:** “Shared experience builds the trust necessary for quality care”
- 9 **Matching system investment to needed levels of care:** “ERs are not equipped to treat serve mental health needs”

Looking ahead: GPL's stimulus learning series

Type into the chat: We are considering future calls to discuss more specific design and implementation challenges. What topics would you be interested in learning more about?

✓	July 9	Benefits & Economic Mobility
✓	July 15	Early Childhood & Families
✓	July 29	<i>Implementation deep-dive:</i> Guaranteed income programs
✓	August 2	Behavioral Health & Housing
	August 10	<i>Implementation deep-dive:</i> Using procurement to advance innovation
	August 25	Jobs & Economic Development

Questions? Contact Danielle at danielle_cerny@hks.harvard.edu

Register for upcoming sessions at: <https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/stimulus-learning-series>