



Office of Addiction  
Services and Supports

Office of  
Mental Health

Office for People With  
Developmental Disabilities

## 2023 Goals and Plans Form

### Orange County Department of Mental Health

**Goal 1:** The LGU will facilitate workforce recruitment, retention, and development discussions with the provider system and state agencies. LGU will advocate for flexibility in the use of state/federal funds to address workforce shortages as well as increase workforce competency.

**Goal 2:** The LGU will monitor the behavioral health crisis service system to ensure that the needs of Orange County residents are being met efficiently and effectively and plan accordingly to adjust services to reflect needs. LGU will seek opportunities for funding to further develop and help sustain these services.

**Goal 3:** The LGU will work collaboratively with federal, state, and local partners to increase and maintain stable housing for individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders, and/or developmental disabilities.

**Goal 4 (Optional):** The LGU will advocate for improved transportation options for individuals with behavioral health needs through venues such as the Orange County Think Differently Committee, Orange County Department of Planning, and state offices.

**Goal 5 (Optional):** Orange County will explore prevention funding and resources to increase the health and wellness for residents. This will include but not be limited to partnering with the Orange County Department of Health, Community Coalitions, the Orange County Resilience Project, and other partners to encourage evidence-based prevention strategies.

**Goal 6 (Optional):** The LGU will facilitate problem solving conversations on behalf of individuals/organizations who express concerns related to the consistency and quality of screening, diversion, treatment and/or discharge processes at local hospitals. This will be accomplished through a focus on pathways to care and transitions between levels of care during quarterly and as needed meetings with local hospitals, the WELCOME Orange Combined Provider Meetings, Complexity Support Planning meetings, and the Orange County Crisis Call Continuum meetings.

**Goal 7 (Optional):** The LGU will work with community providers as part of Changing the Orange County Addiction Ecosystem to provide best practice interventions, increase access to treatment/treatment on demand, and build capacity across the county for MAT/MUOD. The HEALing Communities Study, the State Opioid Settlement Funds, and local Opioid Settlement fund committee funds and recommendations will be considered in the planning.

**Goal 8 (Optional):** The LGU will promote the WELCOME Orange philosophy to ensure a welcoming, hopefully, co-occurring/complexity capable system of care for individuals with behavioral health needs.

**Goal 9 (Optional):** The LGU will increase awareness and understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences and work to foster resilience in Orange County communities,

children, and families. This will be accomplished through the Orange County Resilience Project and innovated initiatives like Handle with Care.

**Annual and intermediate plans for addiction services:**

Orange County and the other counties that make up the Mid-Hudson Region, recognize that the individuals we support often have multiple complex needs across a variety of behavioral health and other systems. As such, the Mid-Hudson counties have come together to form a region-wide Co-Occurring System of Care (COSOC) committee. For several years, Orange County has used the Comprehensive Continuous Integrated Systems of Care (CCISC) model, an evidenced-based SAMHSA “best practice” model (Minkoff & Cline, 2004, 2005), to reimagine and redesign our system of care. Through the CCISC model we brought together cross system partners and created a vision of a system that responds to the complexity of needs of the people we serve regardless of where the individual initially touches down. Therefore, our providers are striving to become integrated and co-occurring capable within their mission, resources, and type of licensure. Our shared vision is of a welcoming system of care that expects individuals to have complex needs and is prepared to provide competent integrated treatment and support in an empathic, hopeful, integrated, and strength-based way, a truly no wrong door approach. However, there is work to be done as many integrated programs such as crisis call centers and crisis stabilization centers continue to serve disproportionately low numbers of individuals with substance use disorder needs. Addressing this disparity will continue to be a focus for Orange County.

Orange County is participating in the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) HEALing Communities Study as part of the Wave II communities in New York State. Orange County will continue to actively participate in the study with the goal of reducing opioid related deaths by 40% by 2024. This will be accomplished by focusing on expansion of evidence-based practices including availability and use of naloxone, medication assistance for opioid use disorder, and safer prescribing practices in criminal justice/congregate levels of care, primary care, and behavioral health care settings.

The Orange County Opioid Settlement Fund Committee is actively planning for the opioid settlement funding.

Priority areas of focus for these funds include:

- expansion of school-based and community-based prevention services with a dedicated focus on gateway drug (inclusive of alcohol, cannabis use/misuse, and synthetic drugs)
- prioritizing access to care by streamlining how individuals with substance use disorder and their families access the substance use disorder system of services. Early planning includes a single point of access for the community which provides engagement and support for the individual to ensure that they are connected to a provider.
- Recovery-oriented housing opportunities that will support individuals in sustaining their recovery long term.
- Workforce recruitment, retention, and development.

**Annual and intermediate plans for developmental disability services:**

For 2023, the LGU will continue to offer technical assistance and advocacy for individuals with disabilities, their families, and all stakeholders. The Developmental Disabilities Division will help others navigate the complex OPWDD (Office for People with Developmental Disabilities) system. The Developmental Disabilities Division will continue to offer support, referrals, and follow up as needed and requested for all individuals with disabilities regardless of OPWDD eligibility status. Division team members will participate in school and community meetings on behalf of individuals and families when requested and will participate in planning for complex needs. The Division will continue to offer behavior analytic services to children ages 4-21 who are OPWDD eligible and have significant danger to self or others, so they can remain at home in the least restrictive environment. This division will offer training on disability topics to Orange County families and providers at no cost. Training will include Evidenced Based Practices such as Functional Behavioral Assessment to address challenging behaviors. The division will disseminate training from other divisions and providers including topics in mental health and substance use in an effort to increase the system's ability to support individuals with complex needs. The Department of Mental health will continue to monitor OCCSI (the Orange County Community Supports Initiative) and participate in regular meetings with the six partner agencies – ASFL, Greystone, Inspire, Mental Health Association, Hudson Valley ARC, and ADAPT of the Hudson Valley. The County Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities team will review the viability of expanding this initiative to include other agencies in the face of workforce challenges in an effort to expand capacity and get services to families sooner. The LGU will continue to meet with the developmental disability agency supervisors to share information, brainstorm, and address concerns. The LGU will continue to attend regional, Hudson Valley, and Orange County meetings with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. The Division of Developmental Disabilities will work with the Community Services Board DD subcommittee to respond to this group's recommendations and concerns. The division will begin to help chair and take a more active role in the Orange County Executive's THINK DIFFERENTLY initiative. The LGU will explore and share topics of interest to stakeholders such as pending legislation that affects individuals with disabilities and their families.

**Annual and intermediate plans for mental health services:**

In 2023, the LGU will continue to promote the WELCOME Orange philosophy which empowers providers to become welcoming, hopeful, and co-occurring/complexity capable to ensure individuals in need can access support through any door. The LGU benefits from strong support from the Community Services Board that provides up to date information on community needs across the 3 service areas. The LGU recognizes that workforce challenges, and the increased demand for services due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have impacted access to inpatient and outpatient care and will focus efforts on workforce recruitment, retention, and development to improve access to services and supports in 2023. The LGU will continue to prioritize expansion of school-based satellites, community-based services, peer supports and collaborative efforts with law enforcement CIT teams in an effort to improve access to high quality mental health

services and supports. Prevention of mental health disorders will also be a focus in 2023. The LGU will continue to partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension on the Orange County Resiliency Project which focuses on preventing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) as well as mitigating the impact of ACEs. Initial discussions have also begun about expanding existing local substance use disorder prevention coalitions to be co-occurring prevention coalitions. A cross-systems work group has been established to encourage school districts to partner with local law enforcement to implement Handle with Care programs across the county which will help mitigate the impact of ACEs. The county has also embarked on a 0-5 Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health initiative. The kickoff mapping event occurred in October of 2022 and a committee will be formed to start the work on this initiative in 2023. There was also a System of Care (SOC) action planning event that took place in October 2022 that focused on planning for children and youth with serious emotional and behavioral challenges and their families. The focus of the event was review SOC framework and core principles, assessment of the local SOC, completion of a gaps analysis, setting priorities, and finally to development of an action plan. Forty representatives from several systems including Mental Health, Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, Family and Youth Peer Services, Health, Education, Substance Use Treatment and Prevention, Youth Shelter, Law Enforcement, Family Court, and Schools participated in the event. The action plan will be worked on in several committees dedicated to addressing the needs of this population. The Suicide Prevention Committee will continue to promote awareness of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention through education, training, and resource development. In 2023, there will be a focus on increasing awareness and prevention training for high school students and partnering with the NYS Office of Mental Health and the University of Rochester to pilot a firearms safety training for families. The committee would also like to develop a resource for families to reduce access to any means used to die by suicide within the home. County stakeholders working with youth and young adults ages 16-25, who have serious behavioral health challenges, have also been meeting to plan the revival of a committee to address the unique needs of this population with the goal of ensuring that they have access to needed services and supports to transition safely and effectively into adulthood.

**LGU Representative Name:** Lacey Trimble

**LGU Representative Title:** Deputy Commissioner

**Submitted for:** Orange County Department of Mental Health



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## 2023 Needs Assessment Form

### Orange County Department of Mental Health

#### **Adverse Childhood Experiences** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Orange County has an active Resilience Project, led by Cornell Cooperative Extension in partnership with the LGU and other community partners. Despite concerted efforts, there is still a need for continued education, training, planning and implementation. One goal for 2023 is the implementation of Handle with Care programs in districts across the county.

#### **Case Management/Care Coordination** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Across all three service areas workforce shortages are impacting case management/care coordination agencies and therefore also impacting those they serve. Caseloads are high; turnover is also high, and individuals with complex needs are not always eligible for Health Home Plus. Care manager/coordinators face the challenge of helping individuals access care while many providers have waitlists or are not accepting new clients due to their own staffing issues. Care Coordination Organizations assist individuals with OPWDD needs through the eligibility process, however, even with that assistance, it is still a very complex and time-consuming process which may take several attempts to complete.

#### **Crisis Services** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Since bail reform and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orange County Crisis Service Continuum has experienced a significant increase in demand. Though staffing has been increased across the Orange County Continuum through a 2-year appropriation through Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther's office, the demand continues to grow, and the mobile response teams cannot always arrive on a scene as quickly as they would like. The LGU has continued to collaborate with police departments, and many are requesting dedicated peer supports, however, there is not the capacity to dedicate a peer to every department. The Crisis Continuum's relationship with law enforcement is also impacted by decisions made at 9.39 hospitals. Continued collaborative efforts between OMH and DOH regarding admission and discharge criteria for those presenting in emergency departments, particularly when individuals are involuntarily transported, would be beneficial.

#### **Cross System Services** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Orange County's WELCOME Orange philosophy continues to address creating a welcoming, hopeful, co-occurring/complexity capable system through regularly scheduled orientation available free of cost, ongoing training opportunities, and contractual obligations. Orange County also has an active Cross Systems Team that comes together to plan and problem solve ways to better support youth and families with complex needs. The Orange County System of Care has started strategic planning for improving and enhancing the system of care (please see annual and intermediate plans for mental health services above for more details). However, Cross system coordination and improved access to care could be enhanced through increased funding flexibility including the ability to braid and blend funds and dual licensure of residential programs so children are able to be served in the location that will best meet their needs regardless of which system they are connected to. This is particularly important for youth in DSS custody who may have needs across multiple systems.

### **Forensics** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Orange County has been significantly negatively impacted by the decision to charge counties 100% of the cost of 730 restoration services while simultaneously increasing the daily rate for restoration services. There continues to be a significant decrease in the Orange County Jail Census and in referrals to specialty courts since implementation of bail reform. Historically, both have served as access points to treatment. Though we agree with the motivation behind bail reform, increased focus on individuals with behavioral health needs during the planning and roll out would have been beneficial to ensure access to services and supports. Individuals and communities would benefit from increased flexible funding to continue to plan for and support these individuals who often have complex multisystemic needs, including but not limited to community-based crisis services such as mobile response teams, peer supports, Crisis Intervention Team Training, Crisis Respite, Crisis Stabilization Centers, etc..

### **Housing** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): The Single Point of Access wait list continues to increase for all levels of housing and affordable housing stock is increasingly limited. It is increasingly difficult to find housing options for those with the most complex needs as many landlords are no longer working with our local housing providers because of the increase in demand for rentals overall and the ability to charge significantly higher rents when not working with our system.

### **Inpatient Treatment** Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Though OASAS is not checked because Orange County has sufficient capacity for adult OASAS inpatient services, there is a lack of OASAS inpatient services for youth. There is also a lack of inpatient services for youth with Mental Health needs which has led to many youths spending significant periods of time in local emergency departments waiting for a bed. When a youth is placed in an inpatient facility outside of the county, it is often a challenge for families to visit and participate in their treatment because of the distance, work schedules, lack of transportation, etc. Adults with complexity of need, especially if those needs are cross system, also come to the LGUs attention because they are spending significant amounts of time in Emergency Departments due to lack of beds across the state. Inconsistent admission and discharge criteria at our local 9.39 hospitals presents

challenges as well. Families, law enforcement, and providers share experiences with the LGU where they feel someone should have been admitted, was denied admission at one hospital, and admitted the same day at another, or discharged and re-admitted within hours or days. Clear, consistent criteria would help ensure that individuals needs are met; and families, providers and law enforcement would have a better understanding of the decisions being made, hopefully leading to better collaboration.

#### **Outpatient Treatment Yes**

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Though OASAS is not checked because we have sufficient capacity for adult OASAS outpatient treatment services, there is not sufficient capacity for youth OASAS outpatient services. There is not sufficient in capacity for youth or adults with mental health needs. Though the Orange County operated clinics continue to accept new clients, many other providers both licensed and non-licensed are not currently accepting new clients or have significant wait lists due in part to staffing shortages. Many individuals who have eligibility in the OPWDD system do not receive their approved services or receive a smaller number of hours and families report that Self Direction should be streamlined, simpler, quicker, and more consistent. All three systems are facing significant staffing shortages which impacts access to care.

#### **Prevention Yes**

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Needs Description (optional): Orange County will explore prevention funding and resources to increase the health and wellness for residents. This will include but not be limited to partnering with the Orange County Department of Health, Community Coalitions, the Orange County Resilience Project, and other partners to encourage evidence-based prevention strategies. Expansion of school-based and community-based SUD prevention services with a dedicated focus on gateway drugs (inclusive of alcohol, cannabis use/misuse, and synthetic drugs). The Suicide Prevention Committee will continue to promote awareness of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention through education, training, and resource development. In 2023, there will be a focus on increasing awareness and prevention training for high school students and partnering with the NYS Office of Mental Health and the University of Rochester to pilot a firearms safety training for families. The LGU will continue to partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension on the Orange County Resiliency Project which focuses on preventing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) as well as mitigating the impact of ACEs. A cross-systems work group has been established to encourage school districts to partner with local law enforcement to implement Handle with Care programs across the county which will help mitigate the impact of ACEs. Initial discussions have also begun about expanding existing local substance use disorder prevention coalitions to be co-occurring prevention coalitions. The county has also embarked on a 0-5 Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health initiative to identify needs earlier in an effort to prevent life long challenges.

#### **Refugees and Immigrants Yes**

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): It would be beneficial if there was communication/coordination by the entity placing refugees/immigrants/unaccompanied minors so that the LGU could assist in assuring that the behavioral health needs of these individuals are being met. This is true for all populations, but particularly for unaccompanied minors.

#### **Residential Treatment Services Yes**

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Orange County fully supports stabilization in the community whenever possible and believes that diversion from hospital and residential services should be a priority whenever it is safe for the individual and the community. However, we recognize that there are situations when residential services are required to maintain safety and stability. In these cases, there is often a lack of residential opportunities, a lack of flexibility in the regulations governing these programs creates barriers to access as well (ex: a child with significant mental health needs being unable to access an OMH licensed residential option because they are in foster care), and/or a complex and time-consuming process to access residential services. Access to residential services could be improved through increased funding flexibility including the ability to braid and blend funds and dual licensure of residential programs so children are able to be served in the location that will best meet their needs regardless of which system they are formally connected to.

### **Respite** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): There is a significant need for crisis respite services across all three service areas for both children and adults. Available respite opportunities are limited and are often not flexible enough to address crisis needs. Crisis respite would be particularly beneficial to youth as an alternative to utilization of hospital emergency departments or inpatient hospitalization.

### **Transition Age Services** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Additional housing opportunities for transition age youth would be beneficial to meeting this population's needs. Orange County has a workgroup focused on improving services for transition age youth.

### **Transportation** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Orange County consists of both urban and rural areas making transportation to behavioral health services a challenge for many individuals. The lack of public transportation has often been given as a barrier to seeking and maintaining engagement in treatment. Medicaid transportation is only available to individuals with active Medicaid and there are few, if any, other alternatives, preventing many people from accessing care. Medicaid transportation requires three-day notice to schedule. Emergency transportation is available for emergencies but requires a provider's assistance to obtain. Orange County has implemented a Think Differently Committee to improve accessibility throughout Orange County, including the area of transportation, for individuals of all abilities. The Mission of the Think Differently Committee "is to fulfill the promise of a community where all people can fully participate, are valued for their unique contributions, and can achieve their dreams."

### **Workforce** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults



Need description (Optional): Workforce recruitment and retention for psychiatrists, nurse practitioners and direct services professionals has been a challenge for several years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, these challenges have extended to Social Workers, CASACs, and a variety of other clinical and non-clinical positions across all three service areas. Though funding has been provided to help address workforce recruitment and retention, it is often not flexible enough to be used by all providers, LGU in particular. Despite creative approaches such as sign on bonuses, retention bonuses, flexible schedules, remote work options, etc. many providers continue to operate with significant staff vacancies which is impacting access to services and supports.

**Early Childhood and Infant Services Yes**

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Youth Only

Need description (Optional): Orange County has embarked on an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative that has brought together stakeholders from a variety of systems to map our current system, identify gaps/areas for improvement, and implement improvements in the system to better meet the needs of this vulnerable population.

**LGU Representative:** Lacey Trimble

**Submitted for:** Orange County Department of Mental Health