

# The Critical Window: A New Behavioral Health Framework to Address Needs After Jail Booking

June 17, 2026

Counties Aligning Health & Safety (CAHS)  
Project Launch



Justice  
Center

ALIGNING  
HEALTH   
& SAFETY  
COUNTIES 

# Welcome



Justice  
Center

## Solutions for complex justice challenges

We help leaders in every state make communities safer and healthier.

- Trusted Data
- Practical Solutions
- Cross-systems collaboration

# The Critical Window

*A moment for contact with a large population with behavioral health needs — and a high mortality risk*

**657,500**

People held in local jails on any given day, with admissions trending up

**44%**

People in jail have a mental illness

**63%**

People in jail have a substance use disorder

**69%**

Of jail population is pretrial

**45%**

People with a history of mental illness receive mental health treatment while held in local jails

**2X**

People with a mental illness stay in custody more than twice as long as those without (New York)

**40X**

**more likely to die of a drug overdose**

*in the first TWO WEEKS after release from incarceration compared to the general population (North Carolina)*

For sources, see slide 14.

# The Opportunity

## Interventions can work

**75%**

reduction in death risk when SUD treatment starts before release and continues post-release

**26–**

less likely to return to jail when connected to behavioral health services post-release

**38%**

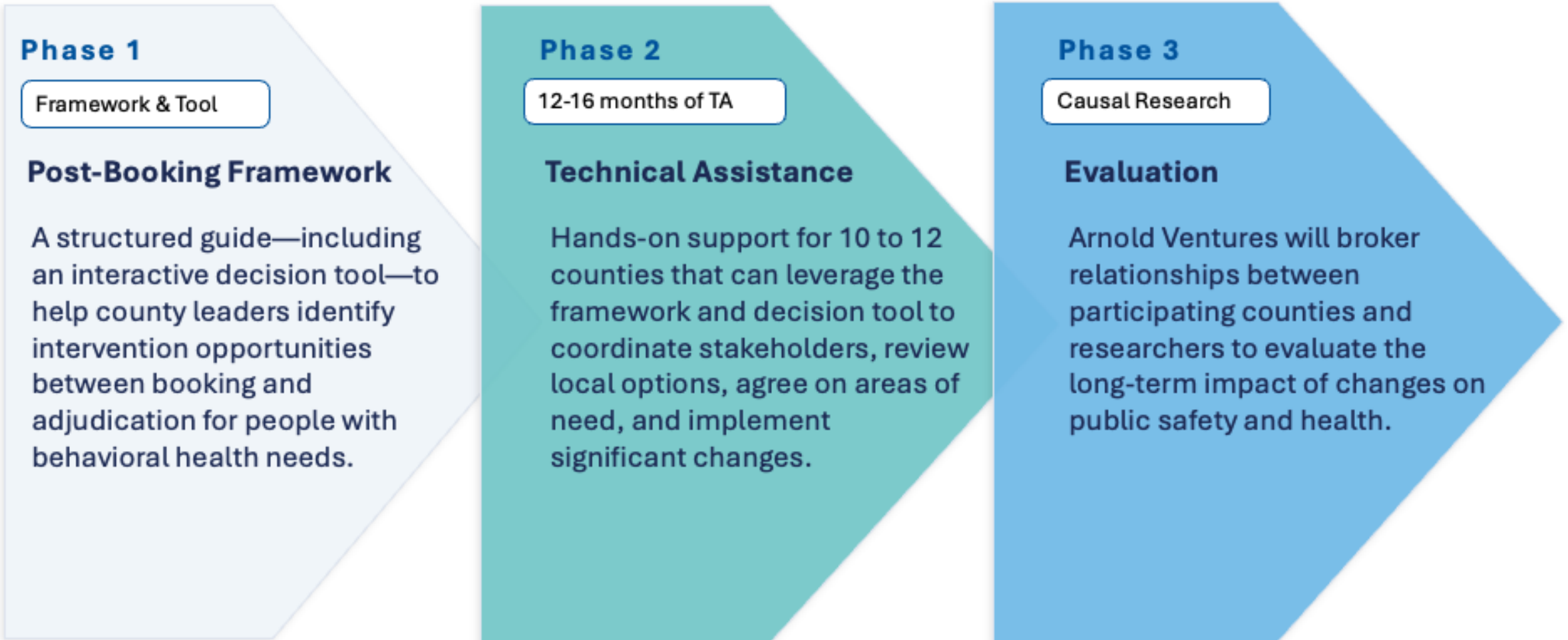
## National momentum to create change is already here

**583**

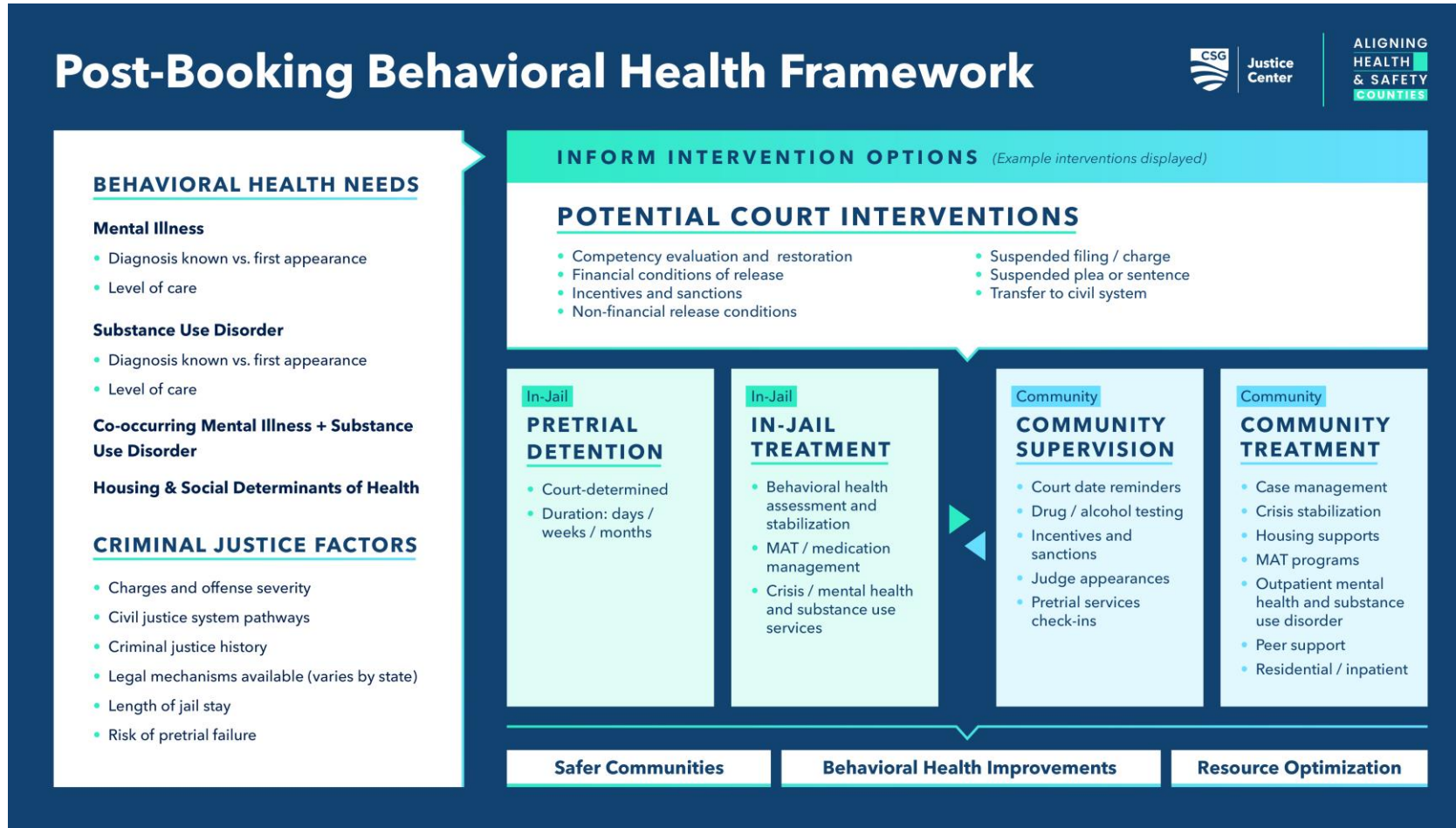
counties have already joined the Stepping Up initiative, committing to and building infrastructure to reduce the overincarceration of people with mental illness.

"Justice-Involved Individuals Returning to the Community Are at High Risk for Overdose Fatality within First Two Weeks after Release from Incarceration; Research Shows MAT Reduces Risk by 75%," Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network Coordination and Translation Center, accessed June 10, 2026, <https://www.jcoinctc.org/justice-involved-individuals-returning-to-the-community-are-at-high-risk-for-overdose/>; J. L. Smith et al., "Behavioral Health Service Use Post-Jail Release and Reduced Risk of Return to Jail," *Journal of Community Psychology* 50 (2022): 3044–3053, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22813>; "10 Years of Stepping Up," Stepping Up, accessed June 10, 2026, <https://stepuptogether.org/10-year-impact/>.

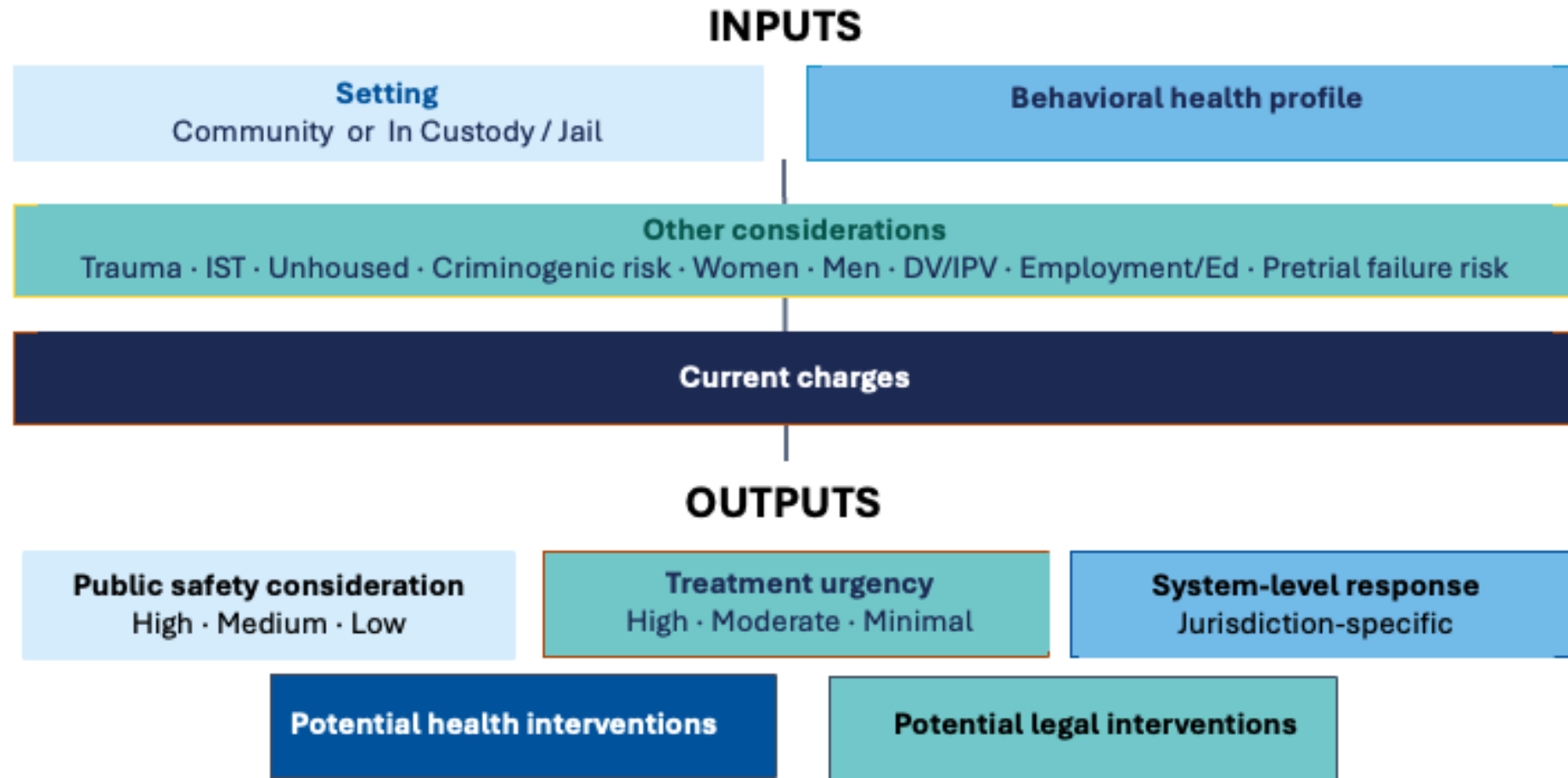
# A Two-Year, Three-Phase Project



# Framework

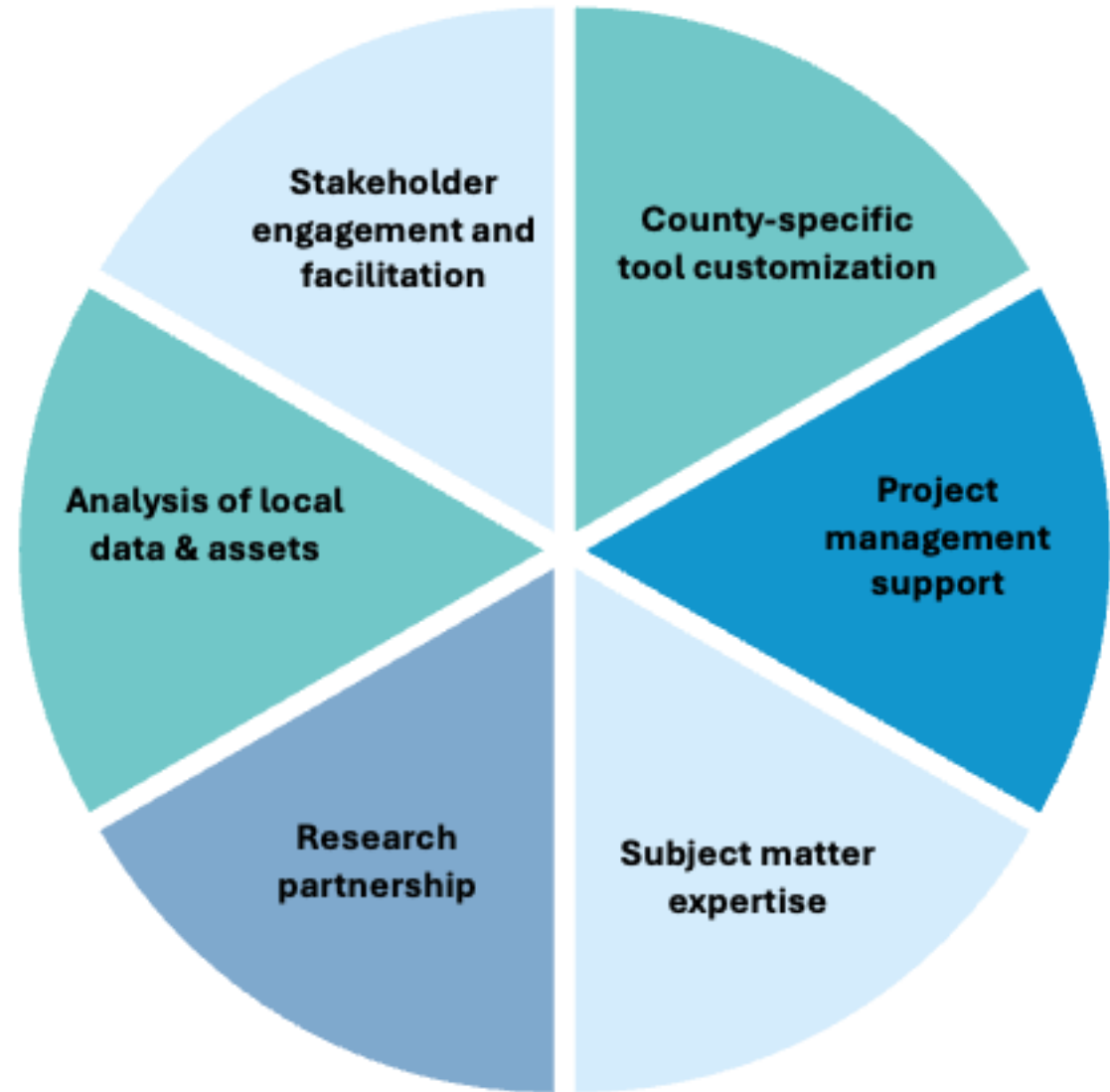


# How the Tool Works



# TA Approach

Counties will receive hands-on support to customize the decision tool for their specific legal and behavioral health context, to assess local needs, and to select appropriate intervention(s).



# Panelists



Justice Briana Zamora  
*New Mexico Supreme Court*



Sheriff Peter Koutoujian  
*Middlesex County, Massachusetts*



Sheriff Samuel Hulse  
*Bonneville County, Idaho*



Ellen Volo  
Opioid Response  
Manager, Diversion  
Initiatives  
*Fairfax County, Virginia*

# The TA Application is Now Available



Applications will be accepted through July 31, 2026, at 11:59 pm E.T.

Site selections will be made in August 2026.

<https://projects.csgjusticecenter.org/aligning-health-and-safety/counties/>

# Sources: Slide 4

- "About Criminal and Juvenile Justice & Behavioral Health," Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, accessed June 5, 2026, <https://www.samhsa.gov/communities/criminal-juvenile-justice/about>.
- Arden Armbruster, *In-Custody Length of Stay and Population Demographics at NYC Jails, 2014–2023* (New York City Independent Budget Office, 2024).
- "Mental Health Treatment While Incarcerated," National Alliance on Mental Illness, accessed June 5, 2026, <https://www.nami.org/advocacy-at-nami/policy-positions/improving-health/mental-health-treatment-while-incarcerated/>.
- Shabbar I. Ranapurwala et al, "Opioid Overdose Mortality Among Former North Carolina Inmates: 2000–2015," *American Journal of Public Health* 108, no. 9 (2018): 1207–1213, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6085027/>.
- Zhen Zeng, *Preliminary Data Release — Jails: 2024* (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2025).

# Thank You!

For more information, please contact Alison Martin at [amartin@csg.org](mailto:amartin@csg.org).

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