

INTERCEPT 1 TOOLKIT

Burlington County, New Jersey



Burlington County Prosecutor's Office

The Burlington County Prosecutor's Office (BCPO) in Mount Holly, New Jersey, implements its law enforcement-initiated deflection operation, Operation Helping Hand, with the goal of positively impacting individuals who have survived an overdose, have been arrested, are incarcerated, or have encountered law enforcement by connecting them with a trained peer recovery specialist to facilitate access to treatment, recovery housing, and other recovery support resources, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The BCPO is supported by a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP).

**Burlington County
Prosecutor's Office
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BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice



BJA's



Comprehensive
Opioid, Stimulant,
and Substance Abuse

Program

BCPO Practical Tips for Success

- Deflection is community policing!
- Collaboration is key! The involvement of other county government departments, state agencies, and community partners will help deflect more people.
- Meet people where they are, but do not leave them there. Make sure law enforcement understands the stages of change.
- Bring lived experience to the table when building deflection programs and making decisions. (BCPO initiatives are supervised by people in recovery, staffed by people in recovery, and continuously revitalized to meet the needs of those seeking recovery.)
- Incorporate harm reduction practices when you can and how you can. Narcan is just the beginning!
 - [National Harm Reduction Coalition](#)
 - [Never Use Alone Inc. – \(800\) 484-3731](#)
- Give people every opportunity to recover. Willingness to meet them at multiple intervention points—post-overdose, non-crisis, pre-arrest, post-arrest, and during incarceration—is key.
- If you do not have it, build it. Do not be afraid to ask others to step in and help. Burlington County’s Human Services Department went from zero to two recovery centers in fewer than two years with support across all departments.
- Do not have them? Train them. Burlington County did not have peer recovery specialists when it launched its first deflection initiative in 2019. Over the past three years, it has held numerous peer recovery specialist trainings to build a peer work force staffed by people who live in the community and work for the community.
- Avoid playing dual roles. Officers providing warm handoffs to peers, clinicians, and community resources is a best practice.
- Clinical and administrative supervision of peer specialists is indispensable. Supervision not only improves efficacy but maintains the well-being of participants and peer recovery specialists alike.

Get connected to the national deflection conversation!

Sign up for the “PTACC Ticker”:

[PTACC | Police, Treatment, and Community Collaborative](#)
([ptaccollaborative.org](#))

Take the free deflection e-course by JCOIN:

[First Responder Deflection: A Warm Handoff to Services in the Community - Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network Coordination and Translation Center](#)
([jcoinctc.org](#))

Check out the resources from PAARI:

[The Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative \(paarius.org\)](#)

*Between May 2020 and May 2022, BCPO peer recovery specialists responded to **395 calls**. Of those, **82 percent** (324 people) accepted peer recovery coaching services and **42 percent** (167 people) ultimately received treatment.*

“The power of reaching out has ripple effects far greater than anticipated. One program participant has gone on to become a local EMS provider, and another was just hired as a corrections officer.”