

I Get By With a Little Help From My Friends: Investing Differently in People With Co-Occurring I/DD and Behavioral Health Challenges





DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES



Stacy Watkins

Deputy Director

Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

Stacy.Watkins@delaware.gov

(302) 893 3044

Presenters — Mercer Government



Kim Donica

Principal, Specialty Consulting
Mercer Government
Kimberly.Donica@mercer.com

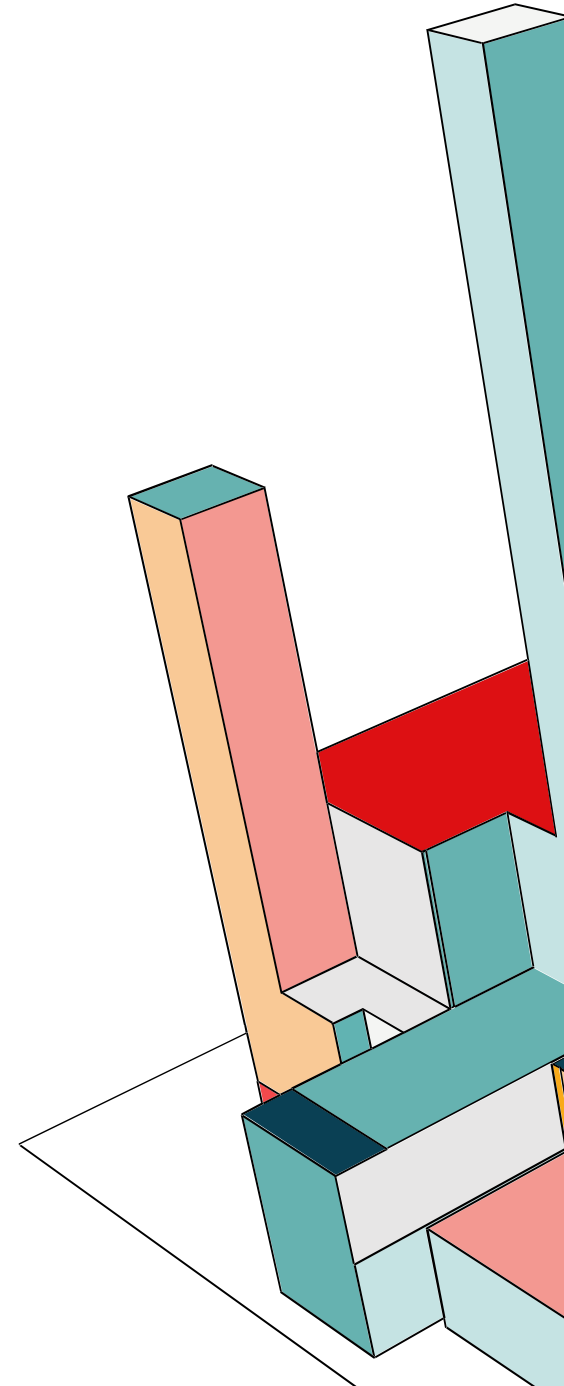


Beth Lewis

Principal, Specialty Consulting
Mercer Government
Beth.Lewis@mercer.com

AGENDA

- The History of the Struggle
- The Opportunity of ARPA 9817
- The Pilot and Implementation
- The Impact
- The Lessons



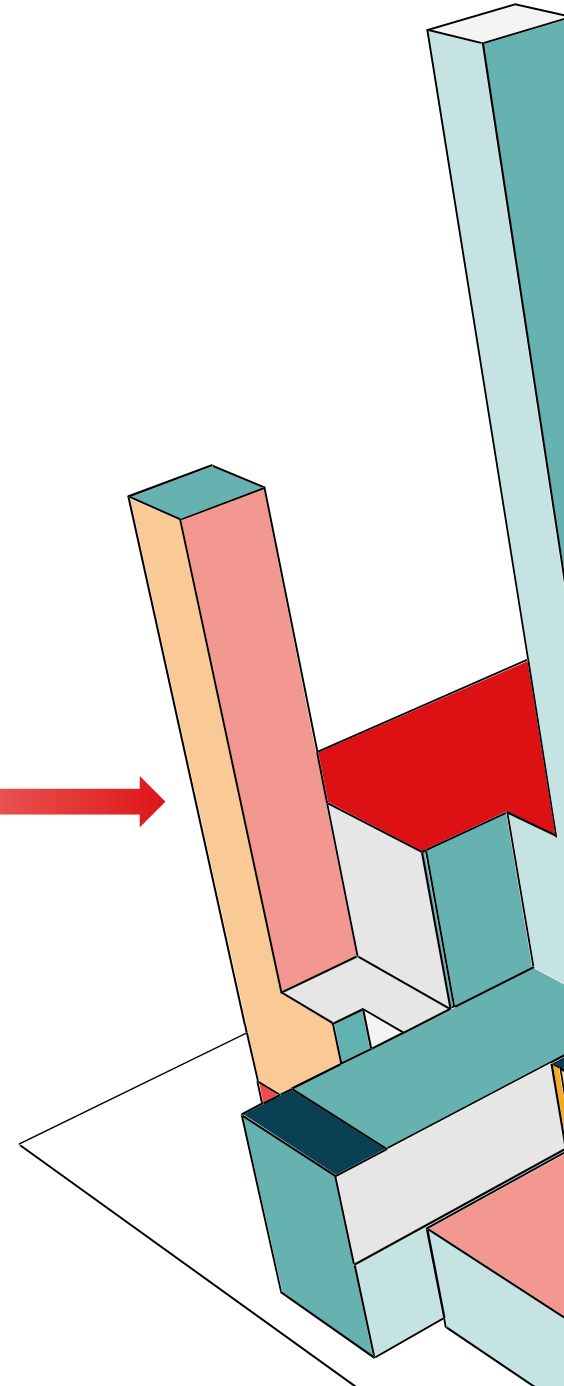
THE HISTORY OF THE STRUGGLE

Increase in
number and
acuity of people

No identified
discharge
options

Disrupted
residential
service
placements

System was not
evolving, so
what to do?



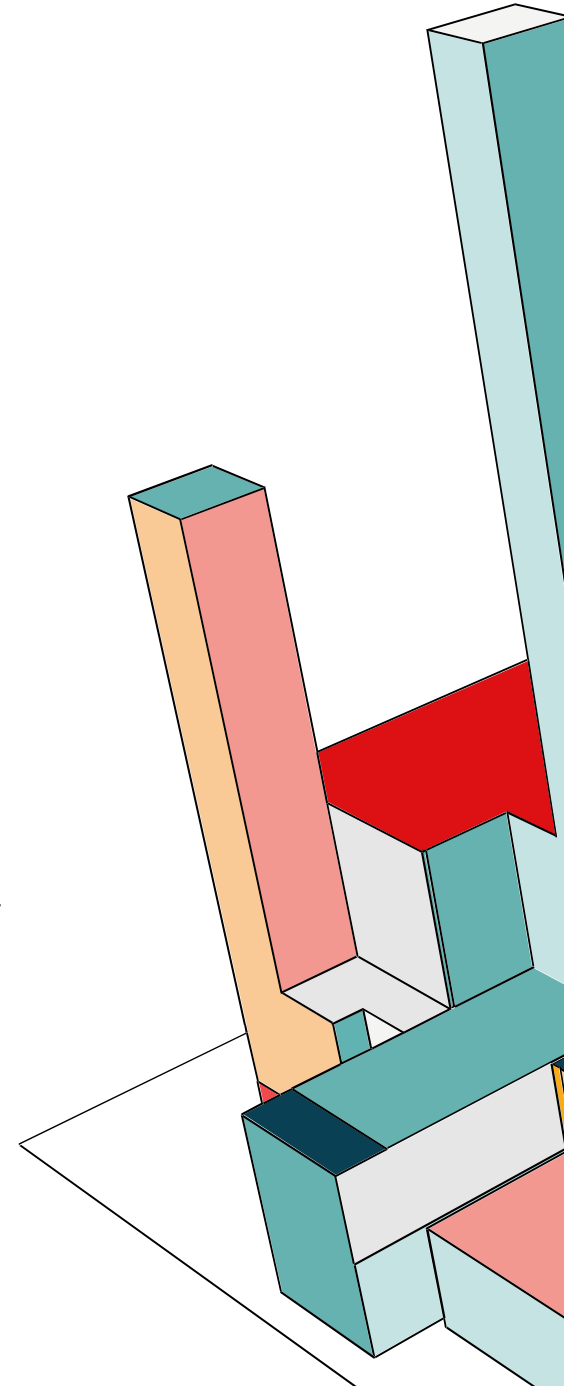
THINKING DIFFERENTLY



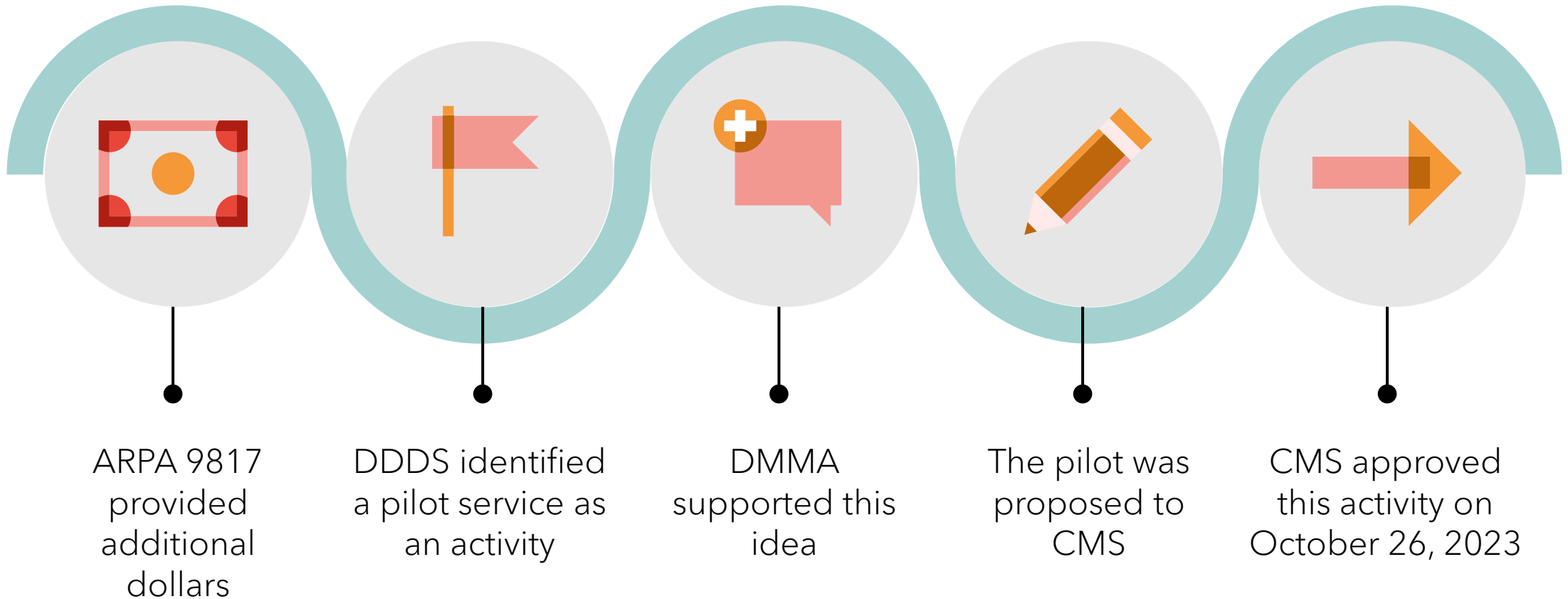
BEYOND CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND INCIDENT REDUCTION

When the first provider workgroup meeting was held on April 29, 2021, the group members determined its mission to be to design a service that would:

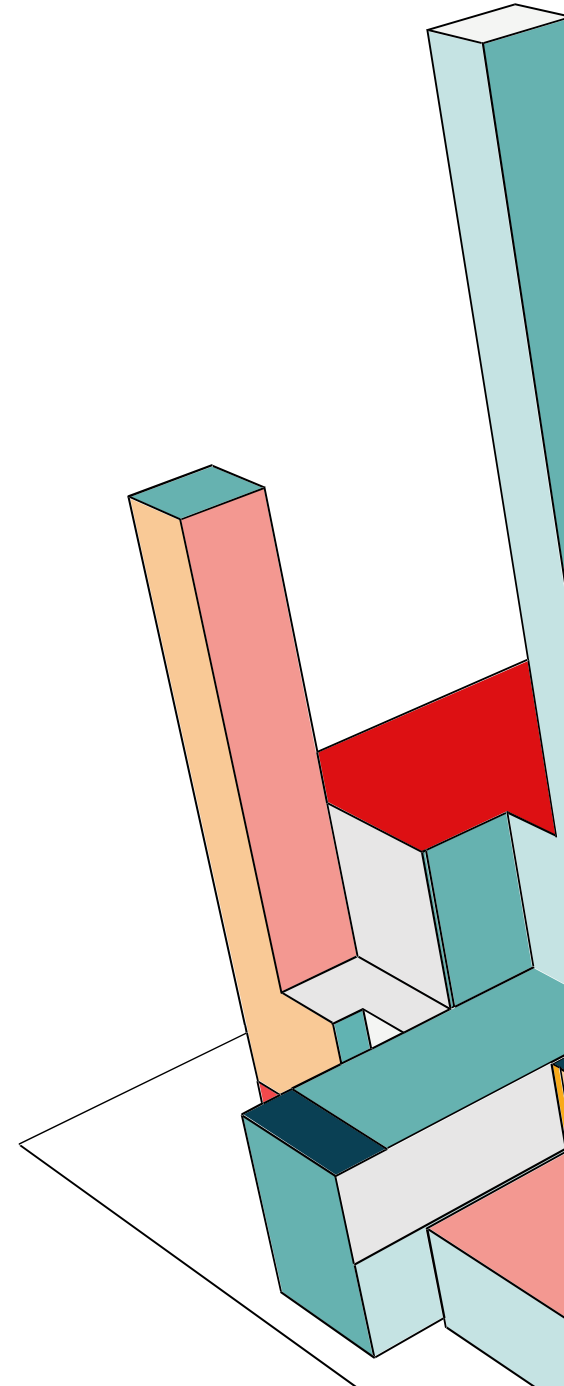
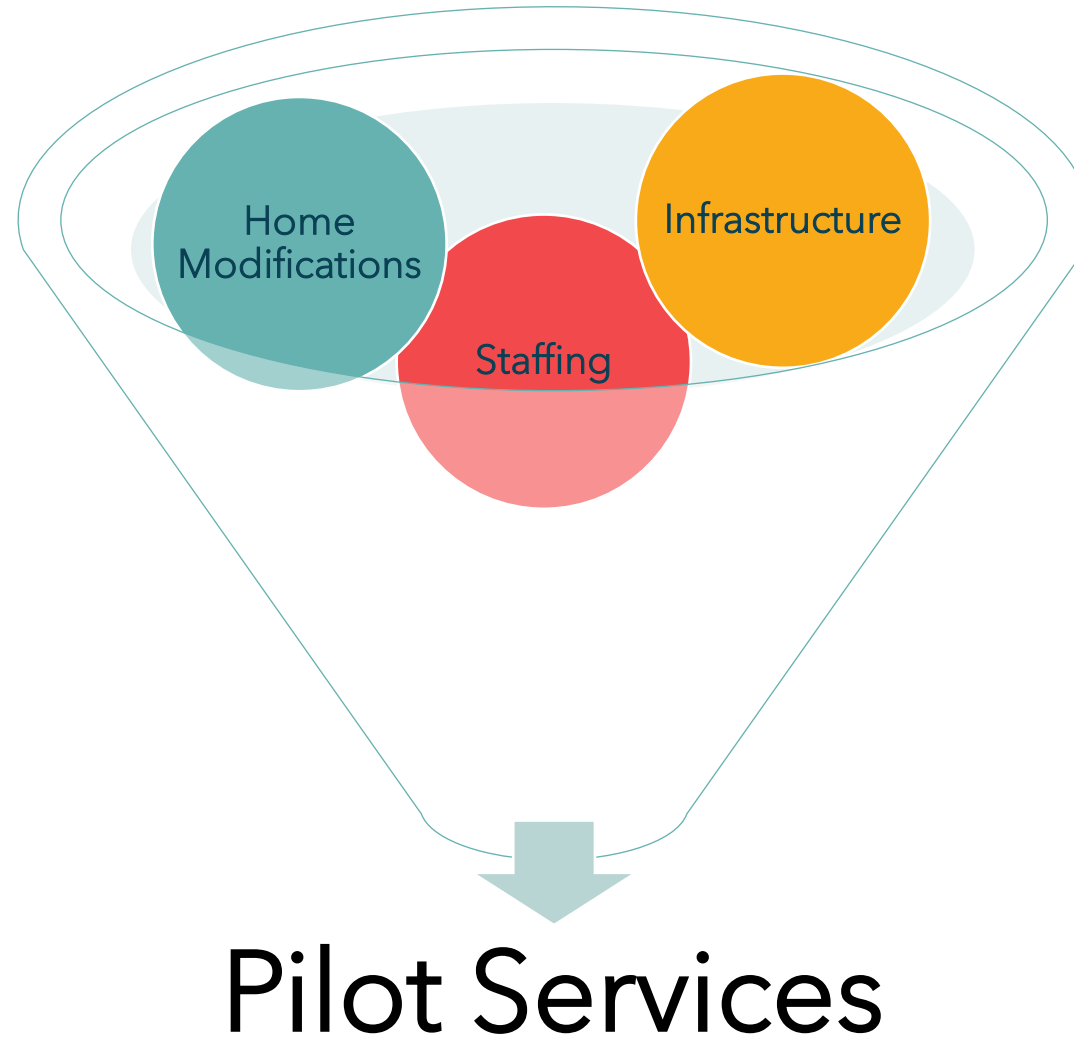
“Provide comprehensive wrap around behavioral health supports to people with I/DD, Autism, or Prader Willi that have co-occurring mental or behavioral health needs in a community-based provider managed setting to reduce the need for police intervention, acute in-patient psychiatric stays, and critical incidents through a trauma informed approach.”



THE OPPORTUNITY: ARPA 9817



THE PILOT



HOW IT'S DIFFERENT...

The Team:





HOW IT'S DIFFERENT....

The home:

Purchased

- No concerns about eviction due to behavioral issues

Space

- Enough property for some space between neighbors' homes
- Adequate space for increased staff parking

Modified for safety

- Reinforced wallboards, recessed lighting, clear sight lines, etc.
- Space for a game room or relaxation space
- Shatter proof glass or film in windows
- Fencing around the property for privacy

GETTING STARTED...



Identifying providers and sites for two homes



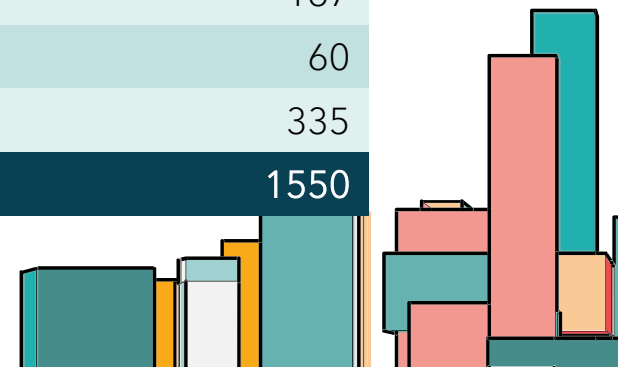
Obtaining funding



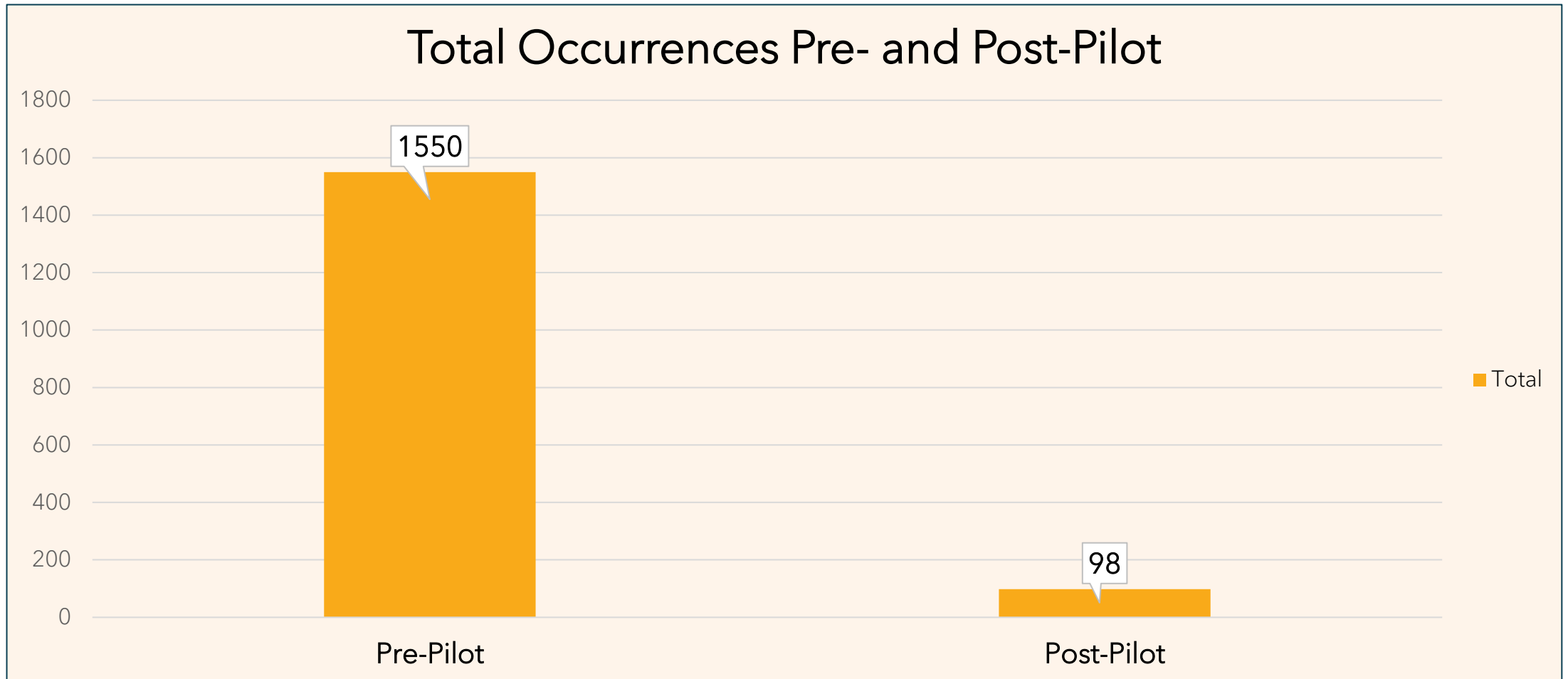
First two people moved into the male pilot home in November 2023

SNAPSHOT OF INCIDENCES – TWO YEARS PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO ENHANCED BEHAVIORAL RESIDENTIAL SERVICES PILOT

Row Labels	Sum of Pre Pilot
Disrupted Placements (Internal with same Provider)	12
ED Visits for Behavioral or Mental Health Issues	32
Elopement	31
Emergency First Responder Involvement	2
Inappropriate Sexual Behavior	115
Inpatient Psych Stays	513
Moved to a Different Provider	14
Other	41
Physical Aggression	166
Police Involvement	62
Property Destruction	167
Self Injurious Behavior	60
Verbal Aggression	335
Grand Total	1550

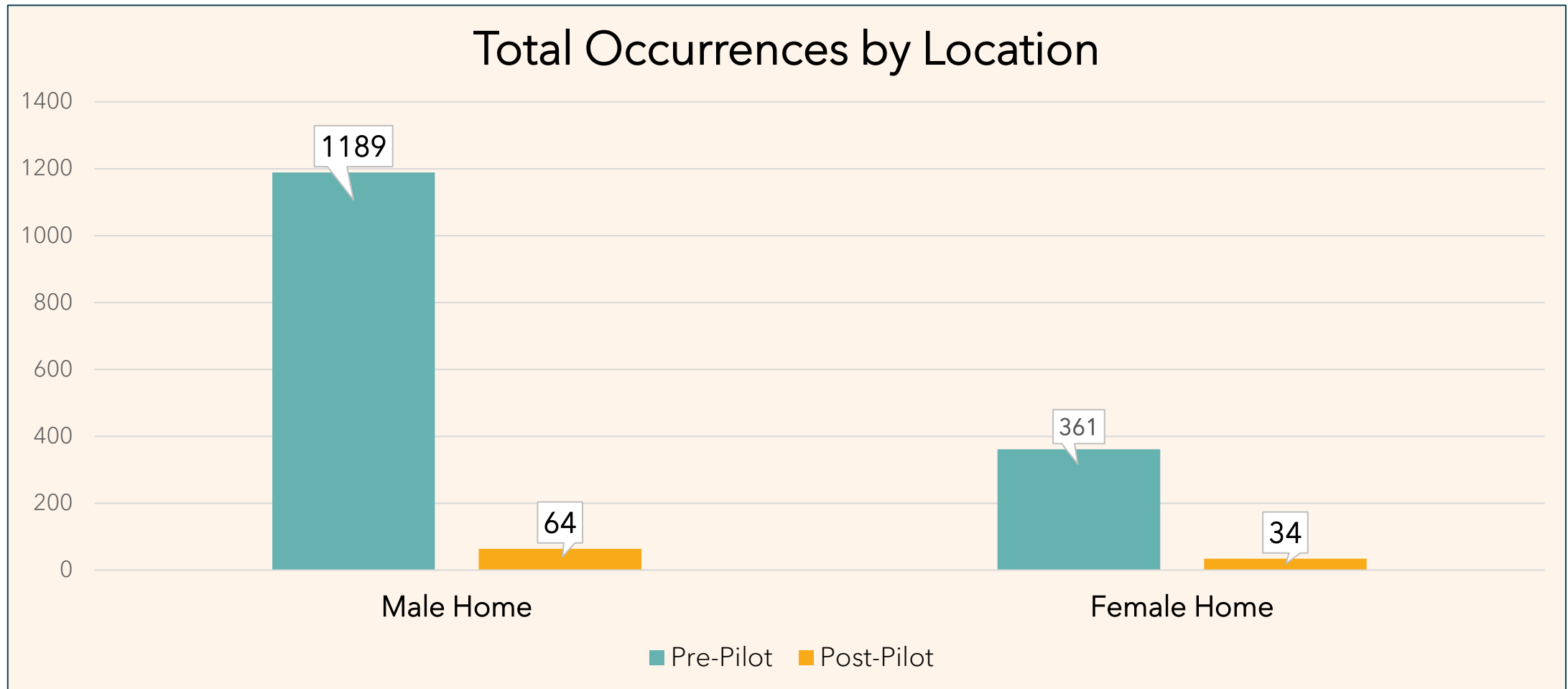


THE IMPACT

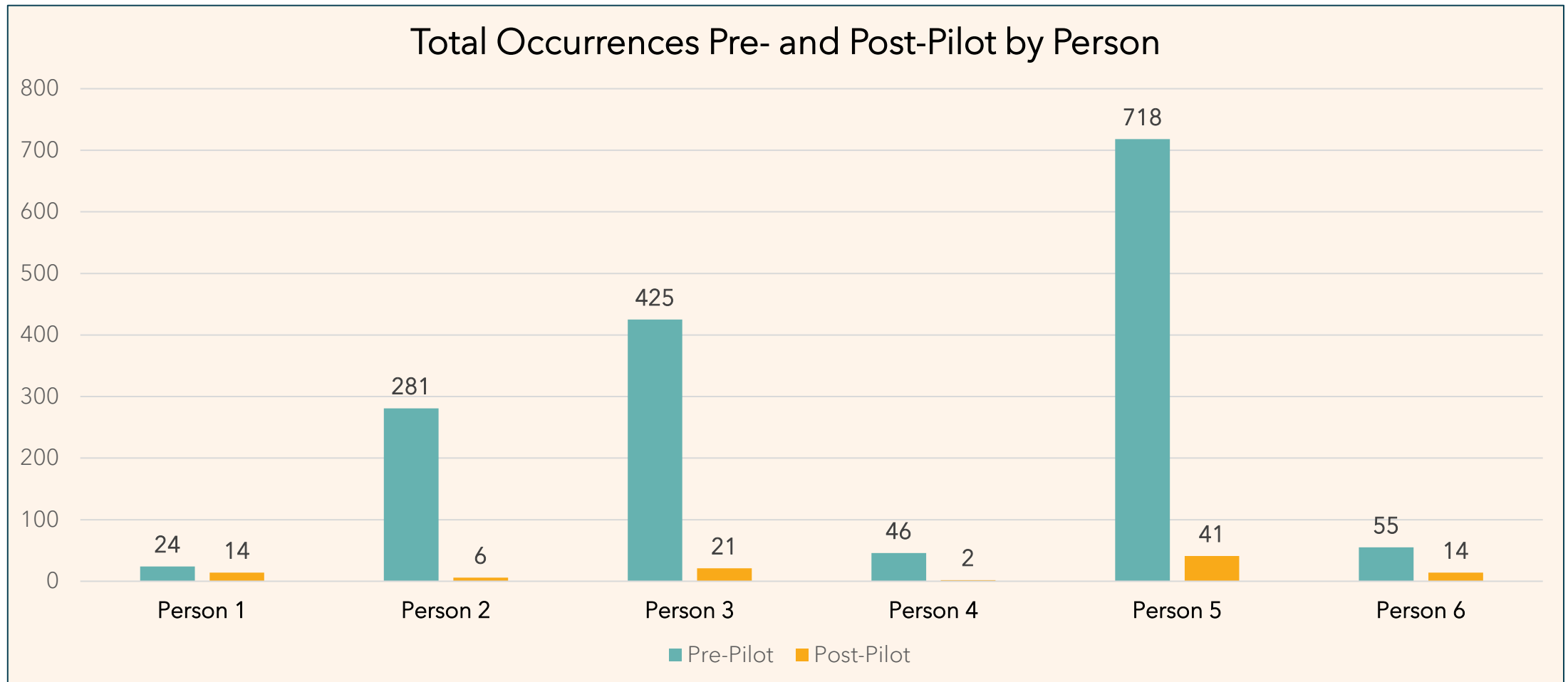


"Post-Pilot" data is cumulative from November 2023-June 2025

DOES IT DO WHAT IT WAS DESIGNED TO DO?



WHAT DID THE PILOT ACHIEVE?



A MEANINGFUL LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

Engaging in
their
community

Improved relationships
with family members

Going out to
eat, shop, and
explore

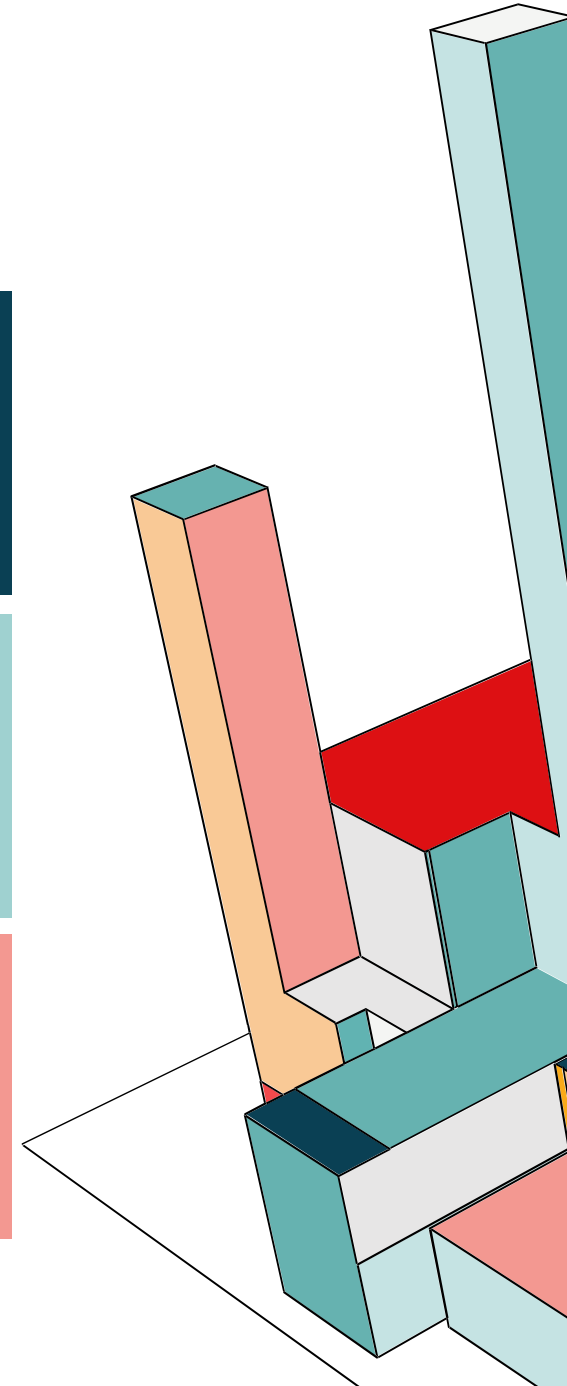
Attending
routine
appointments

Expressing feelings without
explosive behaviors

Exercising at
the local
YMCA

Attending dances,
concerts, and other
community events

Participating in
Special
Olympics

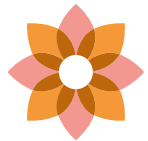
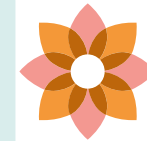


IMPACT FOR INDIVIDUALS

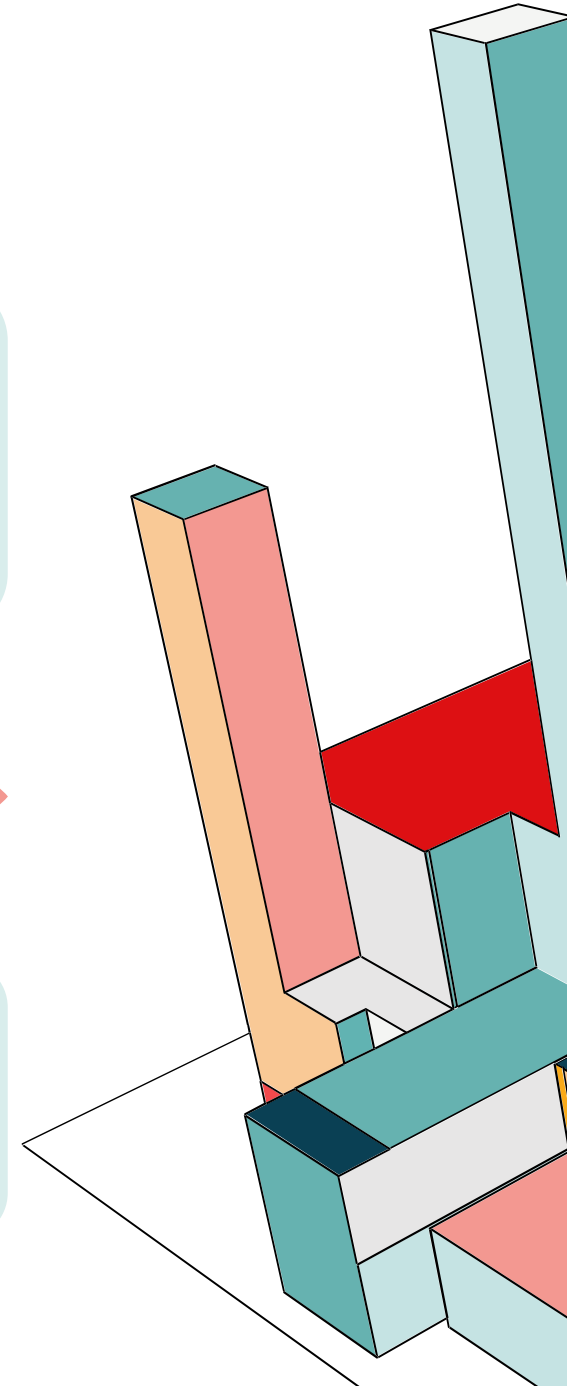


The first male service recipient is known by police, judges, and emergency departments across the State. He has been in and out of inpatient psychiatric placements since the age of three and was in out-of-state institutional placements from ages 8 years-18 years. In June 2024, he was given the game ball for Special Olympics baseball for his contributions to his team.

A second male service recipient is working toward moving into a less intensive residential home, with his direct care staff planning to transition with him.

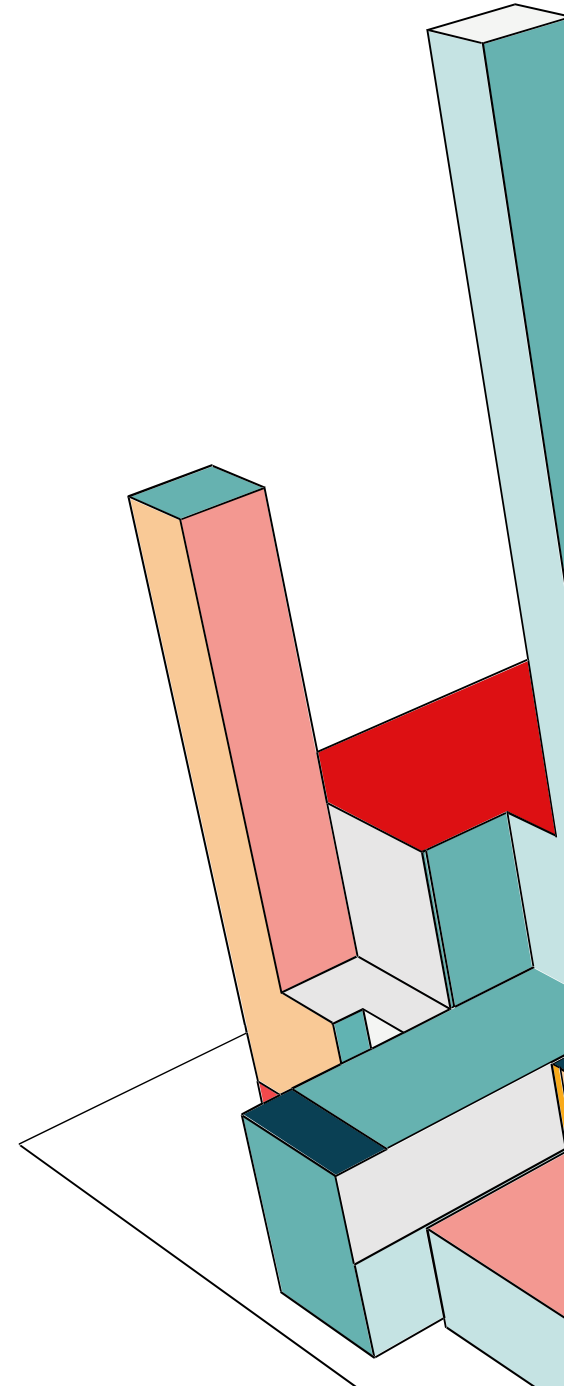


The last male service recipient moved into the pilot program in March 2024. In June 2025, he moved into an apartment with his direct care staff from the pilot to ensure his successful transition, as he no longer needs the intensive supports that Enhanced Behavioral Residential services provides.



A VIDEO TESTIMONIAL

- [Dorian Riddick - My Benchmark Story](#)



FINAL TIPS AND TAKEAWAYS

Talk to your existing provider network

Pilot if you can, as there may be unexpected outcomes

Yes, it is expensive, but no more than the patchwork of emergency and first responder services

Collect data from the onset



QUESTIONS?

Thank You

Stacy Watkins, Deputy Director

Stacy.Watkins@delaware.gov

(302) 893 3044



Thank you



Kim Donica

Kimberly.Donica@mercer.com



Beth Lewis

Beth.Lewis@mercer.com