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## **Evaluation of the Development of Empower, a Multi-Jurisdictional Police-Led Deflection Program in West Central Illinois**

***Part of an Evaluation Series on the Action Planning for Illinois Multi-Site Deflection Programs***



ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION AUTHORITY  
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**Abstract:** Rural, multi-jurisdictional communities face challenges developing coordinated responses that connect people with substance use and mental health needs to services instead of the justice system. We evaluated the action planning (AP) process for Empower, a multi-jurisdictional, police-led deflection program serving six counties in West Central Illinois, developed as part of a statewide Illinois deflection initiative. Deflection initiatives create formal pathways linking people with substance use and mental health needs to treatment and supportive services. The Empower program was developed through six days of guided action planning involving local law enforcement, service providers, and community stakeholders. This process culminated in a written action plan outlining program goals, strategies, and implementation steps. To evaluate the AP process, we conducted structured field observations across all AP sessions and administered daily surveys to participants assessing collaboration, engagement, and perceptions of program feasibility and sustainability. Findings indicate that participants were highly engaged and reported strong collaboration during AP, while also identifying challenges related to uneven participation across counties and sectors, limited service availability, and resource constraints characteristic of predominantly rural regions. The findings reflect participants' perceptions during the action-planning process and do not assess program outcomes. Based on the findings, we offer three recommendations to support implementation: strengthen participation and representation during planning and early implementation, identify strategies to mitigate service gaps in rural communities, and clarify structures for collaboration and accountability across jurisdictions.

## Introduction

Between 1999 and 2022, more than 1.25 million Americans experienced a fatal drug overdose,<sup>1</sup> and as recently as 2023, 48.5 million Americans aged 12 or older had suffered from a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year.<sup>2</sup> Many with SUD come into contact with law enforcement officers who are addressing criminal activity related to drug use or responding to a drug overdose.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, people with mental health disorders are overrepresented in police encounters. Research has indicated that up to 10% of all police contacts involve individuals with mental health disorders.<sup>4</sup>

In recent years, jurisdictions across the country have increasingly adopted community-based responses—rather than punitive approaches—to address substance use and mental health needs.<sup>5</sup> This shift has contributed to the growth of deflection programs, in which law enforcement officers connect individuals to treatment and supportive services as an alternative to justice involvement.<sup>6</sup> Deflection programs rely on coordinated partnerships among law enforcement, community stakeholders, and service providers, and prior research has identified collaboration as a key component of effective implementation.<sup>7</sup> In preparing for implementation, strong program development is foundational.<sup>8</sup> Implementation science emphasizes the importance of clear planning processes, shared goals, and structured collaboration to support long-term program sustainability.<sup>9</sup>

This evaluation examined the development of Empower, a police-led deflection program in West Central Illinois that seeks to connect individuals with substance use and mental health needs to community-based services in lieu of arrest or other forms of system involvement. Unlike many deflection programs across the country, Empower operates in predominantly rural areas. According to its mission statement, Empower aims to “develop a collaborative community initiative and to garner support from both the community and organizations serving individuals and families impacted by substance use and mental health”; to “restore community relationships, provide a holistic approach, combat stigma surrounding substance use, and connect people with peers of similar experience through the establishment of a shared vision”; and “[by] collaborative

stewardship of resources and empowering front-line workers, [to] enhance support for individuals affected by substance use and mental health, ultimately preventing further harm.” Empower serves six counties in West Central Illinois: Adams, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, and Schuyler.

We used surveys and field observations to evaluate the AP process that informed the development of Empower and its effects on overall planning. We sought to answer the following summary and research questions:

- What transpired during the AP sessions that could benefit or hinder various aspects of program development?
- Who attended AP, whose absence was noted, and how did attendance impact program buy-in and representation?
- What planning successes occurred during AP, and what could have been done differently to better align with collaboration and implementation science best practices?
- What barriers were identified during AP that could impede the successful implementation of the program?

## **Background**

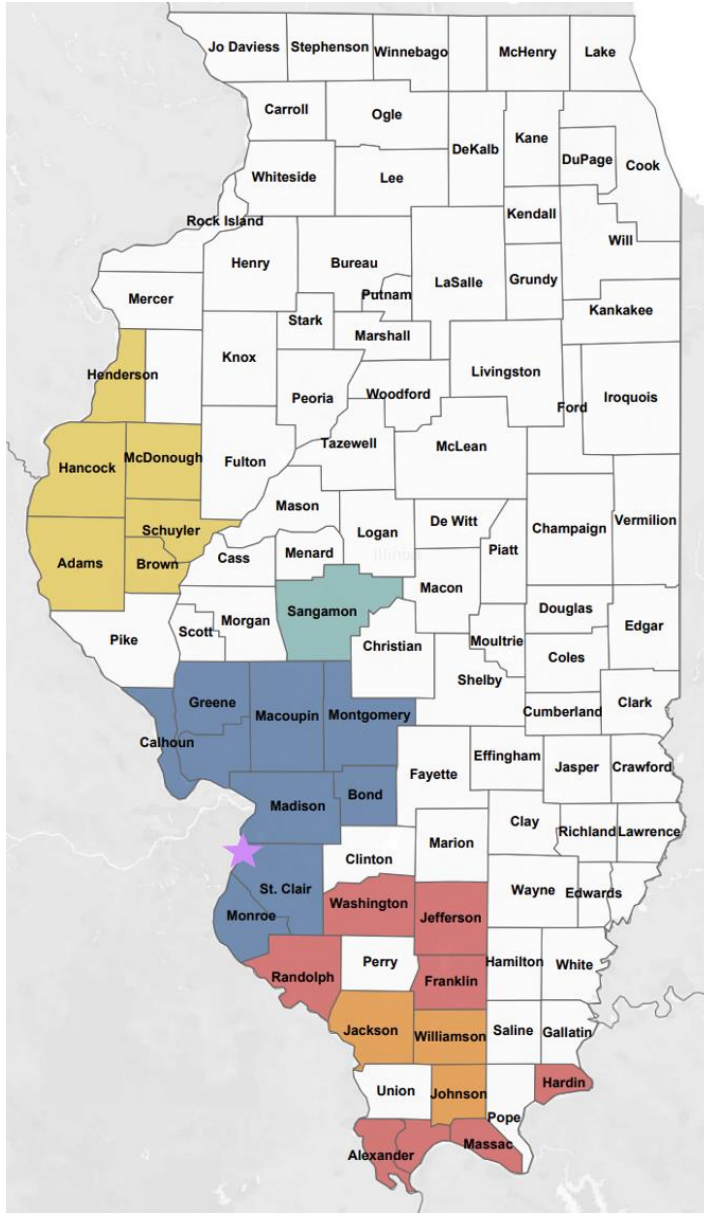
### **State Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force Deflection Project**

The Empower deflection program was developed through a partnership between the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) and the Illinois State Police (ISP). IDHS funds the development and operations of deflection programs through the Cannabis Regulation Fund, established by the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705). IDHS contracts with Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC) to support the deflection initiative. Within TASC, the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) provides training and technical assistance during the planning and implementation phases of deflection programs. CHJ facilitates action planning, a process that helps programs define clear, measurable goals and identify strategies and steps to achieve them before program

launch.<sup>10</sup> Once a deflection program is launched, ISP officers are assigned to the program area. These officers are members of one of Illinois' multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, which combine the expertise of local, county, and state law enforcement officers to address drug trafficking and its effects on communities. ISP officers are tasked with providing warm handoffs of individuals to deflection specialists in another TASC division. After a warm handoff, deflection specialists connect these individuals with appropriate treatment and services.<sup>11</sup>

Deflection sites are usually established in response to a request for assistance from a local law enforcement supervisor, a local service provider, or a staff member from another non-service community organization (e.g., a public health department or a local court) within a particular geographic area. In the case of Empower, both an ISP sergeant and a local Circuit Court judge contacted TASC to request the development of a deflection site in their area. The program development process began with a kickoff event in Carthage, the county seat of Hancock County, in April 2023. Organizers invited local service providers, educators, state and local law enforcement, and representatives of the court system to the event to learn about deflection and decide whether to participate in the action-planning process that would inform the development of the program. About 60 members of the local community, including law enforcement, attended the event, and all attendees were invited to participate in the AP process, which began in June 2023 and included two three-day AP sessions. The Empower deflection program was ultimately launched in July 2024, becoming the sixth program developed through the IDHS-ISP partnership (Figure 1). The local task force partnering with Empower is the West Central Illinois Task Force.

**Figure 1**  
*Map of IDHS-Funded Illinois Deflection Sites*



**Site**

- No IDHS Deflection Program
- ★ #1 East St. Louis Community Engagement Response Team (ESL CERT)
- #2 Southern Illinois Community Engagement Response Team (SI CERT)
- #3 Choices
- #4 Little Egypt Alternative Pathways (LEAP)
- #5 Springfield Engage Empower Deflect (SEED)
- #6 Empower

*Note.* This map displays the locations of deflection sites as of March 2023. Since then, new deflection sites have been launched in additional counties.

## **County Demographics**

As noted above, the Empower deflection program serves Adams, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, McDonough, and Schuyler counties in West Central Illinois. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, these six counties share several important characteristics: all are rural, relatively small in population, and predominantly White.<sup>12</sup> However, key differences shape the counties' respective needs and implementation capacities. For example, Adams County, which includes the city of Quincy, and McDonough County, home to Western Illinois University, have the largest populations of the six counties; however, Adams County is the most populous, while McDonough County has a younger population, slightly greater racial diversity, and higher poverty rates. These differences create unique implementation opportunities and challenges, such as increased demand for services and more complex coordination needs. In contrast, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, and Schuyler counties are more sparsely populated and lack many of the institutional resources found in the two larger counties. These communities report lower median incomes, higher uninsured rates, and fewer social service providers. In terms of racial demographics, Hancock and Henderson counties are over 95% White, and Adams, McDonough, and Schuyler counties are each between 88% and 93% White, while in Brown County, approximately 19% of residents are Black.<sup>13</sup> However, the figure for Brown County is largely attributable to the presence of the Western Illinois Correctional Center. In census data, incarcerated individuals are counted as residents of the correctional facility's location, even though they do not access local services<sup>14</sup> and typically live elsewhere upon release. When a correctional center houses a disproportionately Black population, as does Western Illinois Correctional Center, it can distort the racial demographics of the surrounding community and skew what is believed to be the eligible population for deflection programs. This highlights the importance of considering local context when designing programs and interpreting their reach.

## **Methods**

We evaluated the action-planning process for Empower and its effects on overall program planning. Empower's action-planning facilitators supported our evaluation by including us in AP and by allowing time for survey distribution. The secretary of ICJIA's Institutional Review Board approved the evaluation study as non-research rather than research involving human subjects.

### **Field Observations**

Field observations were used to evaluate the AP process. As collaboration among participants is a key component of successful deflection programs, field observations enabled us to observe both individual behaviors and interactions between AP participants. One researcher conducted in-person field observations during the two three-day AP sessions, which took place on June 13-15, 2023, and July 25-27, 2023. During AP, the researcher took field notes on a laptop computer to document participation, content, and participant interactions. The research team reviewed and summarized field notes for each day to identify key themes and observations. From these observations, we documented what occurred during AP, noted participation, and identified what was included in the final action plan. Based on these observations, we identified potential barriers to program success and areas for improvement in AP and collaboration.

### **Sign-In Sheets and Attendance Data**

The AP session facilitators documented attendance by using sign-in sheets on each day of AP. However, not all participants entered their information, and the facilitators misplaced the Day 5 sheets. Due to incomplete data, we were unable to report accurate attendance for the sessions or determine whether participants consistently attended them.

## Action-Planning Surveys

We distributed paper surveys to participants at the end of each of the six days of AP to learn more about their views on AP, collaboration with other participants, and the extent to which they believed the program would be successful and sustainable. The number of respondents varied each day. On Day 1, there were 22 respondents; there were 23 respondents on both Day 2 and Day 3; Day 4 had 20 respondents; Day 5 had 19 respondents; and Day 6 had 17 respondents. These values do not represent unique respondents, as some participants attended multiple AP days. The daily response rate was unknown because the attendance sheets were unreliable. We collected demographic information only on Day 1. The implications of not having comprehensive demographic data for the entire AP process are discussed in the “Limitations” section below.

Respondents answered AP survey items using a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly agree*). Table 1 shows the number of questions asked each day and the categories they covered. Survey data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to generate descriptive statistics.

**Table 1**

### *Daily Action-Planning Survey Items*

Survey	Number of items	Survey item categories	Items per category
Day 1	15 items	-	-
-	-	Action-planning process	1
-	-	Collaboration and community engagement	5
-	-	Program goals and strategies	2
-	-	Participant demographics	7
Day 2	16 items	-	-
-	-	Action-planning process	4
-	-	Collaboration and community engagement	4
-	-	Program goals and strategies	5
-	-	Program evaluability	1
-	-	Program sustainability	1

Survey	Number of items	Survey item categories	Items per category
-	-	Resources	1
Day 3	8 items	-	-
-	-	Action-planning process	3
-	-	Anticipated program effectiveness	1
-	-	Collaboration and community engagement	2
-	-	Program sustainability	2
Day 4	6 items	-	-
-	-	Action-planning process	1
-	-	Collaboration and community engagement	3
-	-	Program goals and strategies	2
Day 5	17 items	-	-
-	-	Action-planning process	5
-	-	Collaboration and community engagement	4
-	-	Program goals and strategies	4
-	-	Program evaluability	2
-	-	Program sustainability	1
-	-	Resources	1
Day 6	7 items	-	-
-	-	Action-planning process	2
-	-	Anticipated program effectiveness	1
-	-	Collaboration and community engagement	2
-	-	Program sustainability	2

*Note.* The survey was distributed to action-planning participants to inform the development of the Empower deflection program.

### **Collaboration Inventory**

We also administered a paper survey, the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (Inventory), to local participants on Day 6 of AP. The Inventory, developed by Mattessich and colleagues, is an empirically validated survey instrument used to measure collaboration by accurately measuring levels of cooperation within a group.<sup>15</sup> Deflection and diversion literature indicates that successful collaboration typically involves well-established cross-agency partnerships, well-defined communication processes, and shared accountability mechanisms.<sup>16</sup> Establishing collaboration in the early planning and implementation stages of a program helps ensure its consistency and strength.

When collaboration efforts are absent or inconsistent, deflection programs may experience setbacks in service delivery and community engagement.<sup>17</sup>

The Inventory consists of 44 items, categorized into 22 factors and grouped into six categories. Responses are based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). We calculated mean scores for each item and composite mean scores for each factor and category. In the case of this inventory, outside researchers have validated that a mean score of 4.0 or greater indicates an area of strength that does not need attention; a mean score between 3.0 and 3.9 indicates an area that deserves discussion; and a mean score lower than 3.0 indicates an area of concern that warrants attention.<sup>18</sup> Inventory data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to generate descriptive statistics.

## **Findings**

### **Action-Planning Attendees**

#### ***Facilitators and Subject Matter Experts***

Each AP session was led by one of two facilitators from TASC CHJ. TASC CHJ also contracted with two subject-matter experts (SMEs) to provide technical assistance throughout AP. The SMEs included a retired police captain from Madison, Wisconsin, and a behavioral health consultant from Chicago. A TASC Inc. deflection administrator also attended to provide input on the role of deflection specialists.<sup>19</sup>

#### ***Local Participants***

Based on survey responses, local participation in AP was high, with a minimum of 17 local participants per day. The demographic data collected on Day 1 suggests that most local participants were White, non-Hispanic women. All were employed in the participating counties, though a small number lived outside those counties (Table 2). Overall, Days 1 through 3 were attended primarily by local service providers, with only four law enforcement members present. Two additional law enforcement members were present on Days 4, 5, and 6. A single ISP officer attended every AP day. At least three

participants identified themselves as having lived experience with substance use and as being in long-term recovery.

**Table 2**

*Demographics of Local AP Participants*

Characteristic	<i>n</i>
Gender	-
Male	8
Female	14
Race (non-exclusive)	-
Asian	1
White	19
Black or African American	2
American Indian or Alaska Native	1
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1
Ethnicity	-
Hispanic	1
Non-Hispanic	21
County of residence	-
Program counties	19
County outside the program	3
County of employment	-
Program counties	22
County outside the program	0

*Note.* The sample size was 22 participants. Some participants selected more than one race option (non-exclusive). Data were collected from the Day 1 survey.

## **Action-Planning Proceedings**

### ***Defining the Program's Focus***

To define the program's focus, group members discussed problems in their communities they wanted to address. Group members narrowed their focus to the most prevalent community problems, such as substance use, housing, trafficking, and lack of family support. As AP progressed, the group decided that the program would gain the most community support by serving individuals and families impacted by SUD and mental health concerns. Local criminal justice data and the lack of such targeted services in West Central Illinois communities supported this decision. Participants named the initiative “Empower” to emphasize how the program could empower deflection participants.

### ***Selecting a Deflection Intervention Pathway***

To help the group select a deflection intervention pathway, a facilitator discussed six common deflection pathways for referring participants to community-based treatment and services.<sup>20</sup> Each pathway involved methods for identifying individuals for referral (or “deflection”) to services. The facilitator then prompted participants to choose one or two pathways that best fit their community’s needs. To reach a decision, participants engaged in a productive and enthusiastic conversation. They agreed that people identified for potential deflection should include any of the following: those with justice system involvement; youth at risk of justice system involvement; family members of those with justice system involvement; persons with frequent police contact; and community members experiencing mental health needs or SUD. Participants also asked the facilitator to clarify the workflow for the deflection program, from referral to engagement in services. They emphasized the importance of warm handoffs from law enforcement (or other referral sources) to deflection staff. Participants also reiterated that collaboration between law enforcement and service providers who represented all six counties would be essential to the program’s success. However, they acknowledged that ensuring such collaboration could be difficult, given the large number of counties involved.

Ultimately, the AP participants chose to implement a single deflection pathway: police referral. According to this pathway, officers or other first responders who are engaged in routine activities, such as patrolling or responding to a service call, and encounter an individual who may be experiencing a mental health disorder or SUD will engage the individual and provide a referral to treatment or a case manager (i.e., a deflection specialist) as a preventative measure. If an officer is the first responder, they neither file charges nor make an arrest.

Throughout the AP process, participants engaged in similarly collaborative conversations about program details. In previous evaluations, we found that shorter, less engaging AP sessions led to poor collaboration and reduced long-term program sustainability.<sup>21</sup> The longer, more engaging AP process used by TASC CHJ to develop the Empower deflection program exemplifies how community-centered program design and implementation can support the development of potentially strong programs.

### ***Choosing Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps***

AP participants discussed and agreed upon the following goals for Empower:

- Engage families and the community.
- Reduce drug and mental health-related arrests.
- Increase access to mental health and SUD services.
- Allow youth to have a voice in the program.

The group also discussed and developed strategies and action steps to help achieve these goals (Table 3).

**Table 3**

*Empower Strategies and Action Steps*

Strategies	Action steps
Engage the community:	-
-	Share with the community and media.
-	Create a visual flowchart of the program.
-	Demonstrate stakeholder collaboration.
-	Engage participants within 30 days of police contact.
Encourage police to deflect:	-
-	Educate officers on the program.
-	Create police department policies.
Increase access to services:	-
-	Increase the availability of social services.
-	Offer materials on available services.
-	Conduct outreach to those with mental health conditions or SUD.
-	Engage additional social service providers.
Include youth in the program:	-
-	Encourage youth involvement.
-	Spread awareness in schools, libraries, and churches.
-	Promote the program through youth events.

***Identifying Program Challenges***

AP session discussions also focused on identifying potential challenges to the program's sustainability. For example, group members noted the limited number of service providers spanning the six counties. The impacts of provider shortages are well-documented in rural and semi-rural regions, such as West Central Illinois, where healthcare and social service deserts are common. Research by the National Rural Health Association and the Health Resources & Services Administration consistently identifies workforce shortages and service inaccessibility as major challenges to rural behavioral health and substance use treatment programs.<sup>22</sup> Given that deflection initiatives rely heavily on timely and coordinated access to services, these shortages can be especially detrimental.

Members of the group were also concerned that they lacked a shared vision for the deflection program and might not be working towards the same program outcomes and goals, due in part to differences among the various organizations they represented. For instance, group members observed that various community and substance use initiatives already existed in their respective counties, but that these initiatives were characterized by different approaches to similar goals. Participants worried that the absence of a unifying framework could lead to fragmentation. In voicing this worry, group members were likely justified, for research on collaborative governance suggests that without clear coordination structures, shared goals, and mechanisms for accountability, initiatives can become siloed.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, participants voiced operational concerns. These concerns included their lack of time to meet regularly with each other to oversee the program, inadequate representation of people of color at the AP sessions, service providers' and community members' lack of awareness of the available services and treatment opportunities in the region, and "red tape" preventing potential candidates from participating in the deflection initiative. Participants' concerns about the lack of representation by people of color at AP sessions are especially warranted: literature from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration highlights the need for culturally competent and community-informed programming in deflection and diversion models.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, lack of awareness of services is a recurring barrier in both urban and rural behavioral health landscapes and, when coupled with difficulty navigating services, can be major a barrier to program engagement, particularly for underserved populations, even when programs are well-resourced.<sup>25</sup> Finally, concerns about "red tape" align with findings from existing studies on deflection programs. For example, research on police department policies in Illinois found that restrictive eligibility criteria and unclear referral pathways contribute to low uptake of early-stage deflection efforts.<sup>26</sup>

Participants were also concerned about the absence of representatives from several important community organizations. In particular, participants noted that the AP process did not include representatives from fire departments or emergency medical services in participating counties. Participants noted that they would have liked to see more

involvement from local hospitals, behavioral health service providers, and law enforcement, with several respondents also expressing a desire for attendance by specific personnel in the State's Attorneys' offices. Participants' concerns about community representation are supported by research. For example, a Bureau of Justice Assistance guide for creating strong law enforcement and first-responder deflection programs emphasizes that successful deflection models require early buy-in and ongoing collaboration among police, emergency responders, behavioral health providers, and the legal system. The absence of any of these partners can result in poorly aligned interventions. For these reasons, high collaboration ratings among participants in the AP sessions for Empower should be interpreted alongside such gaps in representation. Planning sessions for future deflection programs should ensure fuller representation by community partners, as deflection initiatives are most effective when they operate through multi-sector partnerships. (Complete responses to the daily survey questions can be found in Appendix A.)

### ***Measures of Collaboration***

On Day 6 of AP, 19 participants completed the Wilder Collaboration Inventory. Mean scores for all 44 items are provided in Appendix B. Of the 22 collaboration factors, AP participants had mean scores of 4.0 or higher on 12 factors (Table 4). No factor scored below 3.0; thus, no factor was low enough to warrant significant concern. The overall high scores on collaboration factors indicate that participants reported high confidence in the group's ability to collaborate. Other deflection sites with low collaboration inventory scores among AP members have faced difficulties ensuring continued interest and commitment from leadership team members (often comprising those who attended AP and took the collaboration survey) in the years following AP.<sup>27</sup> Conversely, one deflection site whose AP process generated relatively high collaboration scores continued to exhibit strong engagement from the leadership team throughout program operations.<sup>28</sup>

While the majority of collaboration scores for the Empower team were high (i.e., at or above 4.0), 10 factors had mean scores between 3.0 and 3.9, indicating areas that may

need attention. We found that having “Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time” and convening an “Appropriate cross-section of members” were the lowest-scoring collaboration factors among the Empower group. These two factors were often rated 3.5 or lower at the AP sessions for other deflection program sites.

**Table 4**

*Participant Scores by Collaboration Factors*

Collaboration category	Collaboration factor	Mean score	Number of items
Membership	Collaboration is in their self-interest	4.8	1
Purpose	Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	4.5	3
Membership	Mutual respect, understanding, and trust	4.4	2
Process and structure	Shared stake in process and outcome	4.4	3
Purpose	Shared vision	4.4	2
Resources	Skilled leadership	4.4	1
Communication	Open and frequent communication	4.4	3
Process and structure	Flexibility	4.3	2
Environment	Favorable political and social climate	4.2	2
Purpose	Unique purpose	4.2	2
Membership	Ability to compromise	4.2	1
Process and structure	Appropriate pace of development	4.1	2
Communication	Informal relationships and communication	4.0	2
Process and structure	Multiple layers of participation	3.8	2
Process and structure	Evaluation and continuous learning	3.8	3
Environment	History of collaboration in the community	3.8	2
Resources	Engaged stakeholders	3.8	1
Process and structure	Adaptability to changing conditions	3.8	2

Collaboration category	Collaboration factor	Mean score	Number of items
Process and structure	Development of clear roles and guidelines	3.8	2
Environment	Seen as legitimate leader in the community	3.6	2
Resources	Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time	3.5	2
Membership	Appropriate cross-section of members	3.3	2

*Note.* The sample size was 19. The Wilder Collaboration Inventory was administered on Day 6 of AP.

Aggregated survey results, grouped by collaboration category, indicate that collaboration was strong in all six categories (Table 5). Scores were highest for Purpose, suggesting that participants agreed on the initiative’s goals. They were lowest in Resources, highlighting ongoing capacity challenges that may undermine sustainability. Aggregate mean scores for collaboration categories have limited utility due to high variance across survey items within a given category. For example, the collaboration category of Membership Characteristics contains six survey items, with scores ranging from 4.8 (“My organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration”) to 2.4 (“All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group”). This very broad range of scores is not reflected in the category’s mean score of 4.1.

**Table 5***Mean Participant Scores by Collaboration Category*

Collaboration category	Mean score	Items
Purpose	4.4	34-40
Communication	4.2	29-33
Membership characteristics	4.1	7-12
Process and structure	4.0	13-28
Environment	3.9	1-6
Resources	3.8	41-44

*Note.* The sample size was 19. The Wilder Collaboration Survey was administered on Day 6 of action planning.

While participants perceived overall collaboration to be strong, further analysis of the scores by factor and category reveals key areas that may affect program effectiveness. These findings align with previous studies indicating that even well-aligned initiatives can struggle with resources, staffing, and time constraints, which in turn affect long-term implementation and coordination.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, scores in areas such as stakeholder engagement and cross-sector representation indicate significant gaps. A group of strong collaborators can still mask critical weaknesses in operational or structural factors, such as the inclusion of underrepresented stakeholders.<sup>30</sup> The lower scores in resource availability and stakeholder representation indicate a risk that key roles may be under-supported or missing. Having adequate resources and engaging diverse stakeholders are essential to sustaining momentum and preventing an initiative from becoming overburdened. Without addressing these areas, efforts may fail to scale effectively.

***Limitations***

This AP evaluation has several limitations. First, not all participants attended every session or completed all surveys. While we collected daily survey responses, incomplete sign-in sheets left us without full attendance data, limiting our ability to

calculate response rates or determine whether a core group attended most sessions. It also appears, based upon incomplete records and session discussions, that Brown County was not represented among attendees. This is an important omission, given the county's unique position as home to the Western Illinois Correctional Center.

Second, we collected demographic information only from those who completed the first day's survey. Along with incomplete attendance records, the lack of comprehensive demographic data limits our ability to assess whether AP attendees represented the broader communities served by the Empower deflection program. Although we succeeded in answering our research questions about session content, successes, and barriers, we could not fully determine who attended AP or how this influenced program buy-in and representation.

Third, survey responses capture participants' views at a specific point in time and may not reflect current opinions. Social desirability, vested interests, or preconceived notions may also influence stakeholder feedback.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, because our agency is based outside the involved counties, our evaluation team members lacked deep local knowledge, making it more difficult for us to grasp group dynamics or underlying community conflicts during the AP sessions than it would have been for insiders.

## **Discussion**

### **Action-Planning Engagement**

We observed that AP participants remained highly engaged throughout the AP process. They actively participated in exercises and group discussions. The group appeared lively and talkative, and participants readily shared their input and ideas. The discussions also revealed concerns about community participation and stakeholder AP attendance, limited capacity to serve the program's vast geographic area, and inadequate levels of community buy-in and awareness. These issues may affect the program's reach and implementation. Without consistent participation from a variety of partners, AP sessions risk becoming disconnected from the needs of the communities

they are seeking to serve. This may lead to poorly informed decisions and potential challenges during program implementation.

As previously mentioned, one limitation of this evaluation is the incomplete attendance and demographic data from daily surveys. The lack of complete data prevented us from adequately tracking disparities in participation by members of racially marginalized groups or assessing the effectiveness of outreach strategies for historically underserved populations. As a result, findings related to participation and representation should be interpreted with caution.

This limitation can be addressed in the future by targeting outreach to service providers and community members from underrepresented counties as part of an initiative. Establishing continuous opportunities to gather feedback from underserved communities through focus groups or listening sessions may promote inclusivity, accessibility, and community engagement.

Finally, findings from previous evaluations and the literature reveal the value of input from those who have experienced justice involvement, are in recovery, or have other relevant lived experiences.<sup>32</sup> People with lived experience can provide first-hand insights that professionals may overlook or even dismiss. The input from people with lived experience will likely help ensure that future policies, services, or interventions grounded in action-planning processes reflect real-world issues rather than theoretical assumptions alone. Additionally, sharing lived experiences would likely help uncover gaps or unintended consequences in program design. Likewise, it is important to ensure that the AP format and environment are accessible and welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds, particularly those with lived experience.

## **Program Collaboration, Accountability, and Sustainability**

The lower collaboration scores on items concerning sufficient funds and appropriate cross-section of members were also reflected in interviews with staff and stakeholders conducted at deflection sites that have been operational for at least a year.<sup>33</sup> Insufficient resources can affect AP attendance in communities where law enforcement officers and service providers are overburdened and unable to commit large portions of their week to AP sessions. This can in turn lead to gaps within the cross-section of community members participating in the AP process. These limitations can also persist in a deflection site's operations, potentially leading to law enforcement agencies lacking the capacity to engage in the program, high turnover among overcommitted leadership team members, and insufficient services available to receive deflection referrals.<sup>34</sup>

AP participants suggested that collaboration among all counties during both program development and operations would be essential to the Empower program's success. Identifying practical strategies to streamline communication can promote overall collaboration. For example, one respondent noted that providing a phone number with which first responders could contact deflection staff directly would facilitate a smooth transition during a warm handoff. In general, sharing phone numbers would help strengthen communication between participants and program staff from different counties.

AP participants also suggested that establishing clear community standards to guide their group would promote collaboration, accountability, and sustainability during AP sessions for future deflection sites. These standards would serve as shared expectations and guiding principles for session participants. Discussing standards and accountability early in the AP sessions could also help lay a foundation for decision-making, coordination, and long-term program sustainability.

## **Key Lessons**

In sum, this evaluation proposes three key lessons about action-planning processes that are relevant to policymakers, law enforcement, and service providers:

1. Prioritize community engagement early and as much as possible. Meaningful engagement with the community, especially marginalized groups, is important during the early stages of program development. Lived experiences and decision-making teams should inform planning processes, which should be comprised of members of the communities they aim to serve.
2. Invest in outreach and accessibility. A lack of awareness and participation stems from gaps in communication and accessibility. Individuals in geographically dispersed or low-resource areas are often most affected. Outreach strategies should meet communities where they are and ensure that services are culturally responsive, inclusive, and easily accessible.
3. Prepare to become sustainable from the start by building collaboration and accountability into planning interactions. Long-term success may depend especially on shared goals, cross-sector collaboration, and the use of resources, such as community standards, that promote accountability and continuity beyond the initial planning stages.

## **Future Research**

In the future, we hope to collect programmatic data, including information on persons referred to the Empower deflection site, those who engage with deflection specialists, and the types of treatments and services to which people have been referred. Our team intends to analyze programmatic data to conduct a process evaluation of program operations and assess when the Empower site will be ready for an outcome evaluation. Outcome evaluation techniques could include pre- and post-test surveys for deflection participants or other quasi-experimental study designs.

Analyzing individual-level demographic data on deflection program participants will allow us to assess how effectively the program reaches various racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups in each county. Examination of participant-level data can build on an analysis of county-level demographic data, which may not capture the complex realities of deflection program participants, such as their specific experiences with the criminal justice system. These realities could vary widely within each community.

Further research could include interviews with program staff and stakeholders to ascertain the extent to which they have built racial equity considerations into their program operations. Together with participant-level demographic data, this racial equity analysis would help measure the extent to which the Empower program equitably deflects and serves members of racially diverse communities. Following our evaluation of the AP process for Empower and for other deflection programs, we recommended incorporating racial equity considerations more directly into AP processes. In response, Empower's AP facilitators posed several guiding questions about racial equity to the Empower AP team.

In addition to analyzing programmatic data, we also plan to gather feedback from Empower program staff and stakeholders, including local law enforcement and social service providers. This will provide a deeper understanding of how the program operates, how staff and stakeholders measure their successes, and how they strive to address barriers and challenges. In addition, we plan to examine the perceptions of individuals who participate in the Empower deflection process. Such interviews would provide insight into how participants directly experience the program. This mixed-methods approach will provide a more complete understanding of how deflection programs operate and where opportunities exist to strengthen their implementation.

#### **FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## Appendix A: Daily Survey Results

**Table A1**

*Survey Responses After Day 1 of Action Planning*

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
How do you feel the group did in defining the problem(s) that the deflection program will address?	10	11	1	0
	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
How strong is the level of collaboration and agreement among your community members? ( <i>n</i> = 20)	9	13	0	0
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The right participants are involved in this action-planning process. ( <i>n</i> = 21)	8	11	2	0
The stated purpose of our deflection initiative is clear and concise. ( <i>n</i> = 20)	8	7	5	0
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
To what extent do you think the right community partners have been identified for the deflection initiative? ( <i>n</i> = 21)	11	10	0	0
	Too many	Many	Few	Too few
How do you feel about the number of community partners involved in the initiative? ( <i>n</i> = 20)	0	13	5	2
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements: "I am confident that our community partners are the right ones to help us achieve our goals." ( <i>n</i> = 21)	5	14	2	0

The local data presentation was informative to the action-planning group process. (*n* = 15)

	2	12	0	1
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	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the overall guided action-planning process so far?	11	11	0	0

*Note.* Data from survey responses at the end of day one of action planning on February 21, 2023. The sample size was 22 unless otherwise noted.

**Table A2**

*Survey Responses After Day 2 of Action Planning*

	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
How would you rate the level of collaboration among your community members during action planning? ( <i>n</i> = 22)	14	8	0	0
	Too fast	Fast	Slow	Too slow
How would you rate the pacing of the action-planning process? ( <i>n</i> = 21)	0	12	9	0
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The topics covered during the action-planning process have been clearly explained and discussed.	9	14	0	0
There is adequate community buy-in for this initiative. ( <i>n</i> = 22)	6	16	0	0
Appropriate outcome metrics have been identified to evaluate the program's effectiveness. ( <i>n</i> = 22)	4	17	1	0
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the Solutions Action Planning (SAP) guide and worksheets?	8	15	0	0
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly disagree
To what degree do you have confidence that your group made the right decision on pathway(s)? ( <i>n</i> = 17)	9	8	0	0

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Our action-planning group has decided on the appropriate strategies to help us achieve our goals. ( <i>n</i> = 20)	10	10	0	0
	Very feasible	Feasible	Not very feasible	Completely unfeasible
How feasible do you think your strategies are to achieve your overall goal? ( <i>n</i> = 21)	7	13	1	0
	Very Strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
How would you rate the level of collaboration among your community members?	9	12	2	0
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the overall guided action-planning process so far? ( <i>n</i> = 22)	6	16	0	0
	Very Strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
How would you rate the level of community member engagement in the action-planning process? ( <i>n</i> = 22)	7	10	5	0
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
To what extent do you believe your group has established a realistic action plan through this process? ( <i>n</i> = 19)	12	7	0	0
	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very Weak
How would you rate the potential for lasting and ongoing collaboration within your community action-planning group? ( <i>n</i> = 21)	8	12	1	0
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Adequate resources are available for our group to implement our plan of action.	4	11	4	4
The outcomes developed by our group are measurable.	6	17	0	0

*Note.* Data from survey responses at the end of day two of action planning on February 22, 2023. The sample size was 23 unless otherwise noted.

**Table A3***Survey Responses After Day 3 of Action Planning*

	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall, how would you rate those leading the action-planning process? ( <i>n</i> = 21)	16	5	0	0
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the Solutions Action Planning (SAP) guide and worksheets? ( <i>n</i> = 21)	9	12	0	0
	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
How likely do you think you will take an active role in the implementation of your action plan? ( <i>n</i> = 22)	17	5	0	0
	Very sustainable	Somewhat sustainable	Not very sustainable	Completely unsustainable
At this point, how would you gauge the likelihood of sustainability of this initiative over time? ( <i>n</i> = 22)	11	11	0	0
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
To what extent do you think this initiative will ultimately help people with substance use disorders in your community? ( <i>n</i> = 22)	15	7	0	0
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
How did you find the use of the in-person format rather than virtual for the action-planning process? ( <i>n</i> = 22)	20	2	0	0
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

I felt comfortable participating in the action-planning discussion. ( <i>n</i> = 22)	17	4	1	0
I feel like everyone participating in the action-planning process had their voices heard. ( <i>n</i> = 21)	16	5	0	0

*Note.* Data from survey responses at the end of day three of action planning on February 23, 2023. The sample size was 23 unless otherwise noted.

**Table A4**

*Survey Responses After Day 4 of Action Planning*

	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
How do you feel the group did in aligning with and continuing to address the previously defined problem (s) from the first action-planning session?	10	10	0	0
	Very sustainable	Somewhat sustainable	Not very sustainable	Completely unsustainable
Do you feel the level of collaboration and agreement among your community members is sustainable?	9	11	0	0
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The stated purpose of our deflection initiative is consistent and concise.	8	12	0	0
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
To what extent do you think the right community partners have been identified for the deflection initiative?	9	11	0	0
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement: "I am confident that our community partners share our long-term goals and will aid in achieving them."	10	9	1	0
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the overall action-planning process so far?	11	9	0	0

*Note.* Data from survey responses at the end of day four of action planning on March 28, 2023. The sample size was 20 participants.

**Table A5**

*Survey Responses After Day 5 of Action Planning*

	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
How would you rate the level of collaboration among your community members during action planning?	11	8	0	0
	Very continuous	Continuous	Disjointed	Very disjointed
How would you rate the continuity from the last action-planning session in terms of shared goals and tackling previously defined problems?	7	12	0	0
	Too fast	Fast	Slow	Too Slow
How would you rate the pacing of the action-planning process? ( <i>n</i> = 17)	0	11	6	0
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The topics covered during the action-planning process have been clearly explained and streamlined from the previous action-planning session. ( <i>n</i> = 18)	6	12	0	0

There is adequate community buy-in for this initiative.	2	14	3	0
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Any outcome metrics previously identified to evaluate the program's effectiveness are still appropriate for the current evaluation.	3	16	0	0
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the Solutions Action Planning (SAP) guide and worksheets?	7	12	0	0
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
To what degree do you have confidence that your group made the right decision on pathway(s)?	13	6	0	0
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Our action-planning group has decided on the appropriate strategies to help us achieve our goals.	8	10	1	0
	Very feasible	Feasible	Not very feasible	Completely feasible
How feasible do you think your strategies are to achieve your overall goal?	7	11	1	0
	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
How would you rate the level of collaboration among your community members?	8	11	0	0
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the overall guided action-planning process so far?	12	7	0	0
	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very Weak

How would you rate the level of community members' engagement in the action-planning process	6	10	3	0
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
To what extent do you believe your group has established a realistic action plan through this process?	10	9	0	0
	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
How would you rate the potential for lasting and ongoing collaboration within your community action-planning group?	4	13	2	0
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Adequate resources are available for our group to implement our plan of action.	3	14	2	0
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The outcomes developed by our group are measurable.	4	14	1	0

*Note.* Data from survey responses at the end of day five of action planning on March 29, 2023. The sample size was 19 unless otherwise noted.

## Table A6

### *Survey Responses After Day 6 of Action Planning*

	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall, how would you rate those leading the action-planning process?	13	4	0	0
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

How would you rate the Solutions Action Planning (SAP) guide and worksheets?	12	5	0	0
	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely
How likely do you think you will take an active role in the implementation of your action plan?	14	3	0	0
	Very sustainable	Somewhat sustainable	Not very sustainable	Completely unsustainable
At this point, how would you gauge the likelihood of sustainability of this initiative over time?	9	8	0	0
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
To what extent do you think this initiative will ultimately help people with substance use disorders in your community?	12	5	0	0
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I felt comfortable participating in the action-planning discussion.	7	10	0	0
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel like everyone participating in the action-planning process had their voices heard.	8	8	1	0

*Note.* Data from survey responses at the end of day six of action planning on March 30, 2023. The sample size was 17 participants.

## Appendix B: Wilder Collaboration Survey Results

**Table B1**

### *44 Item Collaboration Survey Results*

Survey item	<i>N</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
1. Agencies in our community have a history of working together.	19	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	3 (16%)	11 (58%)	3 (16%)	3.8
2. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community.	19	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	10 (53%)	3 (16%)	3.8
3. Leaders in this community who are not part of our collaborative group seem hopeful about what we can accomplish.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (74%)	4 (21%)	1 (5%)	3.3
4. Others in this community who are not a part of this collaboration would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the “right” organizations to make this work.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (26%)	13 (68%)	1 (5%)	3.8
5. The political and social climate seems to be “right” for starting a collaborative project like this one.	19	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	6 (32%)	7 (37%)	4.0
6. The time is right for this collaborative project.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	6 (32%)	11 (58%)	4.5
7. People involved in our collaboration trust one another.	18	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.6%)	13 (72%)	4 (22%)	4.2
8. I have a lot of respect for the other people involved in this.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	13 (68%)	4.6
9. The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross-section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	19	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	10 (53%)	8 (42%)	4.3

Survey item	<i>N</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
10. All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group.	19	2 (11%)	12 (63%)	1 (5%)	4 (21%)	0 (0%)	2.4
11. My organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (21%)	15 (79%)	4.8
12. People involved in our collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of our project.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	14 (74%)	4 (21%)	4.2
13. The organizations that belong to our collaborative group invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts.	18	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (17%)	12 (67%)	3 (17%)	4.0
14. Everyone who is a member of our collaborative group wants this project to succeed.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (21%)	15 (79%)	4.8
15. The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (63%)	7 (37%)	4.4
16. When the collaborative group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about the decision.	18	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (39%)	8 (44%)	3 (17%)	3.7
17. Each of the people who participate in decisions in this collaborative group can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part.	18	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	6 (33%)	8 (44%)	3 (17%)	3.9
18. There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing options.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	10 (53%)	8 (42%)	4.4

Survey item	<i>N</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
19. People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	11 (58%)	7 (37%)	4.3
20. People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.	19	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	3 (16%)	11 (58%)	3 (16%)	3.8
21. There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration.	19	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	11 (58%)	2 (11%)	3.7
22. This collaboration is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (47%)	8 (42%)	2 (11%)	3.6
23. This group has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new members in order to reach its goals.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (26%)	10 (53%)	4 (21%)	4.0
24. This collaborative group has been careful to take on the right amount of work at the right pace.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	15 (79%)	3 (16%)	4.1
25. This group is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	15 (79%)	2 (11%)	4.0
26. A system exists to monitor and report the activities and/or services of our collaboration.	19	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	3 (16%)	9 (48%)	6 (32%)	4.1
27. We measure and report the outcomes of our collaboration.	19	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	8 (42%)	8 (42%)	2 (11%)	3.6

Survey item	<i>N</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
28. Information about our activities, services, and outcomes is used by members of the collaborative group to improve our joint work.	19	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	4 (21%)	12 (63%)	2 (11%)	3.8
29. People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	11 (53%)	7 (37%)	4.3
30. I am informed as often as I should be about what is going on in the collaboration.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	9 (47%)	8 (42%)	4.3
31. The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	6 (32%)	11 (58%)	4.5
32. Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (32%)	10 (53%)	3 (16%)	3.8
33. I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group.	19	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	3 (16%)	9 (47%)	6 (32%)	4.1
34. I have a clear understanding of what our collaboration is trying to accomplish.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (37%)	12 (63%)	4.6
35. People in our collaborative group know and understand our goals.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	7 (37%)	10 (53%)	4.4
36. People in our collaborative group have established reasonable goals.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (69%)	6 (32%)	4.3
37. The people in this collaborative group are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project work.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (47%)	10 (53%)	4.5

Survey item	<i>N</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
38. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (79%)	4 (21%)	4.2
39. What we are trying to accomplish with our collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself.	19	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	3 (16%)	14 (74%)	4.5
40. No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do.	19	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	4 (21%)	5 (26%)	8 (42%)	4.0
41. Our collaborative group has adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish.	19	2 (11%)	2 (11%)	8 (42%)	4 (21%)	3 (16%)	3.2
42. Our collaborative group has adequate “people power” to do what it wants to accomplish.	19	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	4 (21%)	9 (47%)	4 (21%)	3.8
43. The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	10 (53%)	8 (42%)	4.4
44. Our collaborative group engages other stakeholders, outside of the group, as much as we should.	19	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (37%)	9 (47%)	3 (16%)	3.8

*Note.* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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<sup>7</sup> Labriola, M., Peterson, S., Taylor, J., Sobol, D., Reichert, J., Ross, J., Charlier, J., & Juarez, S. (2023). *A multi-site evaluation of law enforcement deflection in the United States*. RAND Corporation. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA2491-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA2491-1.html)

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<sup>9</sup> Gleicher, L. (2017). *Implementation science in criminal justice: How implementation of evidence-based programs and practices affects outcomes*. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. <https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/implementation-science-in-criminal-justice-how-implementation-of-evidence-based-programs-and-practices-affects-outcomes>

<sup>10</sup> Creately. (2023). What is an action plan? Learn with templates and examples. <https://creately.com/blog/diagrams/how-to-write-an-action-plan/>

<sup>11</sup> Reichert, J., Sheridan, E., DeSalvo, M., & Adams, S. (2017). *Evaluation of Illinois multi-jurisdictional drug task forces*. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. <https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/evaluation-of-illinois-multi-jurisdictional-drug-task-forces>

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). *American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2018–2022)*.

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