

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc. (BHSB)

Three-Year Strategic Plan: FY 2026-2028

The Strategic Plan: FY 2026-2028 serves as a guide to drive BHSB's day-to-day work and set a strategic direction that is responsive to system partners and the needs of the community. It supports ongoing, adaptive learning and agility, with a focus on broad, overarching goals to build out the system of care and develop BHSB's organizational capacity to effectively lead this work.

BHSB uses the Results Based Accountability™ (RBA) framework to create measurable change in the lives of the people, families, and communities we serve. RBA processes are iterative, with action steps and measures updated based on periodic turn-the-curve exercises, during which the data is reviewed, and action steps adapted as needed. Because not all areas of work are well-suited to the RBA process, BHSB has taken a hybrid approach to this strategic plan, incorporating a mix of RBA strategies and non-RBA strategies.

Organizational Role and Purpose

BHSB serves as the Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) on behalf of Baltimore City and operates in this role under the authority of the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). The role of the LBHA is outlined in state regulations, and BHSB operates under a Memorandum of Agreement with MDH that details LBHA functions within the state's behavioral health system.

BHSB is responsible for planning, managing and monitoring resources, programs and policies within the larger Medicaid fee-for-service system, as well as services directly funded by BHSB through private and public grants. BHSB plays a critical role in helping the city be successful by knowing what the state's public behavioral health system (PBHS) offers and how to leverage it, while aligning resources with the city's needs.

Key System Indicators

BHSB uses data to make strategic decisions and identify opportunities to improve operations and enhance programmatic outcomes. The organization identified the following key system indicators to measure Baltimore City's behavioral health and wellness and the capacity of the PBHS to meet the city's behavioral health needs:

- Fatal overdoses
- Non-fatal overdoses
- Suicides



- 988 call volume and outcome
- Mobile crisis response team capacity
- Crisis stabilization utilization
- Number of people utilizing PBHS services
- Emergency department utilization
- Maryland Department of Health consumer perception of care surveys

Result #1: People in Baltimore City are empowered to navigate the public behavioral health system and interrelated systems, free from barriers

RBA Strategies

Strategy 1: Ensure that public behavioral health system services integrate harm reduction principles into practice and are available to people along the full spectrum of drug use, including people who do not need or want treatment and those that are actively engaged in treatment

Implementation lead: Overdose Prevention & Response Workgroup

Measures:

- How much?
Total grant funds allocated to sub-vendors that provide housing or behavioral health services in a residential setting
- How well?
Percent of grant funds allocated to sub-vendors that provide housing or behavioral health services in a residential setting that do not require abstinence for continued care
- Is anyone better off?
Percent of BHSB employees who see supporting people who use drugs as part of BHSB's mission

Non-RBA Strategies

Strategy 1: Increase effective use of peers in the public behavioral health system

Implementation lead: Special Populations team



Collaborating teams: Harm Reduction

Action steps and measures:

- Create and implement a process to collect data from individuals who participate in BHSB's peer recovery specialist trainings regarding the areas in which they work (e.g., substance use, mental health, criminal justice) and their interests.

Measure: Process created and implemented

- Increase the number of qualified trainers with curriculums approved by the Maryland Addiction & Behavioral-Health Professionals Certification Board (MABPCB) that are contracted with BHSB to facilitate core trainings for peer recovery specialists

Measure: Number of contracted trainers increased from 5 to 8

- Create and implement a process to communicate the availability of peer recovery specialist trainings to the behavioral health provider network

Measure: Process created and implemented

- Create and implement a survey to collect feedback from consumers who have engaged with a peer recovery specialist to measure the effectiveness of services received.

Measure: Survey created and implemented

Strategy 2: Reduce eligible community members' involvement with the legal system by increasing community visibility, provider partnerships, and knowledge of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program

Implementation lead: Adult Services team

Collaborating teams: Communications, Data, Crisis

Action steps and measures:

- Educate 988 and mobile crisis providers about LEAD and how to make a referral

Measure: Track referrals from 988 and mobile services to LEAD

- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy (print/digital material, digital promotion)

Measure: Communications plan created



- Create a dashboard to track LEAD data

Measure: Dashboard created

Strategy 3: Develop processes to support BHSB purchasing goods and services from locally owned and/or operated businesses

Implementation lead: Operations team

Collaborating teams: Finance Department

Action steps and measures:

- Identify types of goods and services that BHSB can procure from locally owned and/or operated businesses

Measure: Types of goods and services identified by March 2026

- Develop and maintain a list of locally owned and/or operated businesses

Measure: List of locally owned and/or operated businesses created by June 2026

- Create and implement procedures to support BHSB purchasing goods and services from locally owned and/or operated businesses

Measure: Procedures created and implemented by December 2026

Result #2: People in Baltimore City have access to a full range of high-quality public behavioral health care and interrelated services

RBA Strategies

Strategy 1: Enhance BHSB's capacity to build a system of care that promotes behavioral health and wellness in Baltimore City by advancing organizational learning through increasing supervisors' 1) understanding of their role in the employee experience, 2) active use of resources/tools that support employee engagement and individual employee development, 3) active engagement in shared learning, and 4) collaboration with other supervisors to consistently implement BHSB policies and practices

Implementation lead: Supervisors Meeting

Measures:

- How much?



Number of employees who had at least one meeting with their supervisor monthly to discuss their assigned work

- How well?

Percent of employees who report that meetings with their supervisor meet their needs to manage their assigned work

- Is anyone better off?

Percent of employees who report that supervision positively contributes to their effectiveness at work

Strategy 2: Increase timely access to high-quality mobile crisis team services for people in Central Maryland (Baltimore City and Baltimore, Carroll and Howard Counties)

Implementation lead: Crisis & Diversion Workgroup

Measures:

- How much?

Number of visits canceled or rescheduled due to lack of available teams as a percentage of total mobile requests

- How well?

Total response time from placement of the dispatch to mobile team arrival

- Is anyone better off?

Provider-administered satisfaction survey shows satisfaction with services

Strategy 3: Empower children, youth, and their families to access services that support their behavioral health and wellbeing by enhancing opportunities to educate system partners, youth-serving organizations, and community members about public behavioral health services

Implementation lead: Child & Family Workgroup

Measures:

- How much?

Number of trainings and information-sharing sessions provided



- How well?

Percent of targeted audiences that participated in a training or information-sharing session

- Is anyone better off?

Percent of participants in a training or information-sharing session who self-report an increase in knowledge about resources for children and families and how to access them

Non-RBA Strategies

Strategy 1: Increase access to supportive services that are tailored to meet the needs of people most impacted by drug use-related harms, taking into consideration individual, family, and community differences

Note: BHSB lost funding for the statewide harm reduction training institute effective July 1, 2025. We are working to identify alternate sources of funding to advance this strategy.

Implementation lead: Harm Reduction team

Collaborating teams: Special Populations, Provider Relations, Adult Services, Child & Family

Action steps and measures:

- Identify and implement innovative harm reduction approaches that meet the needs of people most impacted by drug-use related harms

Measure: Three new harm reduction-informed projects are implemented by BHSB or with BHSB's support

- Provide harm reduction training for BHSB staff who support programs serving people most impacted by drug-use harms

Measure: 100% of BHSB programmatic staff attend a harm reduction training relevant to their area of work

- Expand collaboration with partners serving people impacted by drug use

Measure: Six new or renewed collaborations are formed with partners that serve people impacted by drug use

- Support organizations to expand access to harm reduction services for Spanish-speaking people who use drugs



Measure: Four providers receive training, resources, or technical assistance from BHSB to expand access to harm reduction services for Spanish-speaking people who use drugs

Measure: 50% of BHSB programmatic staff receive training, resources, or technical assistance to expand access to harm reduction services for Spanish-speaking people who use drugs

- Offer four population-specific harm reduction trainings to public behavioral health system providers

Measure: Four population-specific, harm reduction trainings are provided during BHSB All Provider Meetings

Strategy 2: Create an ongoing monitoring structure to ensure a coordinated behavioral health crisis system for the lifespan in Central Maryland (Baltimore City and Baltimore, Carroll and Howard Counties)

Implementation lead: Crisis & Diversion Workgroup

Action steps and measures:

- Hold 6 meetings per year with representation from each jurisdiction where 988, mobile crisis and other aspects of the Central Maryland crisis system are reviewed, and the group provides meaningful input

Measure: Six meetings held per year, for which minutes reflect meaningful input by the group

- Develop a process for people with lived experience to provide meaningful feedback on crisis data

Measure: Process for people with lived experience to provide meaningful feedback on crisis data is developed

Strategy 3: Enhance processes to ensure maximum expenditures of awarded funds

Implementation lead: Finance Department

Collaborating teams: Data and Operations teams; Programs and Policy & Communications Departments

Action steps and measures:



- Develop reports to analyze historical finance data to determine what internal and external factors contribute to underspending and the reports needed to track various contributors

Measure: Analysis is completed, contributing factors are identified, and reports to track contributing factors are created

- Develop organization-wide procedures to systematically track and recognize underspending and what methods to use to minimize underspending in current and future periods

Measure: Procedures to track and methods to minimize underspending are developed

Strategy 4: Categorize operating budget and expenditures based on BHSB services
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Implementation lead: Finance Department

Collaborating teams: Data, Operations and Executive teams; Programs and Policy & Communications Departments

Action steps and measures:

- Determine organizational categories, review contracts and assign services

Measure: BHSB contracts are categorized by organizational services

- Determine contract numbering standards and train staff who create contract numbers

Measure: Organizational services are designated in the contract number and/or a field in CMS

- Designate fields in the accounting system for budget development, expense tracking and board reporting. Update accounting and contracting systems integration.

Measure: Accounting system is updated to include organizational services by contract

Measure: Budgets and expenses are tracked and reported by organizational services



Strategy 5: Develop processes to identify training needs across the city's behavioral health workforce and increase access to educational opportunities that address identified needs

Implementation lead: Operations team

Collaborating teams: Communications, Provider Relations, Leadership, Harm Reduction, and Community Resilience teams; Programs Department

Action steps and measures:

- Develop strategies to gather information on training needs of the Baltimore City provider network

Measure: Strategies to gather information on training needs developed by September 2025

- Collect and analyze data on training needs of the Baltimore City provider network

Measure: Data on training needs collected and analyzed by February 2026

- Develop action plan to address identified training needs, including funding that would be needed and potential funding sources

Measure: Action plan developed by June 2026

Result #3: People in Baltimore City are actively engaged in co-creating thriving communities that support emotional health and wellness

Non-RBA Strategies

Strategy 1: Enhance BHSB's capacity to engage with people in Baltimore City to co-create thriving communities by implementing processes and practices that advance an accountable organizational culture

Implementation lead: President's Office

Collaborating teams: Executive, Operations

Action steps and measures:

- Create and release an Organizational Accountability Framework

Measure: Framework created and released

- Create and release an Organizational Accountability Work Plan

Measure: Work plan created and released

- Implement BHSB Community meetings for all staff

Measure: BHSB Community meetings held

Strategy 2: Build processes to gather feedback from community members and other stakeholders on strengths and weaknesses of the public behavioral health system

Implementation lead: Community Resilience team

Collaborating teams: Adult Services, Harm Reduction, Communications, Policy & Advocacy, Accountability, Child & Family, Special Populations, Data, Quality

Action steps and measures:

- Identify opportunities during which BHSB staff members collect feedback from community members and external partners

Measure: All community feedback data collected by BHSB staff members is identified

- Create a dashboard that collates feedback data BHSB staff members have collected from community members and external partners by June 2026

Measure: Dashboard created

- Host events during which key informants, stakeholders, and community members are invited to provide feedback

Measure: 2-3 events hosted annually

- Develop and implement a process to share with community members the data BHSB gathers and ways it shapes priorities by June 2026

Measure: Processes created

Strategy 3: Enhance BHSB's capacity to collect and use qualitative data

Implementation lead: Data team

Collaborating teams: Community Resilience, Communications, Harm Reduction



Action steps and measures:

- Identify opportunities to collect qualitative data
Measure: Opportunities to collect qualitative data identified
- Identify cost-effective and sustainable tools to support qualitative data collection
Measure: Tools identified