

POLITICO

STEPS program shows promise in first two years

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A pilot program designed to help New Yorkers with serious mental illness transition out of intensive mental health programs shows promise in early results, according to the Institute for Community Living.

A report detailing the STEPS program's [progress over its first two years](#) shows that 97 percent of the individuals who went through the program remain housed. Roughly 89 percent avoided hospitalization, and none of the program participants were arrested or incarcerated while in the program.

The program works with individuals to transition from high-intensity care to lower levels of care, while ensuring that they have housing and the clinical oversight necessary to succeed.

“STEPS began as a pilot to close a critical gap in our mental health system. Our independent evaluation confirms that it is working,” Jody Rudin, president of the Institute for Community Living, said in a statement. “This is helping us address the mental health crisis that has played out on our streets.

Rudin noted that she would like to see the city expand the program in light of its early success. The ICL is calling on the city council to release \$4.5 million in this year’s budget that was allocated to the program. They are also calling on the city to expand the program’s reach to more New Yorkers who rely on the city’s intensive mental health services.

The group is looking to fill a gap in services for individuals who have stabilized during intensive treatment and need a steady off-ramp out of the system. According to the ICL, roughly 1300 people are on waitlists for behavioral health treatment

“As New York City continues to confront a visible mental health crisis, STEPS offers a proven, scalable solution that expands capacity, reduces costs, and protects some of the city’s residents with most acute needs,” Rudin said.