

# YELLOW LINE PROJECT

## Blue Earth County's Yellow Line Project

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In 2016, Blue Earth County was the recipient of a \$300,000 grant from the MN Department of Human Services to develop the "Yellow Line Project" (YLP) and to form an alliance between the Sheriff's Office, Mankato Department of Public Safety, and Blue Earth County Human Services. Blue Earth County received an additional \$500,000 in 2017 to further develop the project for statewide replicability.

The Yellow Line Project is designed to provide early intervention to individuals with acute or chronic mental health or chemical health problems who have become involved with law enforcement and are not a risk to the community. The YLP enhances the options available to law enforcement so the individual can get the right services at the right time and have strong incentives to participate in those services. The hope is to maintain a high level

of personal accountability while at the same time, encouraging healthy choices to reduce future consequences. This practice also reduces/eliminates systemic costs by breaking the cycle of unnecessary incarcerations. The underlying systemic goal is to streamline the decision-making between law enforcement, human services, and community-based care providers. We are focused on providing the most cost-effective and appropriate community-based services that are available.

The Yellow Line Project is different from other jail diversion projects. The main difference is the process for diversion takes place before an individual crosses "The Yellow Line" at the entrance to the jail. By implementing the Yellow Line Project, Blue Earth County fully expects to see a reduction in jail incarcerations and criminal justice system costs and a reduction in other high

cost services (emergency room visits, detox stays, etc.).

An example scenario: A middle aged male was detained for disturbance-related behaviors. He was intoxicated and uncooperative with the officer while in the field and while being transported to the jail. The Yellow Line Project Screening was completed with the individual. Both the officer and the individual were agreeable that community services would be of more benefit to this individual than jail. He was immediately referred to chemical dependency treatment, and has since fully completed an extended course of treatment. YLP staff also assisted him in addressing his urgent mental health needs. He successfully completed all three goals of his "My Yellow Line Plan" avoiding charges and further legal consequences.

If you would like additional information regarding this project, please visit [www.yellowlineproject.com](http://www.yellowlineproject.com) to view a more descriptive 10-minute video.

