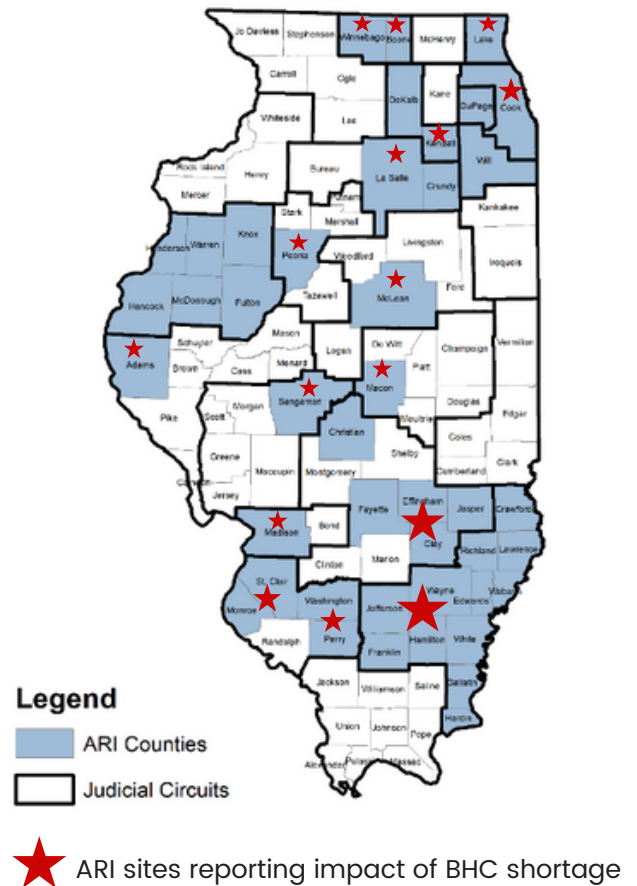


# Behavioral Healthcare Workforce Shortage Impacting Crime Reduction Efforts

Illinois is suffering a behavioral healthcare (BHC) crisis as chronic workforce shortages collide with a sharp increase in demand. Experts estimate **nearly 8 million Illinoisans (60%)** live in mental health service shortage areas, and the current workforce is sufficient to meet only 24% of the need.

The Adult Redeploy Illinois state grant program is monitoring effects on ARI grantees -- drug courts, mental health courts, veterans courts, and specialized probation programs focused on rehabilitation and recidivism reduction.

A recent ARI site survey revealed the crisis' significant impact on local programs and client services.



## Site Impact

- Sites are unable to fill staff positions for mental health and substance use disorder counseling required as a condition of court supervision, making it difficult for clients to succeed.
- Long wait times for behavioral health assessments to determine eligibility and service planning lead to bottlenecks in enrollment.
- Staffing shortages and capacity issues at residential treatment centers cause waitlists that delay client care and progress in the program.
- Provider staff turnover interrupts vital information sharing with court staff managing client supervision and services.

## Client Impact

- Clients cannot access treatment at points critical to breaking the cycle of addiction and crime, which can put them at greater risk of overdose death.
- Clients often may receive inadequate or poor quality treatment from inexperienced counselors. Clients can struggle when only virtual options are available.
- High turnover rates create client barriers to building a therapeutic rapport with providers and can lead to higher rates of relapse or recidivism.
- An inability to meet client treatment needs can damage trust in the program, affecting client engagement, compliance, and long-term recovery.

## Recommendations



Increase use of **peer support models** allowing individuals with lived experience to provide recovery coaching and mentoring to supplement treatment.



Promote statewide **tele-health and tele-psychiatry** programs to provide accessible and effective mental and behavioral healthcare services in rural and other hard-to-serve areas.



Work with local physicians and medical professionals to integrate mental health, behavioral health, and substance use disorder treatment into **primary healthcare settings**.



Provide funding to develop in-house capacity in probation departments utilizing individuals trained to conduct **behavioral health assessments** for more timely service planning and provision.



**Invest in piloting and scaling mobile behavioral health service units and models.** A circuit with 12 rural counties employs "roaming" counselors who meet clients in conveniently located offices.



**Expand crisis services** that provide individuals with stabilization and linkages to care. The Living Room program offers a safe space for individuals in crisis to connect with trained professionals.



Adult Redeploy Illinois is administered by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA). ICJIA is dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice through work in the areas of grants administration, research and analysis, policy and planning, and information systems and technology. Visit [www.icjia.illinois.gov](http://www.icjia.illinois.gov).

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