

Northern Kentucky CAREs:

Coordinating All Recovery Efforts

Year One Annual Report: January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Led by the Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, NKY CAREs is a regional initiative that unites multiple systems and agencies to strengthen behavioral health infrastructure. Its mission is to provide both immediate and long-term support for individuals pursuing recovery from substance use disorders.

The program follows a **"No Wrong Door"** approach, ensuring that Northern Kentuckians can access treatment and recovery services through a variety of entry points. CAREs supports individuals across the full continuum of care from acute treatment to long-term recovery and self-sufficiency by fostering collaborative pathways that include emergent medical care, person-centered treatment modalities, preventive approaches that reduce risks associated with substance use, expanded deflection and diversion programs, legal assistance, transportation support, and reentry services. The initiative also prioritizes employment opportunities for individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD), including those who are justice-involved, promoting sustained recovery, improved wellness, and lifelong disease management.

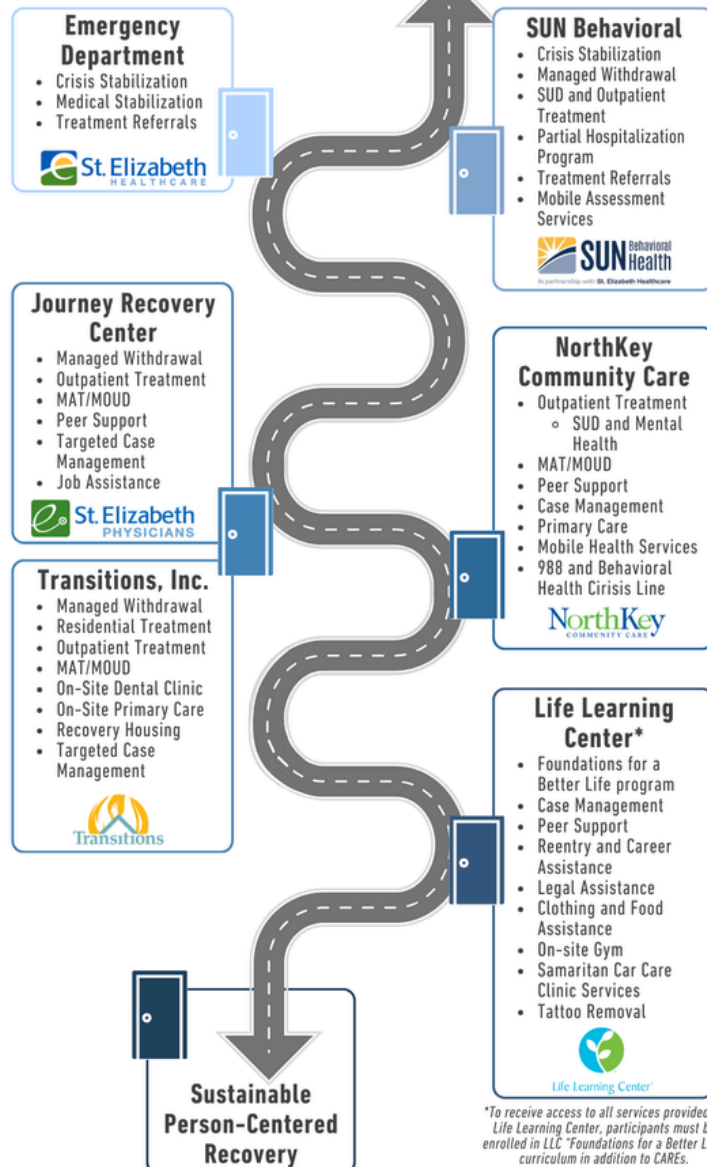
In 2023, Northern Kentucky was designated a **Recovery Ready Community** by the Office of the Governor. Led by the Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy (NKYODCP), this designation followed an extensive process that evaluated the region's resources for individuals with substance use disorders across multiple indicators, including prevention, risk-reduction strategies, and treatment and recovery supports.

The process also provided an opportunity for Northern Kentucky agencies to strengthen the region's recovery-oriented system of care by auditing the **Regional Plan for Substance Use Disorders** (developed by NKYODCP from 2020–2022), conducting asset mapping, and celebrating progress already achieved. As a result, seven Northern Kentucky partners collaborated to develop the **NKY CAREs** proposal, which was submitted to the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission (KYOAAC). The proposal was subsequently awarded **\$1 million** to create a comprehensive roadmap to recovery.

Northern Kentucky is proud to be the **first** region in the state to receive a Recovery Ready Communities designation.

CAREs: Northern Kentucky's Road to Recovery

In NKY, there's no wrong path to recovery.



Pit Stops and Detours

Harm Reduction

- Harm Reduction and Safer Use
- Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution
- Interagency Referrals
- Peer support
- Connection to Public Health Services
 - Women's Health Services
 - Immunizations
 - WIC
 - Infectious Disease Testing
 - HIV and Hepatitis C linkage to care and Case Management
 - Oral Health
 - Smoking Cessation



NKY Addiction Helpline

- Transportation Assistance
- Treatment Navigation
- Recovery Housing Navigation
- Narcan Access
- Interagency Referrals
- Casey's Law Information
- Diversion and QRT
- General FAQ



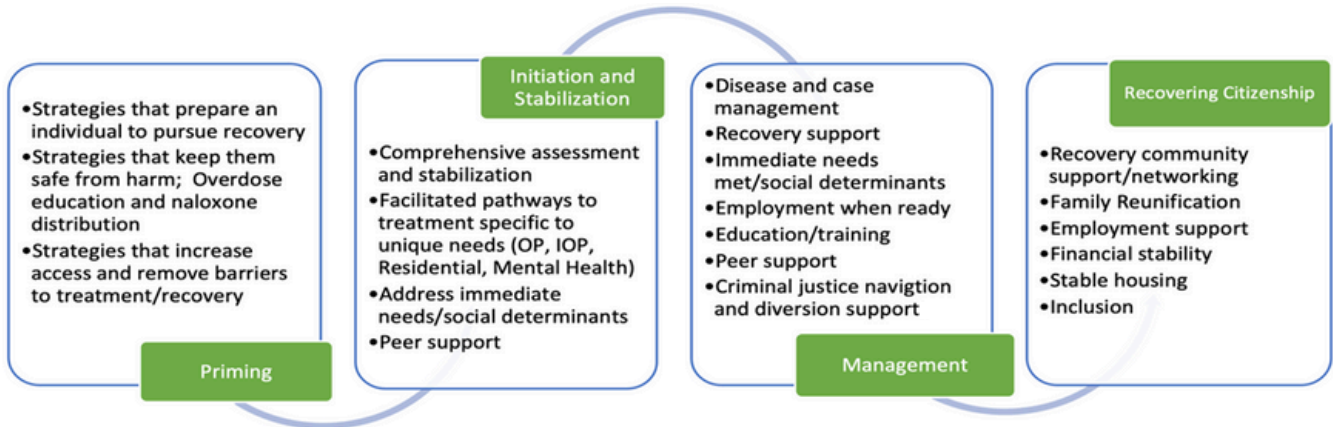
To learn more about CAREs (Coordinating All Recovery Efforts), call the NKY Addiction Helpline at 859-415-9280, or scan the QR Code below.



*To receive access to all services provided by Life Learning Center, participants must be enrolled in LLC "Foundations for a Better Life" curriculum in addition to CAREs.

The What - Building Behavioral Health Infrastructure

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines recovery as “a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.” This definition highlights the personal and evolving process of recovery, emphasizing self-determination, holistic well-being, and the pursuit of individual goals under the four major dimensions of health, home, purpose and community that support a life in recovery.



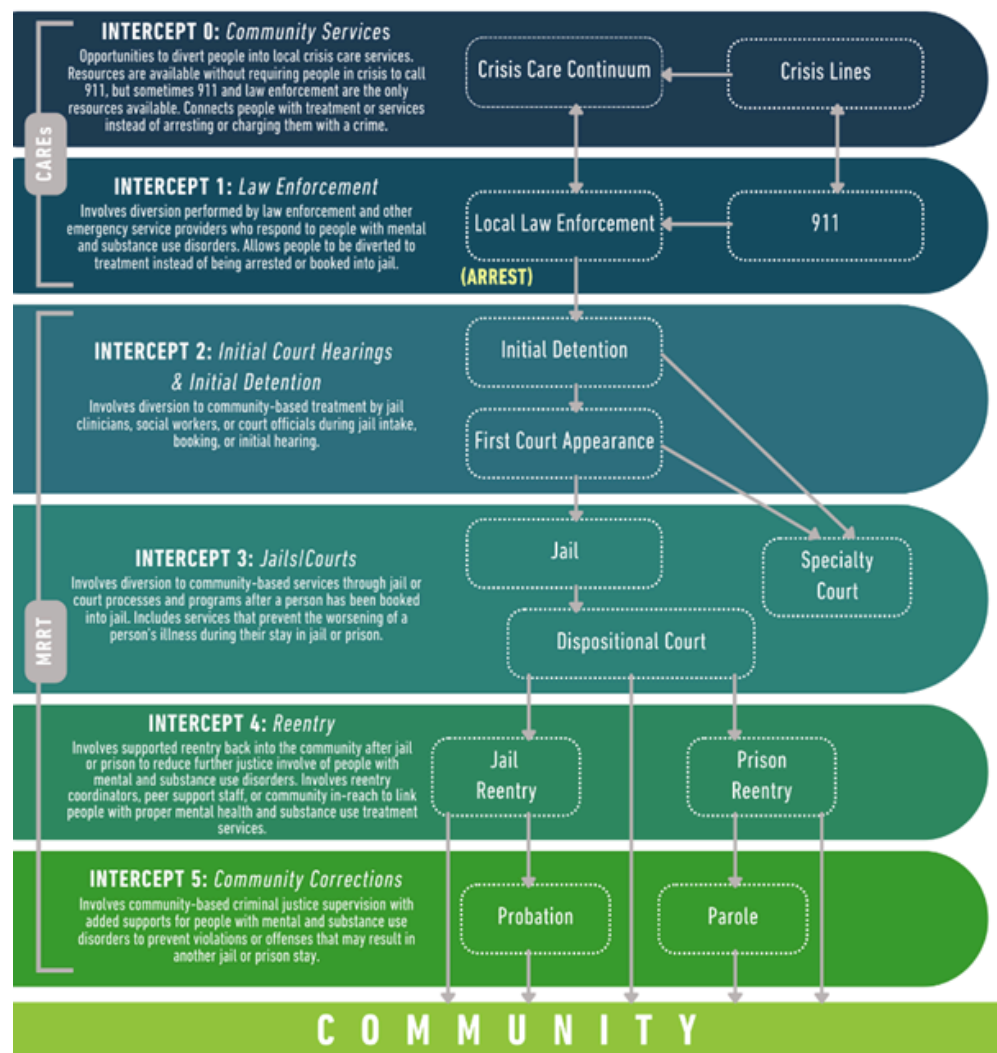
The Sequential Intercept Model

Northern Kentucky has been mapping our behavioral health system since 2020. Taking the approach of the **Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)**, we have examined each point of potential intervention to identify opportunities for enhancing our recovery-oriented system of care. Looking at an intercept point, or an area for timely intervention, has been our guiding framework to support recovery and improve outcomes.

When viewed through the lens of the judicial system, all other systems are naturally encompassed. **This approach is not needs-based, but rather asset-based**, using community asset mapping to create meaningful pathways for individuals and families who require a coordinated continuum of care.

Continuity of care is essential, as it allows people to successfully reunite with their families, re-enter the workforce, and ultimately improve both health and economic outcomes for our region.

SIM mapping serves as a tool to **align public health and public safety efforts** through coordinated organizational strategies and informed local and state policy initiatives. Collaboration remains the key to saving lives and conserving resources while building a healthier, more resilient region.



The Why - Objectives

The Northern Kentucky Coordinating All Recovery Efforts, CAREs, mission is to enhance and expand opportunities for health and recovery for persons with OUD and co-occurring disorders in Boone, Campbell, Grant, and Kenton Counties, especially for those at greatest risk for negative outcomes.

Goal 1

NKY Office of Drug Control Policy will create CAREs, a crisis intercept care coordination team with NKY Collaborative Community Partners to increase access to treatment and recovery supports through the “No Wrong Door” approach.

Goal 2

NKY Health Department (NKHD) will expand harm reduction services, increase peer support services, and overdose education and Naloxone distribution.

Goal 3

Life Learning Center (LLC) will expand diversion efforts, recovery and reentry supports, and strengthen criminal justice integration response strategies to better serve justice-involved individuals and families.

CAREs Programmatic Activities:

Data, Coordination, & Best Practices

- Develop a multi-agency clinical crisis and reentry team, MOAs, and interagency data sharing (NKYODCP).
- Standardize data/outcome reporting, enrollment & ROI forms, and SOPs (NKYODCP).
- Document and disseminate best practices and CQI findings (NKYODCP).
- Identify and coordinate with system intercept points and community stakeholders (NKYODCP).
- Train law enforcement and probation/parole on crisis response, supervision, and data sharing (LLC).

Treatment Access & Care Coordination

- Provide timely level-of-care assessments within 48 business hours for ≥30 individuals/month (CAREs Team).
- Rapidly schedule high-risk discharges into outpatient/intensive outpatient care (NorthKey).
- Provide Targeted Case Management for ongoing stability (NorthKey).
- Expand admission hours and provide licensed clinician support (Transitions).
- Use Uber Health transport procedures for treatment access (NKYODCP).
- Serve as referral source from primary care to recovery services (St. Elizabeth).
- Use patient ID tools to track frequent ED visits and guide interventions (St. Elizabeth).

Crisis Response & Clinical Management

- Provide on-site psychiatric and substance use crisis assessments (SUN).
- Complete DSM-based clinical assessments for treatment planning (SUN).
- Support clinical management at Journey Recovery Center & with partner agencies (St. Elizabeth).
- Support BRIDGE services in Emergency Departments (St. Elizabeth).
- Interface with inpatient SUD units and educators for long-term management (St. Elizabeth).
- Provide immediate managed withdrawal community-based response, meeting individuals where they are (Transitions).

Justice & Reentry Support

- Partner with courts, judges, jails, and public defenders to expand diversion, release programs, and justice access (LLC).
- Ensure OUD treatment and recovery supports during incarceration (LLC).
- Provide reentry wrap-around supports (housing, health, employment, sobriety) (LLC).
- Contract ancillary supports like tattoo removal, car care, and access services for reentry (LLC).
- Act as liaison between agencies to address high-risk individuals facing social, medical, and legal barriers (Transitions).

Community Education & Prevention

- Deliver overdose education and awareness in the community (NKHD).
- Engage SAEP participants to encourage treatment movement (NKHD).
- Provide anti-stigma and overdose prevention leave-behinds (CAREs Team).
- Collaborate with Baby Steps & Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Task Force (St. Elizabeth).
- Collaborate with Opioid Stewardship Committee for safer prescribing practices (St. Elizabeth).

The How - *Implementing a “No Wrong Door” System for Treatment and Recovery*

The **No Wrong Door** regional approach is a collaborative, community-wide strategy embedded in our comprehensive **Regional Response Plan for Substance Use Disorders**.

Recognizing that there is no single path to recovery, this approach ensures that all Northern Kentuckians can access clear, centralized pathways to individualized supports and services. Our goal is that anyone can obtain the help they need, no matter where they enter the region's network of systems.

This approach emphasizes **holistic healing** and the development of **recovery capital**, supporting individuals not just in treatment, but in building sustainable, self-directed lives. At the heart of this system is the **Helpline**, serving as a **Deflection Dispatch Center** that coordinates across systems when individuals experience a crisis related to substance use, mental health, or both.

The program is inherently designed to support **family members, providers, and community partners**, ensuring that everyone involved in an individual's care has access to timely guidance, resources, and coordination.

Opening the Doors to

**TREATMENT
+ RECOVERY**



The Where - *Intercept Points*

Northern Kentucky “doors” for creating access and opportunities for care through the behavioral health emergency system:



The Who - *New Positions*

- **Life Learning Center**
 - Care Coordinator
 - Employment Coordinator
 - Enrollment Coordinator
 - Education Coordinator
 - Peer Support Specialist
 - Peer Support Specialist
 - MRRT (Multidisciplinary Recovery Reentry Team) Coordinator
- **Northern Kentucky Health Department**
 - Health Educator
 - Peer Support Specialist
- **St. Elizabeth Healthcare and Physicians**
 - Emergency Department Nurse Navigator
 - Emergency Department Nurse Navigator
 - Emergency Department Nurse Navigator
 - Out-Patient Peer Support Specialist
- **NorthKey Community Care**
 - Crisis Team Member
- **SUN Behavioral Health**
 - Mobile Assessor
- **Transitions, Inc.**
 - Registered Nurse
 - Crisis Response Team (SUD Therapist)
 - Intake Technician

The Impact - Regional Outcomes

On May 2, 2025, Kentucky released its 2024 Drug Overdose Fatality Report. For the third consecutive year, the state saw a decline in overdose deaths. In total, **1,410 fatalities** were reported, representing a **30.2% decrease from 2023**. Among Black residents, deaths decreased by 37.3%, and all age groups saw reductions except those aged 75–84.

Boone, Campbell, and Kenton Counties, overdose deaths fell by 45% from 2023 to 2024.

Several factors contributed to these declines such as expanded access to treatment on demand, insurance, and Naloxone. Regional collaborative partnerships in care coordination and diversion opportunities, coupled with additional resources from the from **Opioid Abatement Funds from the Attorney General's Office** has provided positive impact in Northern Kentucky.

CAREs Team

• Enrollments - 630

• Interagency Referrals - 200

• Treatment Referrals - 150

Life Learning Center

- Average Recidivism Rate across Year I: 4.20%
- Employments: 256
- Care Items distributed: 64,135
- Legal Services delivered: 163.25 hours
- Care Care Services: 21
- Tattoo Removals: 795
- Graduates: 377



Life Learning Center

NKY Office of Drug Control Policy

| | <u>CAREs</u> | <u>Office</u> |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Helpline Calls: | 514 | 6,220 |
| • Uber Health Rides: | 497 | 2,299 |
| • Uber Health Costs: | \$10,906.20 | \$43,824.63 |
| • Average Ride Cost: | \$21.94 | \$19.04 |



St. Elizabeth Healthcare and Physicians

- ED Connections/SUD Encounters: 2,874
- Follow-up Calls: 2,685
- OUD Assessments at Journey Recovery: 683
- Referrals from St. E ED to SUN: 550
- Total Assessments: 3,182



SUN Behavioral Health

- Assessments for CAREs Clients: 279
- Detox or Managed Withdrawal Clients: 2,770
- Inpatient Treatments: 10,635
- Intensive Outpatient Admissions: 642
- Mobile Assessments completed: 279



NKY Health Department

- Naloxone Kits Mailed in FY25: 1,297
- Reported Lives Saved from Community, Mail and SAEP Naloxone Distribution: 206
- SAEP Conversations and Connections: 58
- Narcan Trainings: 483
- Fentanyl Test Strip Distribution: 2,339
- New Locations for Narcan Distribution: 60



NorthKey Community Care

- OUD Assessments: 2,595
- Clinical Intake Appointments: 369
- 988 Calls: 1,034
- Behavioral Health Calls: 2,033
- Intensive Outpatient Clients: 604
- Individual Therapy Sessions: 450
- Group Therapy Sessions: 21,259
- Psychiatric Medication Visits: 187



Transitions, Inc.

- OUD Assessments: 756
- Psych Evaluations/Services: 492
- Treatment Services: 2,226
- Recovery Housing Placements: 322
- Expanded Intake Hours (after 5pm) Admissions: 248
- Grateful Life Center Clients: 476
- Intensive Outpatient Clients: 302
- Case Management Services: 302



Success Stories

In its first year, the CAREs Program served 630 individuals - below are just two of their stories.

CAREs coordination ensures that providers, caregivers, and community resources work together seamlessly. This collaboration reduces duplication, improves communication, and helps patients receive timely, consistent, and holistic support. Ultimately, it enhances outcomes, increases efficiency, and builds trust by keeping the patient at the center of care.

Sun Behavioral Health – Mobile Assessment Success

Sun Behavioral Health's Mobile Assessor received a referral from the Alexandria Police Department for a man struggling with substance misuse. Although he recognized he needed help, he was hesitant to enter treatment and became emotional. The assessment was conducted in his home, with Police Social Workers present, providing a safe and supportive environment. That same day, he began co-occurring Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Stabilization treatment at SUN. After completing the program, he transitioned to a long-term inpatient facility, successfully completing treatment and advancing on his recovery journey.

Transitions, Inc. - Multi-System and High-Need Client Turnaround

A client initially engaged with Transitions as a high utilizer of services, facing ongoing legal issues, recent incarceration, and frequent emergency room visits related to substance use. Referred first to CAREs partners, Life Learning Center and Journey Recovery Center, he continued to test positive for substances, indicating the need for more intensive care. He was then referred to Transitions, where he participated in both substance use treatment and mental health stabilization through SUN. Today, he is fully engaged at Transitions' long-term treatment facility, The Grateful Life Center, where he has been making steady progress for over two months toward sustained recovery.

Lessons Learned

Client Stability & Engagement

- People struggling with substance use often experience instability (frequent changes in phone/address, lack of transportation), making consistent contact difficult.
- Asking for alternative contacts at engagement improves follow-up.
- Engagement is more successful when individuals are stable, not in acute crisis, as they can better reflect on goals and commit to treatment.
- Some clients require multiple treatment entry points before achieving long-term success.
- Mobile assessments, especially in partnership with law enforcement and judicial systems, help reach transient individuals seeking treatment.
- Follow-up after one month of enrollment is important to ensure coordination and maintain engagement.

Treatment Access & Coordination of Care

- Expanding timely access to evidence-based treatment improves recovery outcomes and reduces recidivism.
- Coordinated care across providers, justice, health, and social systems prevents fragmentation and ensures clients don't fall through the cracks.
- More partners at the table = easier navigation and stronger support for clients, though it increases startup time and system burden.
- Sustained, person-centered approaches reduce reliance on crisis-driven care and improve long-term recovery.
- Systems must integrate pathways for individuals with both substance use and mental health challenges, ensuring coordinated approaches to all behavioral health needs rather than siloed responses.

Data, Privacy, & System Capacity

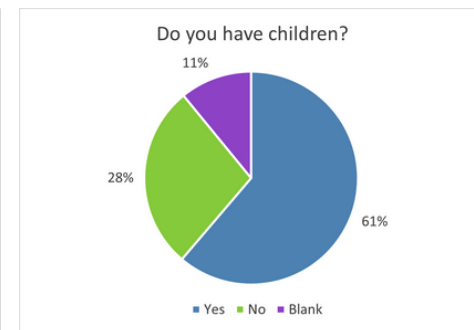
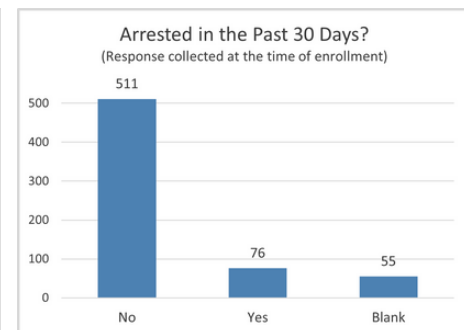
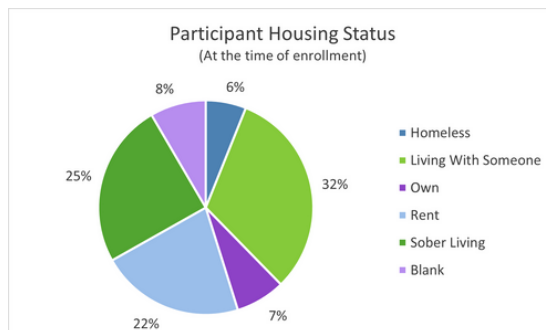
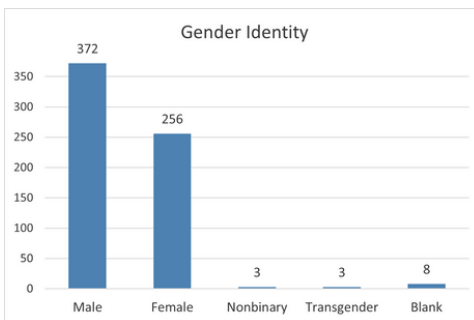
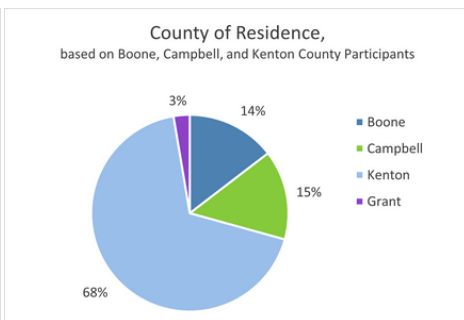
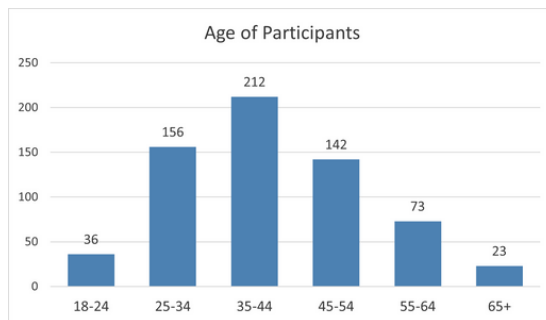
- HIPAA requires sharing only the minimum necessary information, through secure channels, with proper agreements in place.
- Current data systems provide useful insights but are limited; expanded technology is needed for more complex analysis.
- Secure, cross-system data sharing strengthens tracking, identifies service gaps, and informs policy/resource allocation.
- Increased coordination places additional burden on staff and systems, highlighting the need for better infrastructure.

Health & Community Outcomes

- Coordinated interventions improve both physical and behavioral health outcomes.
- Strengthened health outcomes translate into broader community well-being and resilience.
- Addressing social determinants of health (such as housing, employment, transportation, food security, and social supports) is essential to sustaining recovery and reducing risk of relapse.

The Individuals Served -

Data based on information provided by participants at time of enrollment, January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.
Not all 630 participants provided responses for every metric.



The CAREs Team

Steering Committee

- Met 12 times in 2024 as the project governing body to:
 - Oversee the CAREs initiative implementation, including developing Memorandums of Understanding among partners, budgeting, and coordination with State leaders to enhance Northern Kentucky's Recovery-Oriented System of Care.
 - Establish effective warm handoffs through pathways guided by the Sequential Intercept Mapping model.
 - Guide Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts to monitor outcomes, refine processes, and mitigate risks.

Roundtable

- Partners met weekly in 2024 to:
 - Develop processes for identifying CAREs participants at each intercept point.
 - Establish interagency warm handoff protocols to increase continuity of care.
 - Create Participant Navigation Plans to support participants throughout their recovery journey.

Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy Board of Directors

Kris Knochmann, *Judge Executive, Kenton County*
 Gary Moore, *Judge Executive, Boone County*
 Steve Pendery, *Judge Executive, Campbell County*
 Garren Colvin, *CEO, St. Elizabeth Healthcare*
 Jennifer L. Mooney, *Northern Kentucky Health Department Director*
 Scott Hardcorn, *Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force*
 Kimberly Moser, *Kentucky State Representative*

CAREs Steering Committee

County Governments, St. Elizabeth Healthcare, St. Elizabeth Physicians Journey Recovery Center, Transitions, SUN Behavioral Health, NorthKey Community Care, Life Learning Center, and NKY Health Department partners with the Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy to provide oversight of the CAREs Project implementation.

The Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy secured the maximum funding amount of \$1,000,000 for a second year in March 2025.

Amanda Peters, Director
Amy Martin, Assistant Director
Brianna Wolken, Community Health Administrator
Sarah Blackburn, Public Safety Administrator
Julie Hellmann, Regional Resource Specialist

The Funding - Braided and Blended

Braided and blended funding represents a strategic policy approach that aligns federal, state, and local resources to strengthen the continuum of care for substance use disorders. By coordinating funding streams, policymakers can optimize resource allocation, reduce service duplication, address gaps in care, and support sustainable, community-based prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives. This approach also promotes interagency collaboration and enhances the capacity of programs to respond effectively to evolving public health needs.

Kentucky's Opioid Abatement Funds are state-allocated resources derived from opioid settlement agreements. The funds are used to support programs and initiatives that prevent opioid misuse and co-occurring disorders, expand treatment and recovery services, and reduce the impact of opioid-related harms across communities in Kentucky and are managed by the state's Attorney General's office.

Local Funds

Boone, Campbell, and Kenton Counties:
Expansion of police-led diversion and deflection programs. Additional funding will potentially be used to create positions to assist with diversion through pre-trial, alternative sentencing, probation, and parole throughout NKY.

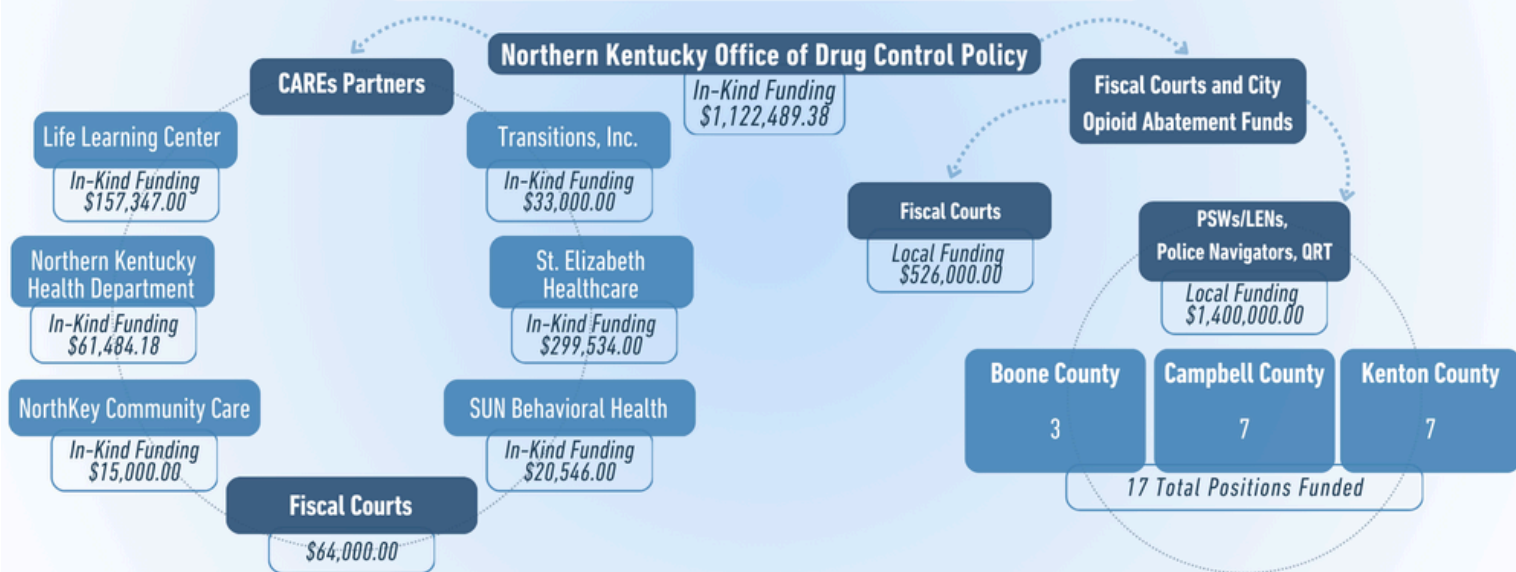
State Funds

Formation of CAREs Team, a crisis intercept and rapid reentry team to enhance and expand opportunities for health and recovery for persons with OUD and co-occurring disorders in Boone, Campbell, Grant, and Kenton Counties, especially for those at greatest risk for negative outcomes.

NKY CAREs In-Kind Funding: Public Safety + Public Health + Public Policy

KYOAAC (Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission) Contributions: \$1,000,000

Total In-Kind and Local Abatement Contributions: \$3,048,489.38



The Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy serves as the backbone of the CAREs Initiative, providing essential guidance and support to ensure the project's implementation stays on schedule and achieves its intended outcomes. By coordinating across public health, public safety, and public policy systems, the Office ensures that both individuals and partner organizations receive the resources and support needed to strengthen Northern Kentucky's behavioral health infrastructure. Their leadership is critical in maintaining a multi-system approach that integrates prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and reentry services for lasting community impact. This report was prepared by the Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, in collaboration with regional partners.

For more information, contact Amanda Peters, APeters@NKYODCP.org, NKYODCP Director and CAREs Project Director, or Brianna Wolken, Brianna.Wolken@nkadd.org, NKYODCP Community Health Administrator and CAREs Administrative Officer. The Northern Kentucky Area Development District serves as the NKYODCP fiduciary agent.