FINDINGS FROM THE RECOVERY CENTER OUTCOME STUDY

2023 Findings at a Glance
INTRODUCTION

Recovery Kentucky was created to help Kentuckians recover from substance abuse, which often leads to chronic homelessness. There are currently 18 Recovery Kentucky centers across the Commonwealth, providing housing and recovery services for up to 2,200 persons simultaneously. Recovery Kentucky is a joint effort by the Kentucky Department for Local Government (DLG), the Department of Corrections, and Kentucky Housing Corporation. Local governments and communities at each Recovery Kentucky center location have also contributed greatly to making these centers a reality.¹ The overall program is composed of 4 main components through which clients advance:

1. **SAFE, OFF-THE-STREET (SOS)**
   - Introduces the client to the program and sober living through a supportive environment, including peers who are in recovery.

2. **MOTIVATIONAL TRACKS (MT 1 AND 2)**
   - Assessments are made on the client’s motivation to change their behaviors and attitudes by participating in educational classes and AA/NA meetings.

3. **PHASE 1**
   - Includes learning responsibility and accountability to the overall community and environment as well as completing classes on working the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

4. **PHASE 2**
   - Clients may become employed or become Peer Mentors to others who are entering the recovery center.

The Behavioral Health Outcome Studies team at the University of Kentucky Center on Drug and Alcohol Research (UK CDAR) independently conducts the Recovery Center Outcome Study (RCOS) which is an annual outcome evaluation that all of the 18 of the Recovery Kentucky centers that participated in RCOS this fiscal year.² Recovery center staff conduct an intake interview when clients enter Phase I after completing SOS and MT 1 and 2 to assess behaviors and problems clients had prior to entering the recovery center. Follow-up interviews are then conducted over the telephone by an interviewer at UK CDAR with eligible, consenting RCOS clients 12 months after Phase 1 entry. A random sample of eligible clients, stratified by target month (based on the intake month), and gender was selected. Client responses are kept confidential to help facilitate the honest evaluation of client outcomes and program services.

This Findings at a Glance report summarizes outcomes for 283 men and women who participated in a Recovery Kentucky program, completed a Phase 1 of a recovery center program and agreed to participate in RCOS follow-up between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. At intake, most clients included in this report were White (91%), not currently married or cohabiting (79%), predominately male (63%) and, on average, 36 years old.

¹ For more information about Recovery Kentucky, contact KHC’s Mike Townsend toll-free in Kentucky at 800-633-8896 or 502-564-7630, extension 715; TTY711; or email MTownsend@kyhousing.org.
FACTORS EXAMINED AT INTAKE AND FOLLOW-UP

Past-6-month substance use

REPORTED ANY ILLEGAL DRUG USE***
- 89% at intake
- 15% at follow-up

REPORTED OPIOID USE***
- 55% at intake
- 2% at follow-up

REPORTED HEROIN USE***
- 38% at intake
- 4% at follow-up

REPORTED METHAMPHETAMINE USE***
- 64% at intake
- 7% at follow-up

How much has opioid and methamphetamine use changed over time?

This trend analysis examines the percent of RCOS clients who reported misusing prescription opiates/opioids, non-prescribed methadone, non-prescribed buprenorphine-naloxone (bup-nx), heroin, and methamphetamine in the 6 months before entering the program from FY 2010 to FY 2021.

REPORTED ANY ALCOHOL USE***
- 41% at intake
- 8% at follow-up

REPORTED ALCOHOL INTOXICATION***
- 36% at intake
- 4% at follow-up

REPORTED BINGE DRINKING***
- 36% at intake
- 3% at follow-up

***p < .001.

2 Sixty-four individuals were not included in the analysis of change in substance use from the 6 months before entering the recovery center to the 6 months before follow-up because they reported being incarcerated the entire period measured at intake (n = 61) and the entire 6-month period before the follow-up (n = 3).

3 Misuse of opioids other than heroin, including prescription opiates, methadone, and buprenorphine-naloxone.

4 Amphetamine, methamphetamine, ecsctacy, Ritalin.
Past-6-month mental health

- **MET STUDY CRITERIA FOR DEPRESSION***
  - 59% at intake
  - 14% at follow-up

- **MET STUDY CRITERIA FOR ANXIETY***
  - 68% at intake
  - 23% at follow-up

- **MET STUDY CRITERIA FOR COMORBID DEPRESSION & ANXIETY***
  - 51% at intake
  - 11% at follow-up

- **REPORTED SUICIDAL IDEATION AND/OR ATTEMPTS***
  - 24% at intake
  - 3% at follow-up

**Trends in depression and/or generalized anxiety**

The percent of clients meeting criteria for depression or generalized anxiety in the 6 months before entering the recovery center has fluctuated from a little less than three-fourths (72%) to 87% over the past seven fiscal years. Each year there has been a significant decrease from intake to follow-up in the number of clients reporting either depression or generalized anxiety – with the lowest percentage at follow-up in FY 2015 (7%) and the highest in FY 2020 (36%).

Past-30-day physical health

- **AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS PHYSICAL HEALTH WAS NOT GOOD***
  - 6.9 at intake
  - 2.2 at follow-up

- **AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS MENTAL HEALTH WAS NOT GOOD***
  - 14.9 at intake
  - 2.4 at follow-up

- **REPORTED CHRONIC PAIN***
  - 21% at intake
  - 14% at follow-up

**p < .01, ***p < .001.

5 Past-6-month measure.
Past-6-month economic indicators

EMPLOYED AT LEAST ONE MONTH***

44% at intake 83% at follow-up

Trends in employment by gender
Since FY 2011, a disparity in employment between men and women in the RCOS follow-up sample has been evident.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTAKE</th>
<th>FOLLOW-UP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2011</td>
<td>FY 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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CURRENTLY HOMELESS***

29% at intake 11% at follow-up

REPORTED DIFFICULTY MEETING BASIC LIVING NEEDS***

33% at intake 20% at follow-up

REPORTED DIFFICULTY MEETING HEALTH CARE NEEDS

21% at intake 15% at follow-up

**p < .001.
Trends in self-reported homelessness

On average, about one-third of clients entering Phase I of the recovery center reported that they were homeless in the 6 months before entering the program.

From FY 2013 to FY 2015, the percent of people reporting homelessness at intake increased and has remained stable from FY 2015 through FY 2019. The percent of people reporting homeless at follow-up decreased from FY 2013 to FY 2015 and had a slight increase in FY 2017 (5%) and then doubled in FY 2018 to 10%, with a reduction to 6% in FY 2019 and 4% in FY 2020. In FY 2021, at follow-up, 11% of individuals reported they were homeless at some point in the preceding 6 months.

Past-6-month criminal justice involvement

REPORTED ANY ARREST***
56% at intake 10% at follow-up

REPORTED BEING INCARCERATED***
79% at intake 11% at follow-up

REPORTED CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUPERVISION***
78% at intake 60% at follow-up

Trends in arrests

Over the past 9 years, over half of RCOS clients reported being arrested at least once in the past 6 months. Each year, at follow-up, significantly fewer clients reported an arrest in the past 6 months.
The multidimensional recovery measure uses items from the intake and follow-up surveys to classify individuals who have all positive dimensions of recovery. The positive dimensions of recovery include: having no substance use disorder, being employed full-time or part-time, not being homeless, having no arrests or incarceration, having no suicidal thoughts or attempts, having fair to excellent health, having recovery support, and having a mid to high quality of life.

**Past-6-month multidimensional recovery**

| WHAT WILL BE MOST USEFUL IN STAYING OFF DRUGS/ALCOHOL AT INTAKE AND FOLLOW-UP |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| **INTAKE**                  | **FOLLOW-UP**               |
| 29% at intake               | 36% support from others in recovery |
| 44% faith or religion       | 28% support from family, friends, partner |
| 43% support from others in recovery | 1% at intake |
| 32% employment              | 25% employment              |
| 81% at follow-up             | 63% at follow-up             |

**RETURN ON INVESTMENT** IN RECOVERY CENTER SERVICES

Estimates of the cost per drug user and alcohol user were applied to the sample to examine the total costs of drug and alcohol abuse to society in relation to expenditures on the Recovery Kentucky program. The cost savings analysis suggests that for every dollar invested in recovery services there was an estimated $2.00 return in avoided costs (i.e., costs to society that would have been expected given the costs associated with drug and alcohol use).

**CONCLUSION**

Overall, Recovery Kentucky program clients made significant strides in all of the targeted areas and have much more support for their recovery after participating in program services. In addition, the Recovery Kentucky Program saved taxpayer dollars through avoided costs to society or costs that would have been expected based on the rates of drug and alcohol use.


**p < .001.**

It is important to keep in mind that the RCOS sample includes only clients who advanced to Phase 1 after completing the SOS and Motivational Tracks and who agreed to be contacted for the follow-up survey 12 months after entering Phase I.