



Hamilton County
**Addiction
Response Coalition**

HAMILTON COUNTY'S RESPONSE TO THE ADDICTION CRISIS

CCAO Summer Symposium | August 31, 2026



PRESENTERS



CHIEF TOM SYNAN

*Village of Newtown Police
Department & Co-Founder
of the Hamilton County
Addiction Response
Coalition*



MIKE DAVENPORT

*Commander
Hamilton County Heroin
Task Force & Law
Enforcement Director of
the Hamilton County
Quick Response Team*



MEAGAN GUTHRIE

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Hamilton County Office of
Addiction Response &
Civilian Programming
Director of the Hamilton
County Quick Response
Team*



SARAH BECKMAN

*Care & Training Liaison
Hamilton County Quick
Response Team*



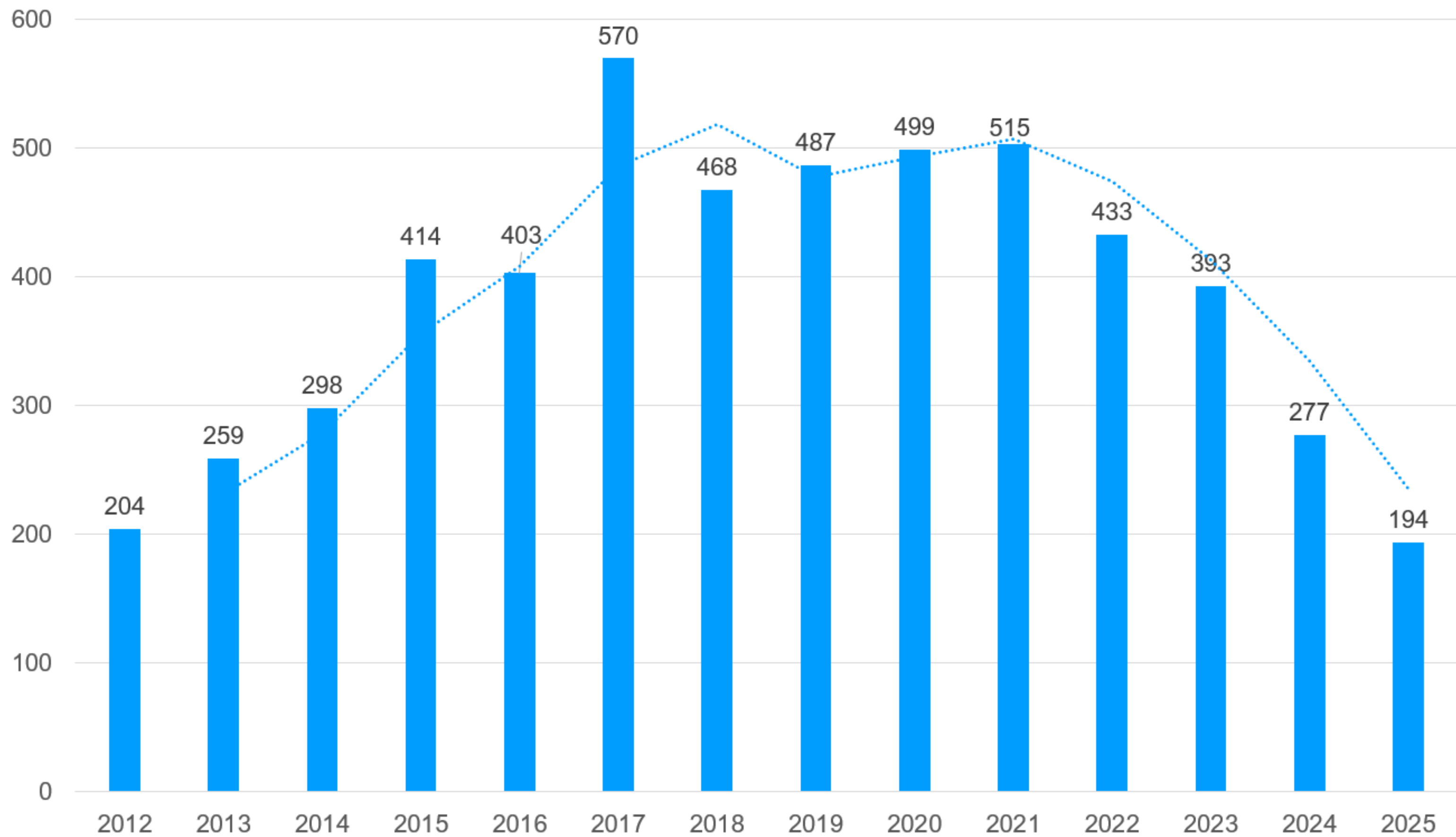
**Hamilton County
Addiction
Response Coalition**

HC ARC

- **Founded by Commissioner Greg Hartman as the Hamilton County Heroin Coalition (HCHC) in 2015 as a state of emergency response to the Heroin Epidemic.**
- **Commissioner Denise Driehaus has served as Executive Chair since joining the Board of County Commissioners in 2017.**
- **In early 2020, we changed our name to Addiction Response Coalition to reflect the comprehensive work of the Coalition, not for a particular drug but combatting the addiction crisis itself.**
- **The 20-member steering committee meets on a monthly basis and the 1,100+ Full Coalition meets on a quarterly basis.**

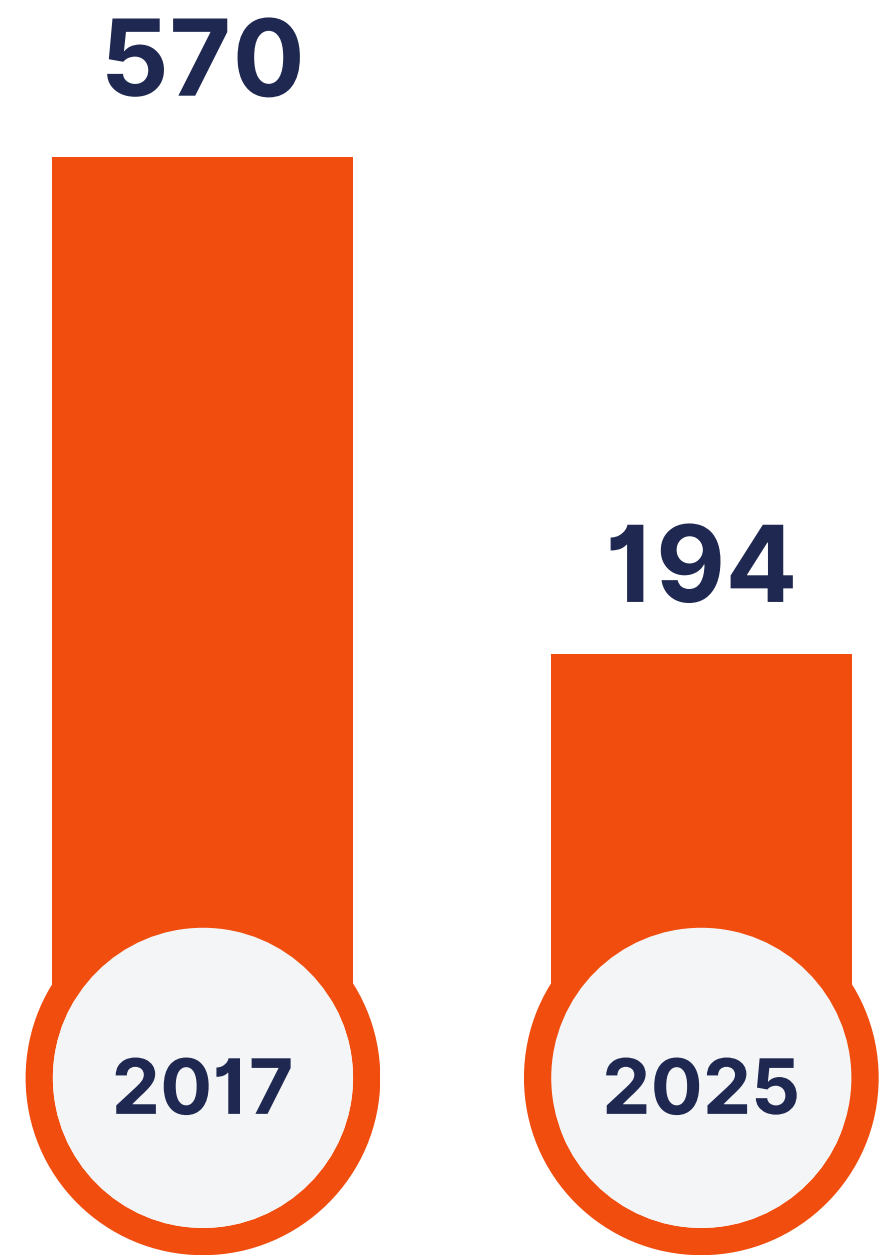
OUR PILLARS





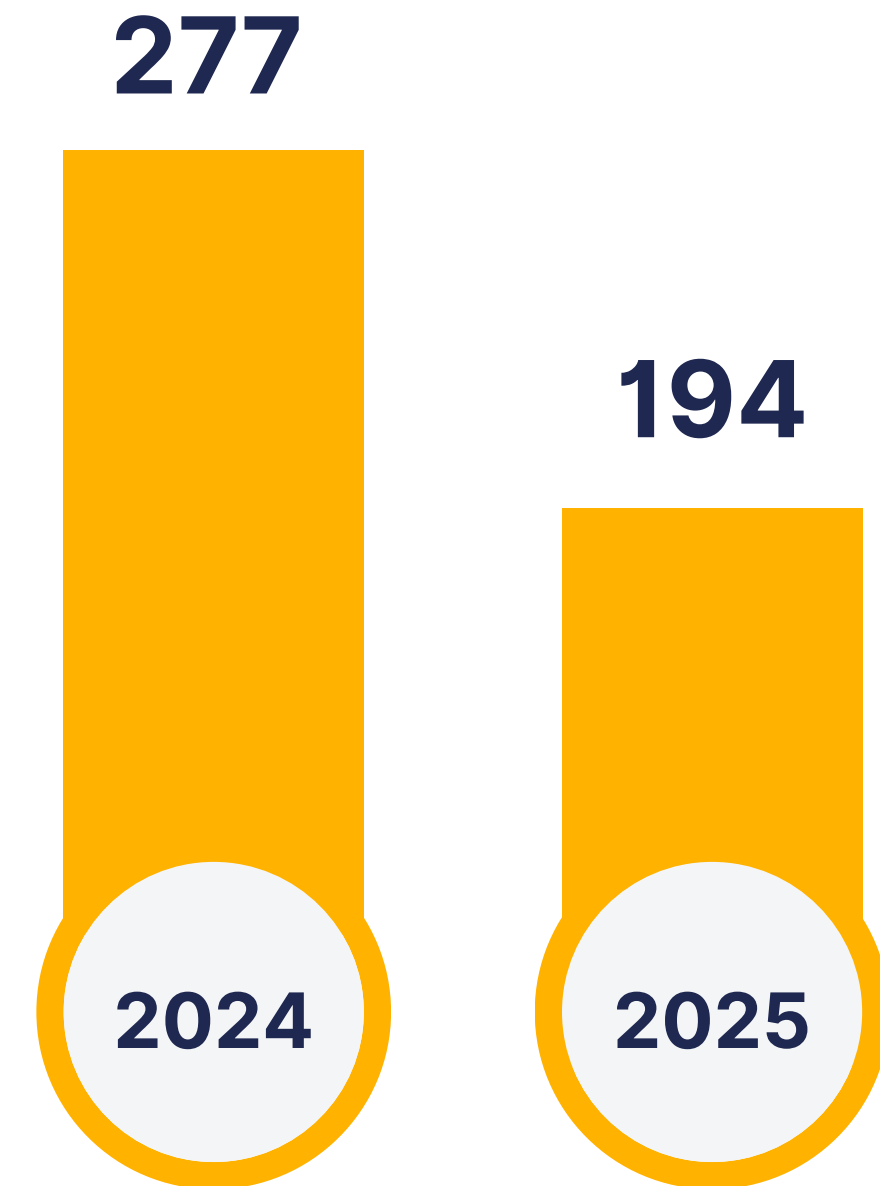
■ Hamilton County - Coroner's Office





Since Crisis' Peak

↓ 66%



Last Year

↓ 30%





Hamilton County

Heroin Task Force

What Solves a Fatal Overdose Investigation? Identifying the Factors that Drive Case Clearance and Strengthen Drug-Induced Homicide Investigations





Hamilton County Heroin Task Force

THE HAMILTON COUNTY HEROIN TASK FORCE (HCTF) WAS FORMED AS A DEDICATED RESOURCE TO COMBAT RISING TRENDS IN OVERDOSE FATALITIES.

HEROIN TASK FORCE

In 2014, Hamilton County had 298 overdose deaths, compared to 87 homicides.

By June of 2015, HCTF began investigating overdose deaths in an attempt to arrest the source of supply linked to the death.

We only start drug investigations if the investigation can be tied to a deceased person from a fatal overdose.

Out of our 2,000+ cases, we have successfully convicted 50 cases.



**Hamilton County
Heroin Task Force**

TASK FORCE PARENT AGENCIES PARTNERSHIPS



DISSERTATION

2,000+ cases have gone cold. Why?

- **Detective caseload**
- **Technology (Brute Force Extraction for cellular devices) not advanced**
- **DNA**
 - **Not enough to create a “major” profile**
- **Prosecutor caseload**
 - **They take the low-hanging fruit.**
- **Autopsy Cause and Manner of Death**

RQ: Will the creation and implementation of a dedicated “unit” or a framework that unites key stakeholders improve the ability to solve cold cases?



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Heroin Task Force**

WHY WE'RE HERE





COLD CASE MODELS

No research thus far on fatal overdose Cold Case Models.

- **Do they even exist?**

Cases should be prioritized based on the likelihood of investigations leading to clearances (Davis et al., 2014):

- **Crime context**
- **Initial investigation results**
- **Viable evidence**

Models have been created for Cold Case Group implementation, but are all focused on homicides and those with named suspects (Adcock & Stein, 2014).

Cold Case models should work in partnership with key stakeholders (Toolin et al., 2022).



**Hamilton County
Heroin Task Force**



**Hamilton County
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Cold Case Review Panel Members



James Drake (JD)
Cold Case Investigator
Hamilton County
Heroin Task Force



Lindsey Insko
University of
Cincinnati, PhD
Student School of
Criminal Justice



Mike Dusold
Father of the Late
Brian Dusold



Erica Parks
Care Coordinator, The
Hope Line



Nick Warnecke
ONIC Intelligence
Manager, Ohio
Narcotics Intelligence
Center



Dennis Lowe
Drug Task Force Liaison,
Ohio Department of
Public Safety's Office of
Criminal Justice Services



Maria Stewart
Chief Coroner
Investigator
Hamilton County
Coroner's Office



**Federal Law
Enforcement Partner**

Vacant



Dave Dornette,
Assistant United
States Attorney,
Southern District of
Ohio



Rebecca Barnett
Hamilton County
Prosecutor's Office



Michael Davenport
Commander
Hamilton County
Heroin Task Force



Meagan Guthrie
Director
Hamilton County
Office of Addiction
Response

***In accordance with best practice (Toolin et al., 2022), members are representative of key stakeholders.*

SUCCESS GOES BEYOND ARREST STATISTICS

**STATE PROSECUTION
FEDERAL PROSECUTION
INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP
LINKAGE TO CARE
ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS
INTERVENTION POINTS TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS
LETTING FAMILY KNOW THAT THEIR LOVED ONES MATTER**

SUCCESSES AND IMPACTS WILL BE EVALUATED BY UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI Ph.D. STUDENT AND DATA ANALYST LINDSEY INSCO

FAMILY SUPPORT TRAUMA INFORMED RESPONSES

Opening cold cases is psychologically demanding on the victims' family (Toolin et al., 2022).

Our thought:

Given that deflection teams provide valuable recovery resources (Diriba & Whitlock, 2022) that leverage trauma informed responses to guide healing (Wilson et al., 2013).

- Implement family support through Hamilton County Quick Response Team (QRT) to help families through the legal and process.



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CASE STUDY ($N = 10$)
CASES OPENED YEAR TO
DATE



DECEDENT CHARACTERISTICS

	Case Frequency	Percentage (%)
DECEDENT		
<i>SEX</i>		
Male	7	70
Female	3	30
<i>MANNER OF DEATH</i>		
Drug Intoxication	9	90
Accident	1	10
<i>DRUGS IN BODY</i>		
Fentanyl	8	80
Norfentanyl	5	50
Acetyl Fentanyl	3	30
Cocaine	6	60
Cocaine Metabolite	7	70
Methamphetamine	2	20
Xylazine	1	10



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SUSPECT CHARACTERISTICS

	Case Frequency	Percentage (%)
SUSPECT		
<i>IDENTIFIED?</i>		
No	1	10
Yes	9	90
<i>SEX</i>		
Male	9	90
Female	0	0
Unknown	1	10
<i>CRIMINAL HISTORY?</i>		
No	0	0
Yes	9	90
Unknown	1	10
<i>US CITIZEN?</i>		
No	0	0
Yes	9	90
Unknown	1	10
<i>GANG AFFILIATION?</i>		
No	9	90
Yes	0	0
Unknown	1	10



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INVESTIGATORY RECOMMENDATIONS

	Frequency	Frequency Completed	Completed (%)
INVESTIGATORY			
Submit to prosecution as is	2	2	100
Interview witness	4	4	100
Handwriting analysis	1	0	0
Acquire medical expertise	1	1	100
Retention request	3	3	100
Conduct buy walk	2	2	100



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NON-INVESTIGATORY RECOMMENDATIONS

	Frequency	Frequency Completed	Completed (%)
NON-INVESTIGATORY			
Contact family for family support	10	9	90
Contact family for grief support	10	9	90
Send phone content to family	9	9	100
Send business letter	2	2	100
RMS records	2	0	0
Environmental photos for examination	10	10	100
Contact recovery housing	3	3	100



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CURRENT CASE STATUS

	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Cases with executed search warrants	6	60
Cases with issued indictments	3	30
Pending court cases	3	30
Active investigation	3	30
<i>CASES CLOSED</i>		
Convictions	2	20
Deceased suspect(s)	1	10
Lack of concrete evidence	1	10

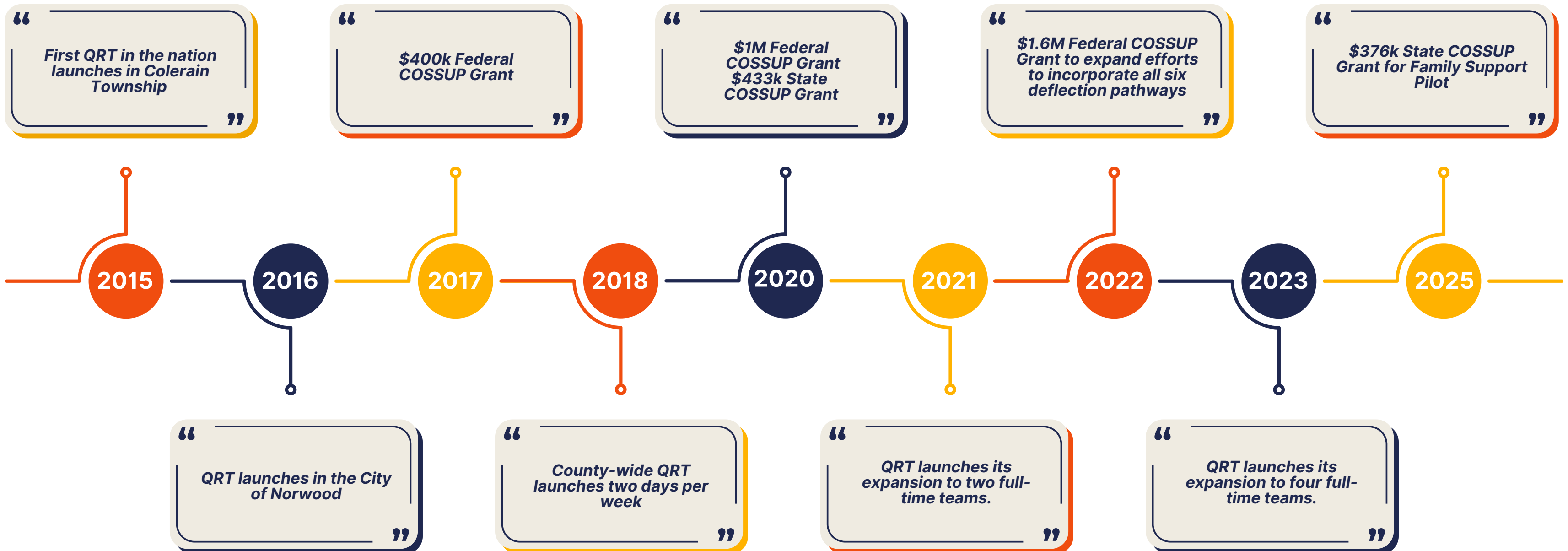


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Heroin Task Force



Hamilton County
**Quick Response
Team**

Deflection Programming Timeline



What is Deflection?



There are **over 1,000** known deflection programs across the United States.

**Out of systems.
Into care.**

Deflection is a **collaborative** intervention that connects public safety (Police, Fire/EMS, and Military) with health systems (Public and Behavioral Health) to create community-based pathways to care for individuals experiencing substance use disorders, mental health disorders, or other unmet social determinants of health.





Services

Treatment

Recovery Supports

Housing

Care Navigation

**Social Determinants
of Health**

Individuals

**Substance Use
Disorders**

**Mental Health
Conditions**

**Co-occurring
Disorders**

**Unhoused
Individuals**

Deflection Pathways



Self-Referral

An individual seeks out law enforcement on their own initiative to receive a referral to treatment without fear of arrest.



Active Outreach

Deflection is initiated by law enforcement by proactively and intentionally identifying an individual or group for a warm hand-off to services.



Prevention

Law enforcement engages an individual while on routine patrol, but no criminal charges are brought against the individual.



Intervention

Law enforcement holds charges in abeyance or issues a citation with a requirement of the individual to take certain actions.



Post-Overdose Response

A co-responder team attempts to engage an individual in treatment as part of an overdose response.



Community-Based Response

The program is unique and responsive to local behavioral health needs, using evidence-based practices.

Deflection Pathway Programs



Self-Referral

Drug Checking
513 Relief Bus
Participant



Active Outreach

Proactive Outreach

Holistic Outreach for Priority People (HOPP)



Prevention

Holistic Outreach for Priority People (HOPP)



Intervention

Specialty Court Dockets

Operation BRIDGE

Operation New Beginnings (OVI)



Post-Overdose Response

Door Knocks



Community-Based Response

NaloxBoxes

Family & Grief Support

Wellness Checks

Anti-Stigma & Trauma-Informed Care Training



Hamilton County
Quick Response
Team

How can we help you?

QRT partners trained **navigators** – individuals with lived experience or behavioral health specialists - with **law enforcement officers** to create non-arrest pathways **out** of the criminal justice system and **into** essential services within the continuum of care.

These services include substance use and mental health treatment, recovery supports, housing, case management, and other resources addressing social determinants of health.



Services Provided by the QRT

Linkage to Care

Direct access and
referral to
treatment

Overdose
Prevention
Supplies

Family Support &
Counseling

Community
Outreach,
Education, and
Training

Wellness Checks

Peer Navigators
are champions
for recovery
through
personalized
paths



**Out of 3,449
individuals
referred for
post-overdose
response...**

61%

were contacted

2,121 Individuals

54%

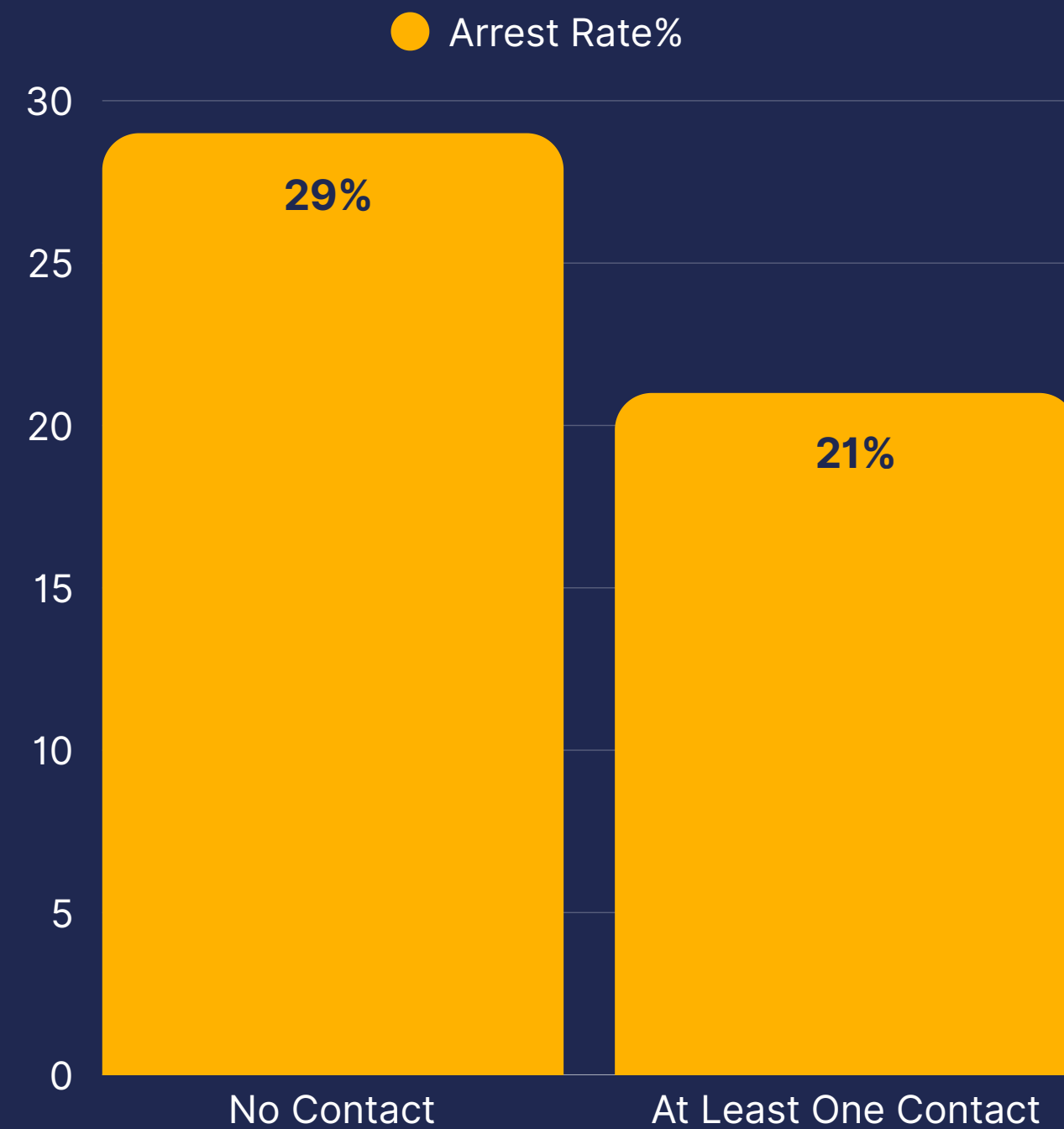
**were connected or
referred to services**

1,150 Individuals



Post-Overdose Response Panel

Arrest Rates



Post-Overdose Response Panel Arrest Rates



Any contact with
the QRT is
associated with a
30.5% decrease in
the likelihood of
arrest in the
following year.

Controlled for age, race, gender, prior arrests,
prior overdoses, previous QRT contact, receipt
of naloxone, and time incarcerated.



Cost Savings & Return on Investment (ROI)

Total County Investment



Every **\$1 invested** in
QRT programming
returns more than
\$24 in avoided
system costs

*through reduced hospital utilization and fewer
overdose-related ambulance responses.*

Program Cost:

2 QRT Units (1-year investment): \$400,000

Total Cost Savings Generated:

\$9,806,763

(Reduced Hospital Encounters & Ambulance Runs)

Net Benefit

\$9,806,763 (total savings) – \$400,000 (investment)

= \$9,406,763 in Net Savings



Evidence-Based Impact



27,600+

Inbound
Referrals

for 9,727 unique individuals



41,100+

Interactions

68% of which are Face-to-Face



57,300+

Overdose Prevention
Materials Distributed



1,600+

Community Events

Data from April 2018 - June 2026



Meet OUR TEAM



Meagan Guthrie
Hamilton County Office of
Addiction Response

Director



Michael Davenport
Hamilton County Heroin
Task Force

Commander



Abigail Fritsch
Hamilton County Office of
Addiction Response

Grants & Strategic
Initiatives Administrator



Peggy Schneider
Hamilton County
Heroin Task Force

Overdose Fatality Review
Liaison Task Force Officer



Nan Franks
Hamilton County Office of
Addiction Response

Family Support Counselor



Sarah Beckman
Hamilton County Office of
Addiction Response

Care & Training Liaison



Andrea Holtman
Hamilton County Office of
Addiction Response

Quick Response Team
Coordinator



Ron Murphy
Village of Amberley
Police Department

QRT Officer Lead



Dashanna Smith
Hamilton County Office of
Addiction Response

Navigator



Michael May
Hamilton County Office of
Addiction Response

Navigator



Mike Dumont
Hamilton County Sheriff's
Office

QRT Officer



Sharese Williams
Ohio State Patrol

QRT Officer



Rod Housely
Hamilton County Sheriff's
Office

QRT Officer



Will Mahone
Village of Amberley
Police Department

QRT Officer



Hamilton County
Quick Response Team





Kentucky files first lawsuit against Purdue Pharma

2007

Cases consolidated into National Prescription Opiate MDL
Cherokee Nation files in tribal court against Big Three – CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart

2017

Mckinsey settled w/47 states for \$573M

2021

Payments to states and local subdivisions are disbursed from more settlements.

2023

2015

Kentucky settles w/ Purdue Pharma \$24M

2019

More than 40 states suing Purdue Pharma
Bellwether trials begin for Summit and Cuyahoga Co, and Muscogee National and Blackfeet Tribe

2022

Big Three & J&J finalize the settlement for the \$26B w/states.
First payments from Distributors released.
Tribes settle w/ manufacturers and pharmacies for a total value of over \$590M

WHERE IS THE MONEY COMING FROM?

Purdue Pharma
Bankruptcy

"Big Three" -
Walmart, CVS,
and Walgreens

McKesson,
AmeriSourceBerg
en, Cardinal
Health, & Janssen
(aka J&J)

Malinckrodt

McKinsey

Teva, Endo

More continue to
be settled every
year...

HOW MUCH?



**Approximately \$56B for
states, counties, and cities**



More than \$1.5B for Tribes

HOW CAN THE FUNDS BE USED?

Strategies for Community Recovery

- Treatment
- Early Intervention and Crisis Support
- Criminal-Justice Involved Persons
- Mother-Centered Treatment and Support
- Recovery Support
- Prevention
- Prevent Over-Prescribing of Opioids
- Prevent Overdose Deaths (Harm Reduction)
- Services for Children
- First Responders
- Workforce

Strategies for Statewide Innovation and Recovery

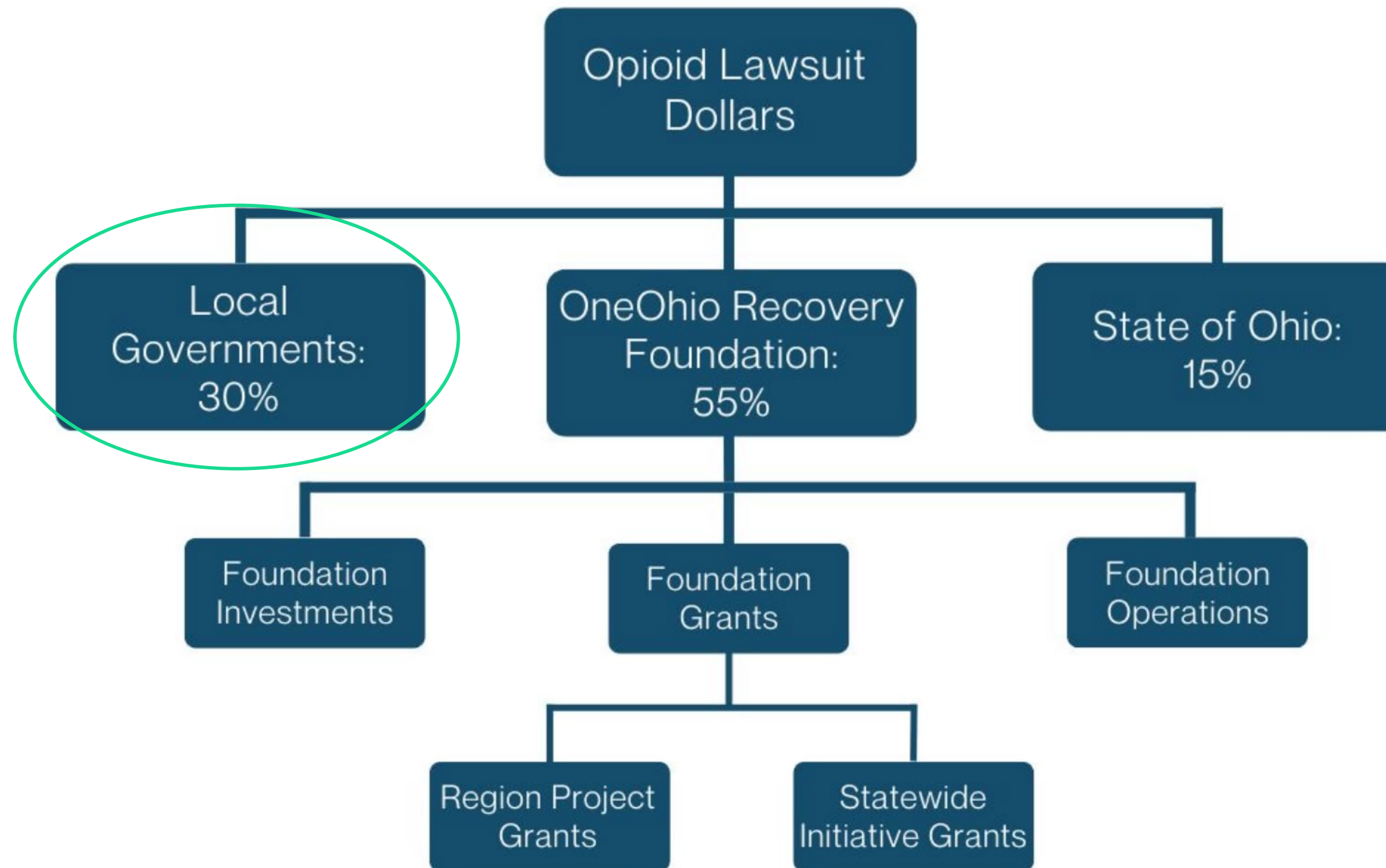
- Leadership, Planning, and Coordination
- Stigma Reduction, Training, and Education
- Research

Strategies for Sustainability

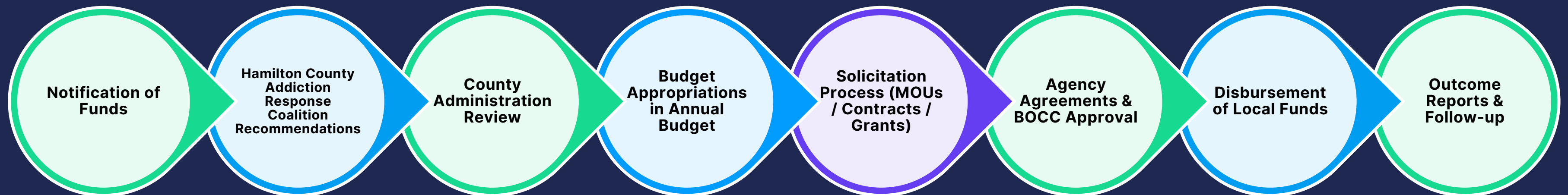


Hamilton County OHIO

OPIOID LAWSUIT SETTLEMENT/AWARD ALLOCATIONS



LOCAL DISTRIBUTION ANNUAL PROCESS



Treatment (\$1,747,232.37)

Talbert House Crisis: \$650,000.00

Capital Funding will cover a portion of the construction for the Hamilton County Crisis Center (HCCC). Upon opening in Summer 2025, funding will also cover key positions for the Engagement Center, which will then be located in the HCCC.

First Step Home: \$500,000.00

Gap Funding to cover essential services provided to women and children, and notably, pregnant and post-partum women. As one of the only maternity/post-partum providers in the area, the funding covers essential personnel, recovery housing amenities, and infrastructure necessary to run programming.

University of Cincinnati Emergency Department: \$296,332.37

Gap funding to reinstate max capacity of The Early Intervention Program, within the UC Emergency Department. Staff conduct screenings, testing, administer harm reduction materials, and offer linkage to care for patients, via three Health Promotion Advocates and one Clinical Research Assistant.

Serenity House: \$240,900.00

Capital funding will cover the renovations of a currently owned property, in Price Hill, increasing the agency's Recovery Housing bed capacity by nine beds. The agency will continue to report back to the OneOhio Local Team regarding performance measures related to the Recovery Housing program and expansion of services post construction.

The Hamilton County Coroner's Office: \$60,000.00

Capital funding will cover the purchase of an additional Gas Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometer (GC/MS) machine. The machine will increase timeliness of drug testing, allowing partners access to quicker analysis of drug trends, promoting concurrent data out into the community.

Recovery Supports (\$1,319,292.29)

Addiction Services Council: \$400,000.00

A collaborative project that funds Addiction Services Council, Hamilton County Public Defenders Office Adult Social Services Agency, OneCity for Recovery HOPE Line, and On the Front Lines Community Alliance. Together the agencies will provide case management, peer recovery services, and professional development to criminal justice involved individuals.

HER Cincinnati: \$400,000.00

Funding will cover the key positions required to implement peer recovery services and resources needed to expand case management services for HER Cincinnati's current and future residents. HER Cincinnati serves women who are victims of human trafficking, chronic homelessness, and living with co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders.

EasterSeals: \$319,292.29

An expansion of their Veteran's service program, funding will cover the implementation of peer recovery services and expanded wrap around supports, specifically workforce development, for Veterans in recovery.

The LIT Movement: \$100,000.00

The primary focus of the project will be removing barriers for participants to employment, recovery housing placement, and transportation. Funding will cover rental subsidies for new participants, basic necessities, recovery support materials, and the purchase of a van for the agency to assist in client transportation.

Joseph House: \$100,000.00

As a veteran-led behavioral health organization, funding will establish a new Senior Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPS) position. This position will conduct intakes, provide onboarding, and work with clients to develop care plans and provide referrals.

Prevention (\$833,000.00)

YMCA: \$300,000.00

Funding will cover the implementation of the Botvin LifeSkills Training in 22 school based and teen programs starting in Fall 2025. In addition, the YMCA will also engage parents through the Parent Champion Network to equip them with tools to facilitate conversations about substance abuse prevention at home.

Fatherless to Fearless: \$240,000.00

Funding will provide prevention programming to predominantly minority youth girls, ages 13-18, suffering from absent parenting. B.R.I.D.G.E.® is an 8 or 14-week school-based socioemotional learning (SEL) program designed to build resilience, self-efficacy, and healthy coping strategies, equipping participants with the skills to avoid substance misuse.

Glad House: \$200,000.00

Via the Champs Prevention Program, youth who are impacted by their caregiver's substance use will receive evidence-based curricula and via structured afterschool and summer programming. GLAD House focuses on two key areas: mental health treatment and substance use prevention.

A1 Stigma Free: \$93,000.00

As a grass roots agency, with a mission of reducing the incidence of drug overdose among African Americans, A1SF will focus on outreach and education in the black community via media campaigns, events and culturally appropriate literature materials.

Questions?



Hamilton County
**Office of Addiction
Response**