

**Strategic Plan
Robeson RCORP
(Pembroke, NC)
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Introduction

This report presents the strategic plan developed by the Robeson Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) in response to the increasing loss of life and poor health outcomes due to opioid misuse. Since July 2019, representatives from 8 agencies providing substance use services in Robeson County met monthly to contribute to the development of this action plan to save lives and reduce illnesses related to substance misuse. The eight agencies that make up the Robeson RCORP are Robeson Health Care Corporation, the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, Monarch, Robeson County Department of Public Health, Robeson County Department of Social Services, Robeson County District Courts, Robeson Substance Use Coalition, and University of North Carolina at Pembroke. In addition to representatives from the identified agencies, 128 individuals that include adult community residents, service users and providers also contributed to the development of the strategic plan through their participation in interviews and surveys during the gap analysis.

Selection of Robeson RCORP Priorities

A series of systematic processes were used to identify and prioritize the key issues that could guide opioid misuse programming in Robeson County. This process spanned over several months with multiple actions that involved consortium members and community members through focus groups and surveys. A timeline of key activities that were completed in the development of this strategic plan is presented below:

- In July 2019, stakeholders came together for an initial visioning exercise, in which they began to broadly state what they hoped to see happen in order to address substance misuse in Robeson County.
- In September 2019, surveys were distributed to community stakeholders to gather their input on the extent of the problem, consequences, access to care, perceived gaps and recommendations. Service users were asked to complete a questionnaire that allowed them to services that they valued in their recovery.
- In October 2019, the consortium held the initial strategic planning meeting that was led by an external facilitator. Prior to the meeting, participants were provided with a summary of the needs assessment results and service gaps prior to the meeting. The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was used to engage consortium members in a guided discussion with the goal to reach consensus on several key points: Who are we? Why are we here? What do we do well? What can this consortium do to improve Robeson County's continuum of care? Participants responded considering the Vision, Values, and Mission of the consortium and feasibility of successful programming to address the identified issues given available resources. Four key priority areas were identified that will be the focus of the consortium's efforts aimed at improving Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery in Robeson County.
- In November 2019, consortium members met to discuss strategies and activities and agree on who would be responsible and the time frame.

The 4 priority areas are discussed next highlighting relevant gaps identified in the analysis and evidence-based, promising, and innovative approaches to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdose in rural communities.

PRIORITY AREA 1: Stigma Surrounding Substance Use

A. Assessment Summary

The gap analysis highlighted several social and environmental factors that hinder successful engagement with prevention, treatment and recovery services for Robeson County residents, such as lack of health insurance, higher poverty and unemployment rates that cause many people not to afford needed services. However, a more pervasive factor reported by all community stakeholder groups is stigma. The Robeson RCORP survey asked participants to identify the greatest challenges faced by the community in its attempt to address the issue of opioid misuse. Community residents, service users and providers reported 130 statements that described challenges and barriers in the county's substance use programming. Of these, 38 statements were on stigma, which represented about 29% of the reported challenges. Specific examples of stigma reported by participants included:

- “We need more people in the community to understand what we are going through. They be like, oh well, they chose that life. They doing it to themselves. But like, they don't know what it's really like. They be looking down on you all the time but they don't know how hard it is. Like, I wish they knew more about addiction so they wouldn't judge me so much.” (Service User)
- “I had a case I had to report (child welfare case where parent lost custody) and Medicaid was cut out. So then self-pay is your only option and most can't afford that.” (Service Provider)
- “When people are dying from the use of opioids the family wants to say they died of natural causes or heart attack.” (Adult Community Resident)

A major consequence of the stigma related to substance use in Robeson County is the expanded social distance between individuals experiencing substance use issues and the general community which interferes with sustained recovery:

- Participants bemoaned lack of support from community leaders and the public whose message seemed to be characterized by “lack of compassion” and the view that “offenders should be arrested and not treated.” (Various Adult community residents and Service Providers)
- “As soon as they hear that you got a problem then they don't treat you the same.” (Service User)
- When adult community residents were asked about their participation in opioid misuse prevention activities in the community, only 20.6% reported having attended an event in the last 12 months.

B. Problem Statement

Stigma surrounding substance use accounts for 29% of all the challenges reported by community residents, service users, and providers in Robeson County. Stigma interferes with successful prevention, treatment, and recovery. Only 20.6% of Robeson County adults reported participating in opioid prevention efforts. As a result of this stigma, the social distance between those affected by substance use and community leaders and the general public is increasing.

C. Target Population

- **Direct Target:** Citizens of Robeson County, Service Providers, Service Users
- **Indirect Targets:** Policymakers

D. Goal

Reduce stigma surrounding substance use in Robeson County.

Specific steps and evidence-based or innovative strategies to achieve the goal include:

(1) Assess stigma experiences in Robeson County.

A formal assessment of stigma experiences in Robeson County is needed to understand the nature and drivers of substance use stigma and discrimination. This will involve a comprehensive assessment of stigma experiences across different stakeholders including service users, community residents, service providers, and community structures in Robeson County. The assessment will employ quantitative and qualitative methods such as standardized stigma assessments, community mapping, and photovoice. The Health Stigma and Discrimination Framework¹ will guide the identification of key areas of focus for the proposed assessments and provide a framework for continued monitoring of the overall project. This objective is important because it will generate data critical for improving stigma-related interventions and service delivery.

(2) Provide education on addiction-related stigma.

Information-based educational interventions are the most common approach to addressing public stigma against any condition, and their content is centered on condition-specific knowledge gaps, stereotypes, fears, and drivers of stigma^{2, 5, 6}. The impact of education is enhanced when combined with contact-based interventions that provide opportunities for people with lived experiences of the condition to share their challenges and successes in-person or through print or video materials⁵. Combined education and contact interventions will be used to educate various stakeholder groups in the community. Educational resources that combine factual information on addiction and the multiple pathways of recovery depicted in the lives of Robeson County residents in recovery will be developed and disseminated in different formats across the county. The educational resources will include, rack cards, photovoice and digital storytelling products of local people in recovery. The educational materials will be distributed around the community through various community agencies such as public library, schools, hospitals, clinics and social service agencies. This objective is important because it will provide community specific educational resources that celebrate successes of local residents.

(3) Increase interpersonal contact between those in recovery and citizens without addiction-related lived experiences: People without stigmatized conditions may have little to no direct contact with those who have these conditions, a scenario that fosters distrust. This objective is important in that it will promote interpersonal contact between those in recovery and others in the broader community through organized community events aimed at reducing the social distance between the two groups⁴. Interpersonal contact will be promoted through community wide

events that celebrate those in recovery and their families and to raise general awareness. Local resources that will be leveraged to accomplish this objective include Robeson Substance Use Coalition's Annual Recovery Walk/Run and Voices in Recovery Facebook page, as well as the Robeson County Family Treatment Court's Recovery Celebration Event. These existing contact events will be enhanced by adding (1) Community Forums/Conferences that bring together service providers, community stakeholders, and people in recovery. These conferences will allow people in recovery and their families to serve as conference speakers⁷. (2) Creation of anti-stigma champions who are individuals with lived experience or community residents willing to assist in educating their respective referent groups on stigma reduction according to the Strategic Stigma Change (SSC) principles⁵. These champions could be representatives from churches, employers, service providers, political and tribal leaders.

E. Long-Term Outcome

The change we are seeking to make in stigma regarding substance use is: By June 30, 2023, community stakeholders who report stigma surrounding substance use as a key challenge in Robeson County will decrease by 9% based on pretest and posttest surveys.

F. Long-Term Outcome Indicators

Indicators that will demonstrate that we are making progress toward the goal above are:

- By June 30, 2021, community stakeholders who report stigma surrounding substance use as a key challenge in Robeson County will decrease by 5% based on pretest and posttest surveys.
- By June 30, 2022, community stakeholders who report stigma surrounding substance use as a key challenge in Robeson County will decrease by 6% based on pretest and posttest surveys.

OBJECTIVES FOR PRIORITY AREA 1

Concrete strategies for implementing the identified evidence-based or innovative practices are presented below.

GOAL: Reduce Stigma Surrounding Substance Use

Objective 1: Assess stigma experiences in Robeson County

Intermediate Outcome: By June 30, 2023, 20% of substance use agencies in Robeson County will incorporate stigma assessments into their intake/evaluation procedures.

Intermediate Outcome Indicators:

- By June 30, 2021, 10 % of substance use agencies in Robeson County receive training on identifying and assessing stigma.
- By June 30, 2022, 15% of substance use agencies in Robeson County receive training on identifying and assessing stigma.

Strategy: Implement a community wide structure to gather and review systematic data on stigma experiences

Activities	Timeline		Who Is Responsible	Process Indicators	Short-Term Outcomes
	Start Date	End Date			
Convene a work group to design the comprehensive stigma assessment	Immediate	Ongoing	FTC GAL/Courts Eastpointe UNCP	Work group of representatives from different community stakeholders is formed	By May 30, 2021, 30% of service providers in Robeson County will have increased knowledge about the nature and drivers of addiction-related stigma.
Identify standardized stigma assessments through literature review and possible work in the local community	Immediate	Ongoing	UNCP	Number of identified assessments Number of local stigma assessment initiatives	
Identify and educate community partners on stigma assessments and explore possible integration into agency procedures to develop local data on stigma experiences	February 20, 2021	Ongoing	All Consortium Members	Number of community providers trained Number agencies adopting the stigma measures	

Objective 2: Provide education on addiction and pathways to recovery

Intermediate Outcome: By June 30, 2023, 20% of Robeson County residents will report increased awareness of the multiple pathways of recovery among local individuals in recovery.

Intermediate Outcome Indicators:

- By June 30, 2021, 10% of Robeson County residents will report increased awareness of the multiple pathways of recovery among local individuals in recovery.

- By June 30, 2022, 20% of Robeson County residents will report increased awareness of the multiple pathways of recovery among local individuals in recovery.

Strategy: Design and implement a community wide stigma education program

Activities	Timeline		Who Is Responsible	Process Indicators	Short-Term Outcomes
	Start Date	End Date			
Identify specific themes or issues to target in the stigma reduction activities	Immediate	Ongoing	All Consortium Members	Number of specific themes or issues identified	By June 30, 2021, service users in Robeson County will report a 10% reduction in perceived stigma surrounding substance use.
Develop educational resources such as rack cards and digital stories that combine factual information and positive depictions of local people recovery	Immediate	Ongoing	All Consortium Members	Developed educational resources e.g. recorded stories, social media posts, rack cards	
Disseminate developed educational resources in community venues including, medical facilities, schools, local libraries	May 20, 2021	Ongoing	All Consortium Members	Number of completed events	By June 30, 2021, 30% of residents of Robeson County that do not receive substance use services will report increased participation in/awareness of substance use prevention activities

Objective 3: Increase interpersonal contact between those in recovery and residents without addiction-related lived experiences.

Intermediate Outcome: By October 30, 2023, perceived social distance between those in recovery and residents without addiction-related lived experiences will decrease by 9%.

Intermediate Outcome Indicators:

- By October 30, 2021, perceived social distance between those in recovery and residents without addiction-related lived experiences will decrease by 5%.
- By October 30, 2022, perceived social distance between those in recovery and residents without addiction-related lived experiences will decrease by 7%.

Strategy: Design and implement community wide contact events

Activities	Timeline		Who Is Responsible	Process Indicators	Short-Term Outcomes
	Start Date	End Date			
Identify specific key groups to target in the contact-based activities such as service providers, employers, churches, and landlords.	Immediate	Ongoing	All Consortium Members	Number of key community groups identified	By December 30, 2021 30% of residents without addiction-related lived experiences in Robeson County will report participation/ awareness of substance use
Identify and train stigma reduction	Immediate	Ongoing	All Consortium Members	Number of champions	

champions from the key groups targeted				identified and trained.	prevention events
Design and Implement community events that facilitate social contact between individuals in recovery and those not experiencing substance use issues.	September 20, 2021	Ongoing	All Consortium Members	Number of completed events	By December 30, 2021 30% of residents with addiction-related lived experiences in Robeson County will report participation in community wide recovery events

PRIORITY AREA 2: Youth Initiation of Alcohol and Other Drugs

A. Assessment Summary

The Robeson County gap analysis identified treatment gaps for specific age groups, especially individuals without children, including youth and men. A major theme from the qualitative data was consensus from adult community residents, service users, and service providers on the need to increase in-patient services for youth and men. Estimates of the number of people who experience opioid misuse at a point in time for Robeson County suggested that about 5,211 individuals aged 12 or older may experience opioid misuse at any given point in time in Robeson County. Of these, 37% (1,860) are youth and young adults aged 12 to 25. Apart from lacking treatment services targeting youth, the disadvantage experienced by children of Robeson County are enduring beginning from higher rates of neonatal abstinence syndrome at 10.9 per 1000 live births versus national and state levels of 8 and 9 respectively. In addition, children of Robeson County live in social contexts characterized by high rates of poverty and other adverse childhood experiences that place them at higher risk of using substances, as observed by some service providers:

“Another issue is a lot of children who use with their parents that's something we see. Yeah, we do see quite a bit. And I do juvenile delinquency court as well. And a lot of my clients in that, as you know, suffer from some type of abuse, and a lot of them needed to feel right. I don't know if there is a way for us to eventually going into the schools and providing education” (Service Provider - Attorney)

B. Problem Statement

Although 37% of youth and young adults may experience opioid misuse at any given point in time in Robeson County, comprehensive prevention and treatment services for youth are lacking. Qualitative data from interviews with adult community residents and service providers reiterated the need for school-based prevention services for children and youth, as well as community wide interventions that mitigate the adverse effects of trauma and poverty that may lead to future substance use.

C. Target Population

- **Direct Target:** children, adolescents, and young adults of Robeson County
- **Indirect Targets:** Service Providers, policymakers, parents, concerned community members

D. Goal

Decrease rates of substance use among youth in Robeson County.

Specific steps and evidence-based or innovative strategies to achieve the goal include:

- (1) Expand opportunities for youth engagement in prevention services through (a) enhanced prevention education in schools, colleges, and community-based settings achieved through partnerships with local schools, colleges, and other

community-based settings such as the Boys and Girls Club and local housing authorities to provide universal substance use prevention and resiliency education. Robeson Health Care Corporation's Prevention Unit that is providing substance use prevention education in local schools using the "Too Good for Drugs" curriculum, and this will be leveraged to add other evidence-based prevention curricula. Agencies that will be leveraged for resiliency education include the Robeson County Health Department's adverse childhood experiences (ACES) initiative and the local school district's school-based resiliency programs. (b) development or strengthening capacities of youth focused services such as ensuring representation of youth-serving organizations and youth in the local substance-use coalitions, and implementing youth empowerment events that bring together youth to participate in various educational activities and games to build coping and social skills that can serve as protective factors against substance use^{7,8}.

- (2) Expand opportunities for youth engagement in treatment services through implementation of Adolescent Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment (SBIRT). SBIRT is a comprehensive approach to identifying and then providing services to young people who may have drug and alcohol problems. This will require training of local youth-serving professionals and volunteers to identify and provide services to high-risk adolescents and youth who may have drug and alcohol problems using the Adolescent Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment (SBIRT) developed by the NORC at the University of Chicago <https://sbirt.webs.com/curriculum>. Continuing education and professional development programs of local higher education institutions such as RCC and UNCP will be leveraged to realize this activity.

Other resources that will be leveraged to address substance use among youth include Robeson Substance Use Coalition, Robeson County Housing Authority, the Lumber Council of Government, and the Lumbee Tribe.

E. Long-Term Outcome

By June 30, 2024, the percentage of adolescents and youth experiencing substance use problems in Robeson County will decrease by 15% when comparing pre and posttest data.

F. Long-Term Outcome Indicators

- By June 30, 2021, the percentage of adolescents and youth participating in prevention and treatment services will increase by 15% when comparing pre and posttest data.
- By June 30, 2022, the percentage of adolescents and youth participating in prevention and treatment services will increase by 30% when comparing pre and posttest data.

OBJECTIVES FOR PRIORITY AREA 2

Concrete strategies for implementing the identified evidence-based or innovative practices are presented below.

GOAL: Decrease rates of substance use among youth

Objective 1: Expand opportunities for youth engagement in prevention services

Intermediate Outcome: By June 30, 2023, the number of adolescents and youth participating in substance use prevention services will increase by 10% based on pretest and posttest surveys.

Intermediate Outcome Indicators:

- By June 30, 2021, the number of adolescents and youth participating in substance use prevention services will increase by 6 % based on pretest and posttest surveys.
- By June 30, 2022, the number of adolescents and youth participating in substance use prevention services will increase by 8 % based on pretest and posttest surveys.

Strategy: Provide prevention education in schools, colleges, and community-based settings

Activities	Timeline		Who Is Responsible	Process Indicators	Short-Term Outcomes
	Start Date	End Date			
Develop partnerships with local agencies and schools to coordinate prevention activities	Immediate	Ongoing	RHCC Prevention	Number of educational partnerships developed	By May 30, 2021, 20% of adolescents and youth in Robeson County will participate in educational prevention services.
Design and implement youth focused educational initiatives	February 20, 2021	Ongoing	RHCC Prevention Lumbee Tribe Schools Colleges	Number of educational events held	By December 30, 2021, 10% of adolescents and youth in Robeson County will participate in youth empowerment events.

Objective 2: Expand opportunities for youth engagement in treatment services through implementation of Adolescent Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment (SBIRT)

Intermediate Outcome: By October 30, 2023, 20% of youth-serving providers such as school counselors and social workers in Robeson County will incorporate SBIRT procedures into their work.

Intermediate Outcome Indicators:

- By June 30, 2021, 30% of providers will complete adolescent SBIRT training.
- By June 30, 2022, 25% of providers will indicate intention to use adolescent SBIRT procedures in their practice.

Strategy: Design and implement adolescent SBIRT training

Activities	Timeline		Who Is Responsible	Process Indicators	Short-Term Outcomes
	Start Date	End Date			
Identify certified Adolescent SBIRT trainers.	Immediate	Ongoing	UNCP	Number of identified certified trainers	By December 30, 2021 15% of youth-serving providers will participate in adolescent SBIRT training.
Recruit professionals to participate in the adolescent SBIRT trainings.	Immediate	Ongoing	UNCP	Number of potential participants recruited.	
Implement adolescent SBIRT trainings.	October 20, 2021	Ongoing	UNCP	Number of completed trainings. Number of trained service providers.	

PRIORITY AREA 3: Community Knowledge About Resource Availability and Accessibility

A. Assessment Summary

Analysis of primary data from interviews and surveys of residents, service users, and service providers in Robeson County, as well as secondary data from state databases suggest that the number of people receiving substance use treatment lags behind prevalence estimates in Robeson County and the State of North Carolina as a whole.

- Over 80% of Robeson County residents that completed the RCORP survey were not aware of available substance use treatment services.
- Some service users reported that they got to know of substance use treatment services when child welfare got involved.
- Community residents and service users reported knowing people who need

substance use services but do not know where to go or where to refer them especially those without children, men, and youth.

- Service providers reported encountering children and youth that could benefit from substance use prevention or treatment but do not know where to refer them for services.

B. Problem Statement

80% of Robeson County residents that completed the RCORP survey were not aware of available substance use treatment services.

C. Target Population

- **Direct Target:** Citizens of Robeson County, Service Providers
- **Indirect Targets:** Service users, Policymakers

D. Goal

Increase knowledge of available community resources and how to access them

Specific steps and evidence-based or innovative strategies to achieve the goal include:

- (1) Provide community resource awareness guides and training through platforms such as schools, treatment facilities, provider meetings, web-based dissemination and print materials.
- (2) Promote engagement with community resources among community residents through the use of community resource navigators knowledgeable of available resources and how to access them¹⁰. These individuals can be peer support specialists or student interns in a variety of community settings such as integrated care agencies, advocacy organizations or public libraries who assist community residents to connect with needed community resources, provide follow-up services to encourage wellness and the development of basic interpersonal skills needed to navigate systems of care. State and local resources that will be leveraged for this activity include Stop the Pain a local agency that provides community engagement services including peer support services and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' guidelines for the development of post-overdose reversal response teams that connect those who have had non-fatal overdose to community resources and supports.

E. Long-Term Outcome

By June 30, 2023, 60% of individuals in Robeson County will report knowledge of available community resources and how to access them.

F. Long-Term Outcome Indicators

- By June 30, 2021, 30% of individuals in Robeson County will report knowledge of available community resources and how to access them based on pretest and posttest surveys.
 - By June 30, 2022, 50% of individuals in Robeson County will report knowledge

of available community resources and how to access them based on pretest and posttest surveys.

OBJECTIVES FOR PRIORITY AREA 3

Concrete strategies for implementing the identified evidence-based or innovative practices are presented below.

GOAL: Increase knowledge of available community resources and how to access them

Objective: Develop and implement a community resource awareness campaign

Intermediate Outcome: By June 30, 2023, 50% of Robeson County residents will demonstrate higher levels of knowledge of available community resources in pre and posttest surveys.

Intermediate Outcome Indicators:

- By June 30, 2021, 30% of Robeson County residents will demonstrate higher levels of knowledge of available community resources in pre and posttest surveys.
- By June 30, 2022, 60% of Robeson County residents will demonstrate higher levels of knowledge of how to access community resources in pre and posttest surveys.

Strategy: Disseminate community resource guides through electronic and print materials, including training events at select sites

Activities	Timeline		Who Is Responsible	Process Indicators	Short-Term Outcomes
	Start Date	End Date			
Review existing resource guides and make needed modifications	Immediate	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number of local resource guides identified	By May 30, 2021, 30 of Robeson County residents will report increased knowledge of available community resources
Design print and web-based substance use resource guides	January 30, 2021	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number and types of resource guides designed	
Disseminate electronic and printed resource guides	March 30, 2021	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number of disseminated guides and dissemination sites Number of hits for online dissemination platforms	
Hold resource awareness training events at select community venues such as professional meetings and fairs	March 30, 2021	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number of events held	

Objective 2: Develop and implement a community resource navigator project

Intermediate Outcome: By June 30, 2023, 50% of Robeson County residents will demonstrate higher levels of engagement with available community resources in pre and posttest surveys.

Intermediate Outcome Indicators:

- By June 30, 2021, 30% of Robeson County residents will demonstrate higher levels of engagement with available community resources in pre and posttest surveys.
- By June 30, 2022, 60% of Robeson County residents will demonstrate higher levels of engagement with available community resources in pre and posttest surveys.

Strategy: *Promote engagement with community resources through the use of community resource navigators.*

Activities	Timeline		Who Is Responsible	Process Indicators	Short-Term Outcomes
	Start Date	End Date			
Identify and train community resource navigators	Immediate	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number of trained navigators	By April 30, 2021 20% of service users will indicate increased engagement with community resources.
Recruit agencies willing to incorporate the services of community resource navigators in their practice e.g. EMS for post-overdose response, integrated behavioral settings, medical clinics, courts, police, public libraries	Immediate	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number of navigators placed in the county	
Track activities of community resource navigators	October 20, 2021	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number of community residents served by community resource navigators	

PRIORITY AREA 4: Community-based Recovery Support Services, including recovery coaching, harm reduction outreach, food, transportation, vocational support, etc.

A. Assessment Summary

Analysis of primary data from interviews and surveys of service users and service providers in Robeson County revealed great need for community-based recovery resources.

- 100% of service users who completed the Robeson RCORP survey reported that recovery was very important to them.
- Service users, community residents and service providers agreed that there is a lack of aftercare supports such as peer coaching, transportation, housing, and jobs in Robeson County and this is contributing to relapse rates.
- 95% of service providers who completed the Robeson RCORP survey reported seeing the same people repeatedly in treatment.

- Secondary data from the local managed care organization showed that 69% of family members and stakeholders reported transportation issues.

B. Problem Statement

Although 100% of service users who completed the Robeson RCORP survey indicated that recovery was very important to them, there is consensus among service users, community residents and service providers that the county lacks community-based supports needed to promote sustained recovery and self-sufficiency. Select measures demonstrating lack of recovery support services in Robeson County include:

- (1) There is only 1 in-patient treatment program for men and zero for youth and adolescents
 - (2) About 69% of family members and stakeholders reported transportation issues.
 - (3) Robeson County does not have a syringe exchange program.
 - (4) There are only 37 certified peer support specialists in Robeson County against 5,211 individuals aged 12 or older who may experience opioid misuse at any given point in time in Robeson County.
- Limited recovery supports create a gap in continuity of care for service users resulting in higher rates of returning to use.

C. Target Population

- **Direct Targets:** Individuals in recovery in Robeson County, Families affected by substance use
- **Indirect Targets:** Service providers, policymakers, parents, youth, concerned community members

D. Goal

Increase community-based sources of recovery supports for service users in Robeson County.

Specific steps and evidence-based or innovative strategies to achieve the goal include:

- (1) Development of community-based recovery partnerships between substance use treatment and non-traditional agencies such as churches, employers, vocational training, and housing organizations. Recovery support services such as transportation, housing, and employment services improve access and retention in services.
- (2) Linking service users and their families with needed recovery supports. The recovery-oriented system of care (ROSC) model will be used to ensure provision of recovery services at the earliest point possible across the recommended full continuum of care - prevention, early intervention, treatment, post-treatment services¹¹. This model will enable systems change as all agencies are encouraged to treat the whole person and not just focusing on the symptoms.

Service users will be assisted to develop their recovery capital as different community-based resources are made available to support them. For instance, child welfare involved parents will receive specialized services based on the recovery specialist model by the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW)¹² <https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/resources/resources-recovery-support-specialists.aspx>

E. Long-Term Outcome

By June 30, 2023, 25% of individuals receiving substance use services in Robeson County will reported higher levels of recovery capital.

F. Long-Term Outcome Indicators

- By June 30, 2021, 20% of individuals receiving substance use services in Robeson County will reported higher levels of recovery capital.
- By June 30, 2022, 30% of individuals receiving substance use services in Robeson County will reported higher levels of recovery capital.

OBJECTIVES FOR PRIORITY AREA 4

Concrete strategies for implementing the identified evidence-based or innovative practices are presented below.

GOAL: Increase community-based sources of recovery supports

Objective: Develop Community-based Recovery Support Services, including recovery coaching, harm reduction outreach, food, transportation, vocational support, etc.

Intermediate Outcome: By June 30, 2023, levels of perceived recovery support among individuals receiving substance use services in Robeson County will increase by 15% based on pretest and posttest surveys.

Intermediate Outcome Indicators:

- By June 30, 2021, levels of perceived recovery support among individuals receiving substance use services in Robeson County will increase by 10% based on pretest and posttest surveys.
- By June 30, 2022, levels of perceived recovery support among individuals receiving substance use services in Robeson County will increase by 20% based on pretest and posttest surveys.

Strategy: Expand available community-based recovery resources

Activities	Timeline		Who Is Responsible	Process Indicators	Short-Term Outcomes
	Start Date	End Date			
Develop a steering committee of existing partner agencies and interested community stakeholders that meets quarterly to brainstorm solutions to	Immediate	Ongoing	RHCC Lumbee Tribe Monarch	Number of agencies participating in the steering committee	By May 30, 2021, 10% of service users in Robeson County will be linked with recovery

barriers and expand recovery resources.					support services.
Establish strategic partnerships between substance use agencies and community-based agencies that provide services to meet basic needs, 12 step programs, vocational support, and transportation services.	Immediate	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number and types of partnerships developed	
Provide recovery specialist services to link service users with needed services through the full continuum of care according to the recovery-oriented systems model e.g. recovery specialists for child welfare involved parents, justice-involved persons, overdose patients, and pregnant women.	February 20, 2021	Ongoing	All consortium members	Number of recovery specialists Number of service users linked with recovery services Types of settings providing recovery specialist services	

Four priority areas aimed at improving prevention, treatment and recovery services in Robeson County have been identified in the preceding sections highlighting gaps in prevention, treatment, and recovery services as identified in the needs assessment. In addition, evidence-based, promising, and innovative approaches have been suggested for each priority area with examples of local and state resources that can be leveraged to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with substance use and opioid overdose. Concrete strategies for implementing the identified evidence-based or innovative practices were articulated in the objectives. This section will present a summary of the identified priorities discussing issues of affordability and accessibility of services to the target population and strategies to eliminate or reduce costs of treatment for uninsured and underinsured patients.

Summary of Priority Area 1-4: Affordability and Strategies to Reduce Costs for Target Population

Given the existing challenges such as the North Carolina State Legislators, not accepting the Medicaid expansion, high poverty and unemployment levels in Robeson County, the target population will not be expected to pay out of pocket for any of the services in the proposed strategic plan. The Medicaid expansion has hit families involved with DSS needing treatment extremely hard because they actually lose the very resource (Medicaid) that would help them to access and remain in treatment when their children are removed from the home. The high poverty and unemployment are a direct result of the substance-use disorders our residents are struggling with. Therefore, resources from local and state agencies will be leveraged to provide the proposed services. For instance, agencies such as Robeson Health Care Corporation's Prevention Unit equipping youth in schools with prevention tools will not only be sustained but last a lifetime for many of the youth who participate. The Lumbee Tribe is working to provide substance-use treatment to tribal members as well as culture classes to help members reconnect with their roots. Local institutions of higher education UNCP and RCC, and The Governor's Institute <https://governorsinstitute.org/> can be leveraged when developing educational resources to reduce stigma and to help train and educate a behavioral healthcare workforce. The thought process, due to the extremely limited funds and resources in the county is "to each one, teach one".

Grant funding will also be sought to provide the money needed to implement the proposed activities. Possible sources of funding include federal level resources such as:

(1) HRSA Rural Communities Opioid Response Program-Implementation

(2) State level grants through NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/mhddsas/grants>

- NCDHHS has two key grants that can be used to further the activities proposed in this strategic plan. First, North Carolina State Opioid Response grant provides funding for prevention, treatment and recovery activities for opioid use disorder.
- Second, the North Carolina State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant provides funding for prevention, education and outreach, screening/triage/referral, recovery supports, and provider education and development.
treatment services.

(3) Grants from foundations such as the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust <https://kbr.org/>.

- Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust funds initiatives aimed at improving health and quality of life for communities across North Carolina. One of its areas of focus pertains to Equitable Health Outcomes and through this program funding is available for building partnerships between hospitals and health systems and the community organizations that are working to address specific social drivers of poor health.

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