

## PROGRAM PROFILE

# Community Recovery Program, Virginia

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The Community Recovery Program, operated by the Piedmont Community Services Board, provides recovery services and employment services to help individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) gain employment. This profile describes Community Recovery Program's approach to integrating education and employment services into its treatment and recovery services for people with SUD, along with lessons and insights for practitioners based on their experiences.

This profile was developed as part of a descriptive study of programs that offer employment services to people with SUD; the study was part of the Building Evidence on Employment Strategies (BEES) Project, funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The profile draws on interviews with program administrators and selected staff members conducted during the summer of 2020. For quick facts on Community Recovery Program, see Box 1.<sup>1</sup>

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Community Recovery Program targets people in recovery from SUD. All Community Recovery Program participants receive one-on-one staff assistance, job-readiness and job placement services, referrals to occupational training and educational programs in the community, and peer support provided by peer support specialists in group and individual settings. A subset of participants can participate in an eight-week janitorial training program, available to residents in Community Recovery Program's recovery housing program.



## LOCAL CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The Piedmont Community Services Board provides behavioral and mental health services in the City of Martinsville, Virginia and surrounding Henry, Franklin, and Patrick Counties, at three locations. This is a primarily rural and low-income area in southwest Virginia.

The Community Recovery Program serves anyone with SUD or a mental health disorder. Staff members report that most participants have been involved in the criminal legal system and have experienced housing and employment instability. The Community Recovery Program has also seen recent increases in enrollment among people with mental health disorders and among younger participants experiencing homelessness. Most Community Recovery Program participants have a history of using multiple substances. Opioid use is the most prevalent, followed by methamphetamine use.

Most participants are referred to the program from other organizations in the community, though the program also receives word-of-mouth referrals and accepts walk-ins. Many referrals are made internally from the Piedmont Community Services Board mental health and SUD clinical staff. Other referrals come from local shelters for people experiencing homelessness, the legal and child welfare systems, and other external agencies.<sup>2</sup>



## SUD TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SERVICES

The Community Recovery Program provides treatment and recovery services both in partnership with the Piedmont Community Services Board and directly, on its own. The following services are provided to Community Recovery Program participants:

### Box 1. Community Recovery Program: Quick Facts

<b>PROGRAM:</b>	Community Recovery Program
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Martinsville, VA
<b>IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION:</b>	Piedmont Community Services Board
<b>PARTICIPANTS SERVED PER YEAR:</b>	80
<b>SERVICES:</b>	One-on-one staff assistance, job-readiness and job placement services, peer support, eight-week janitorial training program, recovery housing
<b>STAFFING:</b>	Five full-time equivalent staff members

- **Clinical SUD treatment services and medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD)** are provided through the Piedmont Community Services Board. The Community Recovery Program coordinates with Piedmont Community Services Board clinical staff members to provide treatment and recovery services, including individual and group counseling. MOUD is provided in all three Piedmont Community Services Board offices. Participants with opioid and methamphetamine use disorder receive outpatient treatment through the Piedmont Community Services Board.
- **Recovery housing.** The Community Recovery Program operates a six-bed men's house and a five-bed women's house, with single bedrooms for all residents. Residents of the houses are in early stages of recovery, typically less than a year into the process.
- **Peer support.** In recovery themselves, peer support specialists use their training along with their own knowledge of issues and triggers associated with SUD to support participants. Peer support specialists accompany participants to Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and host peer support meetings in the recovery houses. Peer support specialists coordinate with case managers about how to meet participants' needs.



## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Staff members work with participants one-on-one to assess their needs, identify their barriers to employment, and develop service plans for them. Based on the service plans, staff members make referrals to Community Recovery Program recovery housing, the janitorial occupational training program, and education and training providers in the community:

- **Occupational training.** The local community college offers short-term occupational training. In addition, the local vocational rehabilitation service provider can provide access to occupational training programs.<sup>3</sup>
- **Job-readiness services.** The local public workforce system provides job-readiness workshops and hosts employment fairs to which Community Recovery Program participants have access. In addition, a local organization provides two-month, paid internships through a partnership with the local public workforce system.
- **Janitorial training program.** The janitorial field has a strong demand for workers locally, so the Community Recovery Program operates an eight-week janitorial training program for recovery-housing residents. Training happens two days a week

for a total of eight hours. The program includes a mix of classroom and on-the-job training in the Piedmont Community Services Board offices. Participants also receive ongoing, one-on-one staff assistance and peer support.

Staff members work one-on-one with participants on job placement by assessing their skills and interests, working with them to develop résumés, helping them fill out applications, and practicing interviews with them. Staff members connect participants with employers and provide support after employment is obtained. Community Recovery Program staff members invest significant time building relationships with employers to overcome their reluctance to hire people with SUD or previous involvement with the criminal legal system.



## SUPPORT SERVICES

Community Recovery Program's primary support service is one-on-one assistance with both employment and recovery needs. Once referred, participants meet with the Community Recovery Program manager, who conducts a needs assessment and assigns participants to one of two case managers. One case manager works with participants at any stage of recovery and the other works with those who have been in recovery for at least three months.

Staff assistance is tailored to individuals' needs. In addition to the employment services described above, the program makes referrals to other service providers in the community, such as those providing housing, childcare, and legal assistance. The Community Recovery Program also engages a local transportation provider to provide transportation to medical appointments, training, job interviews, and work until participants receive their first paychecks.

On average, participants meet one-on-one with case managers each week, but they may meet more or less often depending on a participant's needs. After a participant is employed, staff members continue providing support for as long as the participant remains in contact. They connect participants to peer support specialists and coordinate with assigned peer support specialists about how to meet participants' needs.

## PARTNERS

The Community Recovery Program relies on partners in the community for various job-readiness services, educational services, and occupational training. Its main partners are the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Patrick Henry Community College, the Virginia Employment Commission, and the local American Job Center.

## FUNDING SOURCES

The Community Recovery Program's two main funding sources are annual funding from a private local foundation and a portion of the yearly allotted state general assembly funds for the Piedmont Community Services Board.



## STAFF REFLECTIONS

Community Recovery Program leaders and staff members shared the following reflections and insights regarding their efforts to integrate education, training, and employment services with SUD services.

- **Individually tailored assistance is a strength in a small community.** The Community Recovery Program is primarily a program that provides one-on-one assistance and referrals to a range of services, including employment services, for people with SUD or mental health disorders. Staff members report that this approach is effective in a small, rural community that relies on strong partner and employer relationships. The small size of the program allows for personal staff assistance.
- **Employer engagement is important to finding employment for people with SUD, who can be stigmatized.** Employers are reluctant to hire people with SUD or previous involvement the criminal legal system. Community Recovery Program staff members invest significant time building relationships with employers to overcome this reluctance.
- **Services in a small community can be limited.** Smaller service providers can have limited capacity. The vocational rehabilitation system, for example, maintains a waiting list for services and other nonprofit partners have limited funding.

- **Job readiness is necessary for job retention.** Early on in Community Recovery Program's operations, staff members found participants were struggling to maintain employment due to limited soft skills.<sup>4</sup> In response, the program began to focus on job readiness in advance of job placement. It also developed the janitorial training program.

## SNAPSHOT GRAPHIC

Figure 1 summarizes the Community Recovery Program's services.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Box 1 gives staff sizes in full-time equivalents. Full-time equivalents indicate the number of full-time employees at an organization plus the number of part-time employees, standardized to a full-time basis. For example, an organization with 4 full-time and 3 half-time employees would have 5.5 full-time equivalents.
- 2 The child welfare system responds in cases of alleged child abuse and neglect.
- 3 The vocational rehabilitation system "provides services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, so that they may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment or supported employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency." See Rehabilitation Services Administration, "State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program" (website: <https://rsa.ed.gov/about/programs/vocational-rehabilitation-state-grants>, n.d., accessed on December 13, 2021).
- 4 "Soft skills" refer to the general habits and competencies that make for an effective employee, such as how to show up to work on time and how to work cooperatively with others.

**Figure 1. Snapshot of Services in the Community Recovery Program's Treatment and Recovery Programs**

	Activity	Description
<b>TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SERVICES</b> 	Medication for opioid use disorder	Provided through Piedmont Community Services Board
	Individual and group SUD and mental health counseling	Provided through Piedmont Community Services Board
	Peer support	Provided by peer support specialists at Piedmont Community Services Board
	Recovery housing	Six-bed men's house and five-bed women's house
<b>SUPPORTIVE SERVICES</b> 	Case management	One-on-one, weekly case management meetings
	Transportation	Transportation provided to appointments, training, interviews, and work until first paycheck is received
<b>EMPLOYMENT SERVICES</b> 	Occupational training	<p>Eight-week janitorial training program (for recovery housing participants only)</p> <p>Referrals to community college and vocational rehabilitation providers for other short-term occupational training</p>
	Job-preparation services	<p>Skills assessment and résumé-development assistance from case managers</p> <p>Job-readiness workshops, employment fairs, and work-experience opportunities through the public workforce system.</p>
	Job search support	<p>Assistance from case managers with filling out applications and preparing for interviews</p> <p>Connection to employers through case managers</p>
	Job retention	Ongoing case management support after employment is obtained for participant and employer

SOURCE: Interviews with Community Recovery Program leaders and staff members conducted between June and August of 2020.