Core Activity #4: Workforce Development Plan

Seneca County, OH

Seneca County Opiate Task Force

**Mental Health and Recovery Services Board
of Seneca, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties**

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Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (COP-RCORP)

Seneca County Opiate Task Force

Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties
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Introduction

RCORP-Planning

The Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) is a multi-year initiative supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to address barriers to access in rural communities related to substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid use disorder (OUD). RCORP funds multi-sector consortia to enhance their ability to implement and sustain SUD/OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services in underserved rural areas. To support funded RCORP consortia, HRSA also funded a national technical assistance provider, JBS International.

The overall goal of the planning phase of the RCORP initiative is to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses in high-risk rural communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortiums to address prevention, treatment, and recovery. Under the one-year planning initiative, grantees are required to complete five core activities. The fifth core activity is to complete a sustainability plan for the consortium. This report contains the local consortia's workforce development plan from the planning phase.

CoP-RCORP Consortium

The Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (CoP-RCORP) Consortium was created in 2018 when the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) and Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OHIO) and braided together funding from two separate awards (G25RH32461-01-05 & G25RH32459-01-02). PIRE and OHIO then offered equitable access to five backbone organizations in the rural communities of: Ashtabula, Fairfield, Sandusky, Seneca, and Washington Counties. An organizational chart of the braided CoP is included here for quick reference. More information about the organizational structure, co-developmental process, and shared economy may be found on the project website: https://www.communitiesofpractice-rcorp.com/
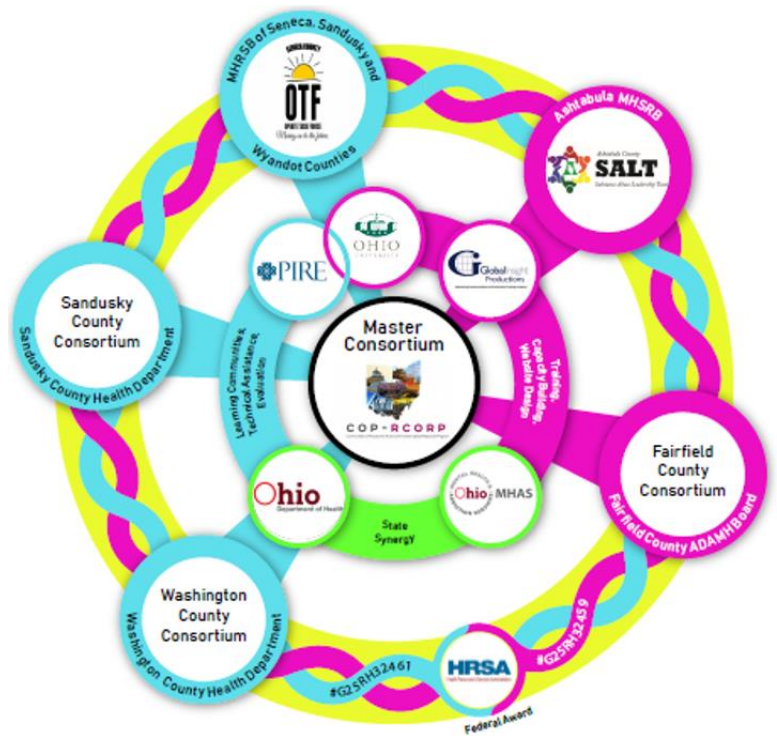
Workforce Development Plan Overview

Although Workforce Development is critically important to successfully addressing SUD/OUD, it has not received much attention at the state level in Ohio and there have been few resources devoted at the state and local levels to assessing workforce needs and gaps and to addressing development and retention needs of the SUD/OUD workforce. RCORP-Planning Core Activity 4 provided the Seneca County Opiate Task Force with an opportunity to better understand its current workforce along with needs of the workforce. Because this is a new area, work by the Seneca County local consortium on its SUD/OUD workforce will be ongoing throughout the RCORP-Implementation project.

The Workforce Development Plan that follows below assesses SUD/OUD workforce needs and gaps, articulates goals and activities designed to facilitate progress toward improving recruitment, training, and retention of the Seneca County SUD/OUD workforce. The plan also identifies opportunities at the federal, state, and local levels that will contribute to further development of the Seneca County SUD/OUD workforce. This Workforce Development Plan will result in the formation of three workgroups (subcommittees of the OTF) that will work on each priority area.

Current SUD/OUD Workforce in Seneca County

During the process of writing the RCORP-Planning and RCORP-Implementation grant submissions to HRSA, COP-RCORP local consortia gathered data about their community's existing SUD and OUD workforce. Local consortia drew from these data, as well as data collected as part of their Needs and Gaps Assessment to respond to guiding questions provided by PIRE and OHIO regarding the current needs and gaps of the SUD and OUD workforce. These guiding questions operationalized the workforce plan guidance provided by HRSA and JBS, the national RCORP-Planning technical assistance provider.

In Seneca County, Prevention Connection LLC provides prevention services and coordinates the local substance use prevention coalition Community Action for Reducing Substance Abuse (CARSA). Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services implements the Botvin LifeSkills Training in three school districts in Seneca County. Collaborations between local prevention partners and law enforcement and have produced medication take back events and trainings on naloxone use. There are five permanent drug take back sites in Tiffin and Fostoria.

The lead agency for treatment in Seneca County is Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services, which provides screening and outpatient mental health and substance use treatment services. There has been a significant increase in the number of SUD/OUD providers available in Seneca County over the last 3 years. In addition to Firelands, several other providers, listed in Table 1, also offer screening and outpatient services, as well as inpatient services, detox, and case management. In addition to the treatment and recovery providers listed below, Table 1 also includes our two OUD/SUD-focused community coalitions as their work supports treatment and recovery in Seneca County.

Table 1. SUD/OUD Treatment and Recovery Support Providers in Seneca County

Name of Provider	Address	Description of Services
Firelands Counseling & Recovery Services	76 Ashwood Rd. Tiffin Ohio 122 W. Center St. Fostoria	MAT, mental health services, AoD individual and group counseling, case management, peer support, psychiatry, jail services, youth AoD Services, prevention.
Rigel Recovery Services	65 St. Francis Ave. Tiffin	MAT, case management, AoD individual and group counseling, alcohol monitoring, family support
PIVOT	Justice Center	multijurisdictional drug court, case management and probation services
New Transitions	777 S. Washington Street Tiffin, Ohio 44883	AoD Individual Services
Dr. Megan McBride	24 W. Market Street Tiffin, Ohio 44883	AoD Individual Services
Tiffin University Counseling Center	155 Miami Street Tiffin, Ohio	AoD Individual Services

Name of Provider	Address	Description of Services
Heidelberg University Counseling	310 W. Market Street Tiffin, Ohio 44883	AoD Individual Services
Christian Counseling Center	300 Melmore Street Tiffin, Ohio 44883	AoD Individual Services
Lutheran Social Services	668 Miami Street Tiffin, Ohio 44883	AoD Individual Services
Health Partners of Western Ohio	1344 W. Seneca Avenue Tiffin, Ohio 44883	MAT
Serenity Christian Counseling	112 E. North Street Fostoria, Ohio 44830	AoD Counseling
ProMedica	Fostoria, Ohio 44830	AoD Counseling
FACTOR	281 N. Washington Street Tiffin, Ohio 44883	Peer support, support group
Lotus Recovery House	201 N. Washington Street Tiffin, Ohio 44883	Female recovery housing
The Cottage	104 N. State Route 101 Tiffin, Ohio 44883	Male recovery housing
HOPE in Fostoria	Fostoria, Ohio 44830	Coalition; Community Education
CARSA	Tiffin, Ohio 44883	Coalition; Community Education

Firelands collaborates with Tiffin Community Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Health Center and NHSC site, to offer integrated primary care and behavioral health services. However, Tiffin Community Health Centers is not well known throughout the community and potential patients may not be aware of it as an option for care. Table 2 show the number of professional staff serving Seneca County. Service providers are primarily located in Tiffin. The community would benefit from increased education among support staff about the available programs and services in Seneca County, including behavioral health services, detox, housing, MAT, and other services.

Table 2. SUD/OUD Workforce

Type of Provider	Number of Providers in the Service Area	Location
Prevention Professionals (OCPSA, OCPS, OCPC)	2	Tiffin, Attica
Psychiatrists	3	Tiffin, Findlay
APRNs	9	Tiffin, Findlay, Bloomville
Psychologists	1	Tiffin
Licensed Clinical Social Workers	4	Tiffin
Professional Counselors (LPC, LPCC)	27	Tiffin, Fostoria
Peer Support Specialists	4	Tiffin, Bloomville

Table 3 shows the number of prescribers currently providing MAT. Consortium leaders have noted an improvement in the level of acceptance of MAT in Seneca County. However, gaps remain in the availability of

MAT services as well as stigma around MAT. The majority of prescribers providing MAT are advanced practice nurses, with only a few physicians providing MAT. Because Seneca County is rural, it is common for prescribers to split their practice time between sites within Seneca County and sites outside the county—meaning that most MAT providers should be considered partial FTEs.

Table 3. Number of Prescribers Currently Providing MAT

Health Care Providers with a Waiver to Provide MAT	Number of Providers in the Service Area
Physicians	3
Nurse Practitioners	7
Physician Assistants	0
Other Mid-Level Prescribers (CNM, CRNA, etc.)	0

Patients in Seneca County have access to recovery supports including housing and peer support through Recovery Engagement Navigators, Bellevue Recovery and Support Services, FACTOR, and OhioCAN. Additionally, the PIVOT program in Seneca County is a multijurisdictional drug court, through which individuals can access recovery supports. There are currently case managers in the jail through Firelands, the jail will now be hiring their own case managers to increase the availability of behavioral health services to their inmates.

Seneca County SUD/OUD Workforce Needs and Gaps

Recruitment

Openings for SUD/OUD positions produce few applicants. Consortium leaders note that staff can earn more money through factory work than as a peer specialist, so there are fewer individuals wanting to invest into becoming certified.

Consortium leaders believe that new professionals entering the field are likely to be more attracted to the larger urban areas to practice, such as Toledo, Columbus, and Cleveland where wages are higher and where provider organizations can offer more flexible work schedules. Although internship opportunities with area provider agencies are available for students from Tiffin University and Heidelberg University who are interested in entering the SUD/OUD workforce, there are not strong relationships between local service providers and other neighboring universities that could supply the OUD workforce. Creating a pipeline of residents and university students who wish to enter the area SUD/OUD and healthcare workforces is a key need in Seneca County.

Retention

Unlike other healthcare tracks, there is currently no career ladder for SUD/OUD occupations. With no clear paths for advancement, SUD/OUD support workers have limited incentive to remain in the field and to invest in SUD/OUD service as a career. Although some area providers have employee assistance programs offering tuition reimbursement and loan forgiveness are not well-publicized and the existing SUD/OUD workforce in Seneca County has limited knowledge of these resources.

Training and Retraining

Consortium leaders have identified a need for training for clinical staff in motivational interviewing and trauma-informed care. In addition, training and ongoing professional development opportunities are needed

among area prescribers on what MAT is, how it complements traditional SUD treatment, its benefits, and side-effects of MAT therapy options. While stigma surrounding MAT is improving, some key stakeholders in Seneca County's SUD/OUD system, such as judges and law enforcement, have shown resistance to the use of suboxone and methadone in OUD treatment. A limited number of providers currently offer suboxone treatment, and no provider in Seneca County offers methadone. Clients from Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services can travel to Sandusky, OH to receive suboxone, but transportation for the one-hour trip is a barrier to treatment. There are ongoing discussions to work through perceptions, concerns and barriers regarding the use of suboxone.

There has been an effort by the MHRSB to support the efforts to increase the workforce for prevention and to support training opportunities and mentoring opportunities for professionals to become prevention specialists.

SUD/OUD Workforce Resources and Opportunities in Seneca County

Partnerships

The SUD/OUD workforce in Seneca County could be expanded by strengthening relationships between the local University and community behavioral health providers to develop a pipeline for talent for the community and to provide a richer experience for students. Tiffin University offers a Bachelor Level Psychology degree with a concentration in Addictions Counseling. Heidelberg University has a Master of Counseling Program. University of Findlay, Terra State Community College, Bowling Green State University, The Ohio State University, and University of Toledo also supply the workforce. Consortium leaders see an opportunity to build relationships with these institutions to increase job placement in Seneca County.

Federal, State, and Local Programs

Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services, a National Health Service Corps site, offers tuition assistance and a loan reduction program for behavioral health professionals who have a degree and/or license in a related field. The degree/license must have been obtained within the last five years prior to the application date and must be in direct correlation to the employee's position. More therapists need information regarding its existence. One of Seneca County's larger agencies, Oriana House Inc. considered applying for the NHSC program listed above but they were ineligible as they do not bill Medicare. Identifying other area provider organizations who are eligible to apply to become a NHSC site or a NHSC SUD/OUD expansion site provides a key opportunity for Seneca County.

The MHRSB is a recipient of the Medication Assisted Treatment-Prescription Drug and Opioid Addiction grant through Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services. Through this grant, local licensed therapists and physicians were offered free training to attend the Ohio ASAM/Ohio Waiver trainings for MAT. Therapists attended ASAM training to increase their clinical knowledge of different levels of care, this was the first time this type of training has been available for therapists. The Ohio Waiver training helped to increase the workforce of physicians able to able to provide MAT.

SUD/OUD Workforce Goals for Seneca County

Preliminary goals for Seneca County to improve recruitment, training, and retention of its SUD/OUD workforce follow below. As noted above, workforce development is a new area for Seneca County and its stakeholders and additional planning work is needed. The goals below will be addressed during the three-year RCORP-Implementation project by creating three workgroups that will focus on workforce strategic planning related to provider recruitment, training, and retention. A key outcome of the RCORP-Planning grant has been a shared commitment by Seneca County consortium to monitor and address SUD/OUD workforce issues

through developing, operationalizing, and sustaining workgroups focused on these three areas of workforce development.

Recruitment

The OUD Workforce in Seneca County will be expanded by strengthening relationships between the local Universities and community behavioral health providers to develop a pipeline for talent for the community and to provide a richer experience for students. Consortium leaders would like to explore job placement services as a source of data that will help them better understand the challenges Seneca County faces in competing with urban areas and educate students in behavioral health programs about the NHSC loan reimbursement program and the benefits of staying in the rural area instead of moving to a larger city.

The OUD Workforce in Seneca County will market the competitive advantages of being employed as a substance use disorder provider within Seneca County.

Retention

The consortium will engage service providers to explore strategies to increase retention of current staff, including better education of employees on existing tuition reimbursement and loan forgiveness programs.

Training and Retraining

The OUD Workforce in Seneca County will maintain a list of all available alcohol and other drug-related trainings that are being offered in the State of Ohio that it will provide to all of the area treatment provider agencies. The consortium will design and administer a survey on desired training topics for substance use disorder providers. This will help ensure that training, retraining, and professional development are more consistently available for SUD/OUD providers.

Federal, State, and Local Program Participation

Consortium leaders are reviewing the HRSA website and the frequently asked questions, eligibility and use of funds. The consortium will research the requirements for obtaining eligibility for designation of a NHSC location/site and support agencies in obtaining and maintaining the status. The OUD Workforce in Seneca County will work together to increase the number of NHSC sites based on the requirements and any barriers that need to be overcome to increase the number of sites. The OUD Workforce in Seneca County will explore loan forgiveness opportunities to maximize the ability offer the benefit to potential substance abuse disorder providers.

Partnership development

The OUD Workforce will pool local resources to host trainings for substance abuse disorder providers that meets CEO requirements and addresses the desired topics. Work will be ongoing to strengthen existing partnerships and to develop new partnerships to better support Seneca County's SUD/OUD workforce.

Ongoing Monitoring of Labor Market Trends and Data

This effort was the first time in Seneca County that an environmental scan of the community's SUD/OUD workforce had been completed. Monitoring will be ongoing and future work also will identify and utilize labor-market data as well as utilize ongoing epidemiological data about drug use and other related public health threats. This approach will help the Seneca County COP-RCORP consortium understand employment trends along the County's healthcare and SUD workforces and will help ensure that the reach and competencies of its SUD/OUD workforce can address emerging public health concerns related to SUD/OUD in the future.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Project leads from the consortium and backbone organization reviewed the available data, identified partners and stakeholders to engage to form workgroups, and developed a set of overarching goals to explore and further refine. The consortium has identified twenty-four potential organizational partners within their community who may contribute to operationalizing the workforce development plan. (Appendix A lists these organizational partners and describes their roles in the community's OUD workforce.)

Having identified key stakeholders and community needs, the Seneca County Opiate Task Force and local partners will utilize this report to develop concrete objectives and metrics to advance Seneca County's SUD/OUD workforce. This will be an iterative process informed by conversations with community members, organizational partners, service providers, and other impacted populations. Key next steps include forming a workforce development team and three workgroups (corresponding to each of the identified workforce goals of recruitment, retention, and training) that will develop action plans for each goal and objective that include measurable and time-bound indicators of progress. A template for this action plan is included in Appendix B. COP-RCORP and local consortium efforts on workforce development will continue during the RCORP-Implementation project.

APPENDIX A: Environmental Scan of Seneca County's SUD/OUD Workforce

Organization	Sector	Name of Contact	Area: Prevention, Treatment, and/or Recovery	What does this organization contribute to your community's workforce plan? Why is this individual key to your community's workforce plan?
Heidelberg University	State universities, community colleges, and vocational schools	Dr. Shavers	Treatment	Provides interns and professionals knowledgeable in AoD treatment
Tiffin University	State universities, community colleges, and vocational schools	Dr. Appel	Treatment	Provides interns and professionals knowledgeable in AoD treatment
Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services in Tiffin and Fostoria	Community behavioral health clinics	Robin Stull Pat Hardy	Prevention and Treatment	Hires treatment staff to provide AoD services in Seneca County
Rigel Recovery Center	Community behavioral health clinics	Deanna England	Treatment	Deanna hires treatment staff to provide AoD services in Seneca County
New Transitions	Community behavioral health clinics	Kara Windsor	Treatment	Kara hires treatment staff to provide AoD services in Seneca County
Christian Counseling Center	Community behavioral health clinics	Jennifer Damm	Treatment	Hires treatment staff to provide AoD services in Seneca County
Lutheran Social Services	Other	unknown	Treatment	hires treatment staff to provide AoD services in Seneca County
Dr. Megan McBride	Community behavioral health clinics	Dr. McBride	Treatment	Dr. McBride does have at least one other provider working with her.
Factor	Local recovery networks and recovery associations	Stephanie Little	Recovery	Hires and training host for peer supporters.
Sojourn at Seneca	Inpatient Detox	Todd Grogan	Treatment	Anita hires treatment staff to provide AoD services in Seneca County
Health partners of Western Ohio	Providers and providers association	Beth West	Treatment	Hires medical professionals to provide MAT.

Organization	Sector	Name of Contact	Area: Prevention, Treatment, and/or Recovery	What does this organization contribute to your community's workforce plan? Why is this individual key to your community's workforce plan?
CARSA	Other	Charla Van Osdol	Prevention	Coalition to prevent substance abuse and use in the community.
Narcotics Anonymous	Local recovery networks and recovery associations	Varies	Recovery	Sober support groups in the community.
The Cottage	Other type of community partner	Challie Briihl	Recovery	Recovery housing for men.
Lotus Recovery House	Other type community partner	Robin Reaves	Recovery	Recovery housing for women.
Promedica	Providers and providers association	Jeff Vogel	Treatment	Hires treatment staff to provide AOD services.
HOPE of Fostoria	Local recovery networks and recovery associations	Autumn Clouse	Prevention	Coalition to prevent substance abuse and use in the community.
Serenity Christian Counseling	Providers and providers association	Tecky Rusk	Treatment	Hires treatment staff to provide AOD services.
PIVOT	Government agencies	Judge Shuff/Brandy Bagent	Treatment	Hires treatment and recovery staff to provide AOD services.
MHRSBSSW Board	Government agencies	Mircea Handru	Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery	Plans, evaluates, monitors and funds AOD services in the community.
Tiffin Mercy Hospital	Providers and providers association	Megan Hohman	Treatment	Provides medical assistance to those who have overdosed and SBIRT to screen, link and referral.
ProMedica Fostoria	Providers and providers association	Amy Preble	Treatment	Provides medical assistance to those who have overdosed.
Opiate Task Force	Other type community partner	Mircea Handru	Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery	Task force that addresses the gaps and needs for AOD services for opioids.
Seneca County Sheriff's Office	Government agencies	Sheriff Eckelberry	Prevention and Treatment	Drop box location, provides AOD services within the facility or contracts for the services.

Organization	Sector	Name of Contact	Area: Prevention, Treatment, and/or Recovery	What does this organization contribute to your community's workforce plan? Why is this individual key to your community's workforce plan?
Chamber of Commerce	Area employers, local Chamber of Commerce, and small business associations	Director	N/A	The Chamber of Commerce is a leader of business advocacy and serves as a resource for workforce development. The help to foster community partnerships and they help to promote Seneca County as a great place to work, live and raise a family.
Seneca County Economic Development	Area employers, local Chamber of Commerce, and small business associations	David Zac	N/A	The Seneca County Economic Development focuses on businesses that are looking to locate/relocate or to expand, offering such companies access to a large pool of talented employees and excellent education options. They are a potential partner for promoting Seneca County as a great place to work, live and raise a family.

APPENDIX B: Workforce Strategic Planning Template

Activity Table

Goal:						
Objective:						
Strategy						
Activities	**Timeline**		**Responsible Party**	**External Partners**	**Cost and Possible Funding**	**Metrics/ Indicators of Progress**
	Start Date	**End Date**				