



Opioid Solutions: Increasing Capacity and Building the Recovery Workforce: Leveraging Opioid Settlement Funds for Peer Support

July 9, 2026

KACo Opioid Solutions Learning Opportunities



Kentucky counties continue to lead the way in addressing the opioid epidemic through thoughtful, strategic use of opioid settlement dollars. To support this work, KACo is launching Opioid Solutions, a nine-part webinar series in 2026 designed to help counties better understand and implement the core strategies outlined in [Exhibit E](#) of the national opioid settlements.

Each monthly session will take a deep dive into one allowable strategy area and will include:

- A clear explanation of the strategy and how it fits within settlement requirements
- Practical guidance for local implementation
- Real-world examples of county-funded opioid abatement programs
- Tips to support impact, sustainability, and compliance



Allowable uses of Opioid Settlement Funds



Core strategies:

- **Naloxone** or other opioid overdose reversal drugs
- **Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) / MAT**
- Services for **pregnant women and parents**
- Expanding treatment for **neonatal abstinence syndrome**
- Expansion of **warm hand-off programs** and recovery services
- Treatment for **incarcerated populations**
- **Prevention** programs
- Expanding **syringe service** programs
- Evidence-based **data collection** on the effectiveness of abatement strategies

See Exhibit E, the National Opioid Settlement Agreement

Connections to Care



Support EMS, including Peer Support Specialists (PSS) to connect individuals to treatment following an opioid emergency

Support PSS in emergency rooms, detox facilities, recovery centers, recovery housing

Provide PSS services in harm reduction programs or correctional settings



Provide full continuum of care of treatment for OUD/SUD including peer support services

Support People in Recovery



Provide comprehensive wrap-around services to individuals with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including housing, transportation, education, job placement, job training, or childcare.

Support or expand peer-recovery centers, which may include support groups, social events, computer access, or other services for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions

Engage non-profits, faith-based communities, and community coalitions to support people in treatment and recovery and to support family members in their efforts to support the person with OUD in the family.

Support stigma reduction efforts regarding treatment and support for persons with OUD, including reducing the stigma on effective treatment.



Counties in Action



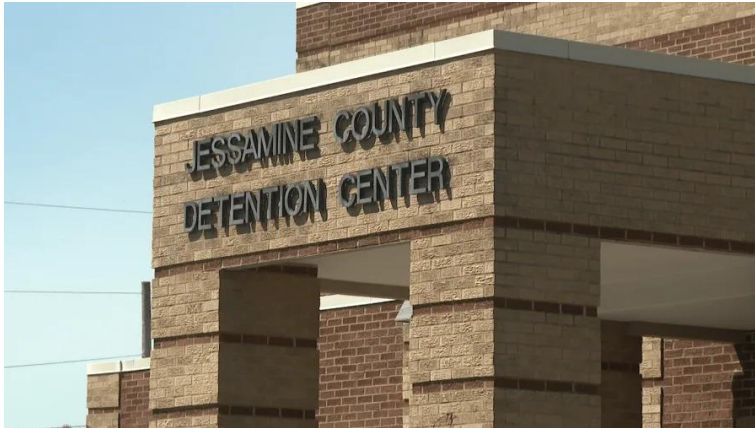
Jessamine County

Leveraged opioid settlement funds to expand re-entry services by hiring a Peer Support Specialist to assist individuals leaving the Jessamine County Detention Center with recovery, treatment, and community reintegration.



Rowan County

Recovery Rowan County serves as a recovery hub, offering peer support, mutual-aid meetings, and connections to treatment, housing, and employment. Through weekly meetings and community events, the organization provides trusted, lived-experience support that helps people engage in recovery and build hope.





Recovery Corps

Workforce Engagement and Recovery Capitol Capacity Expansion in Service

Rachael Ratliff

Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID)

Katie Thompson, CRPS

Ampact, Recovery Corps

KY Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

Mission: Promote health and well-being by facilitating recovery for people whose lives have been affected by mental illness and substance use; supporting people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities; and building resilience for all.

Vision: All Kentuckians have access to quality services and supports to live full and healthy lives.

Values:

Collaboration

Choice

Respect

Equity

Advocacy

Trauma-Informed & Resilience Oriented Approaches

Excellence

Behavioral Health Workforce Limitations



Provider Shortage: Not enough professionals to meet the growing demand



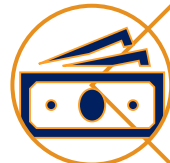
Unequal Distribution: Underserved communities lack adequate access to necessary services (e.g., rural communities)



Turn Over & Burnout: Depleted workforce and stressful work environments lead to workforce instability



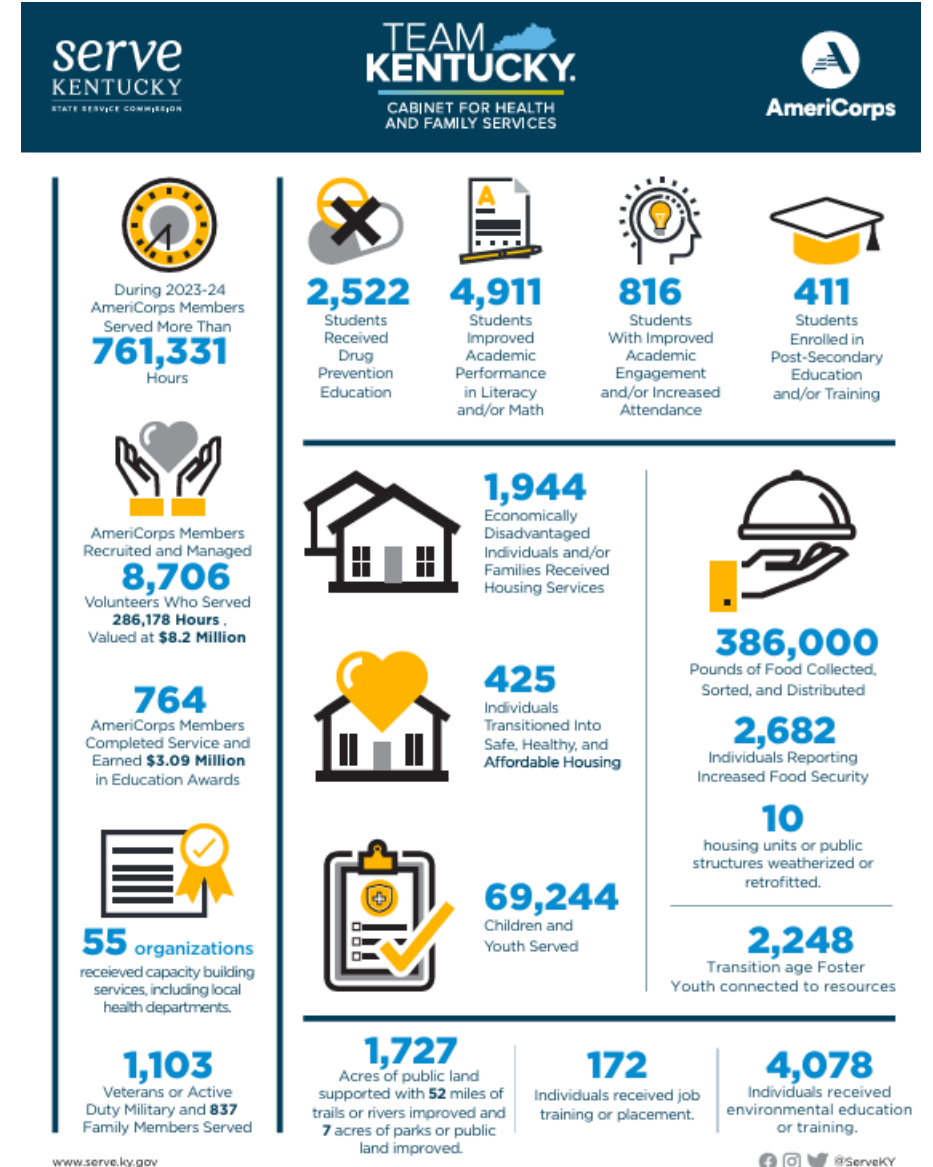
Training Gaps: Insufficient preparation that aligns with emerging needs and best practice (e.g., trauma-informed and person-centered services)



Wage Challenges: Low compensation impacts capacity to recruit and retain quality staff

AmeriCorps in Kentucky

- AmeriCorps has operated in Kentucky since 1994
- ServeKY is the AmeriCorps State Commission
- More than 16,000 Kentuckians served 25 million hours through AmeriCorps
- More than \$62.7M Education Awards provided



Overview of Recovery Corps

Benefits of serving in Recovery Corps:

- Training that supports professional skills and career building
- Peer Support certification
- Helping people maintain long-term recovery

Who can serve in Recovery Corps?

18 years of age or older with a high school diploma or equivalent

- A citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident of the United States
- Able to successfully complete a background check as required by AmeriCorps
- Lived experience with SUD and at least 1 year of sustained recovery by the service term start date



Recovery Corps as a Workforce Solution



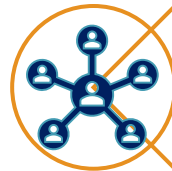
Expands Talent Supply: Brings in people with lived recovery experience to support behavioral health needs.



Builds Career Pathways: Offers training, certification, networking and entry into the behavioral health field



Increases Capacity: Members expand workforce capacity to deliver peer support, resource navigation, outreach and more



Leverages Lived Experience: Enhances trust and connection, improving engagement and outcomes

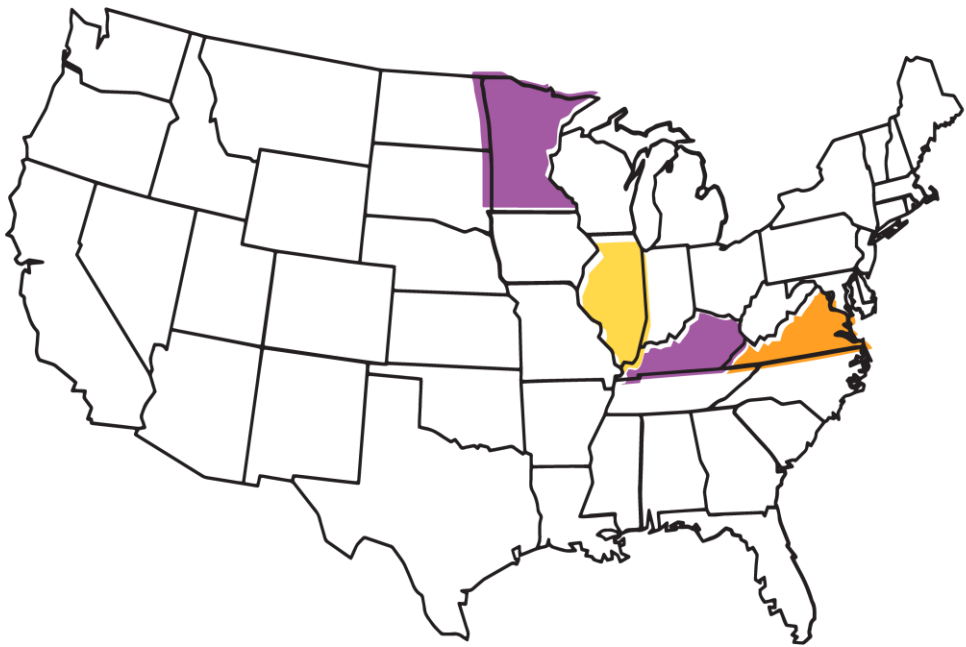


Promotes Retention: Strengthens the workforce with diverse perspectives and long-term commitment



Building
capacity to
**support
recovery**





Recovery Corps is an AmeriCorps program where people who are passionate about recovery get the training they need to serve as **Recovery Navigators** and **Project Coordinators** at partner sites across Minnesota, Illinois, Virginia, and now... **Kentucky!**

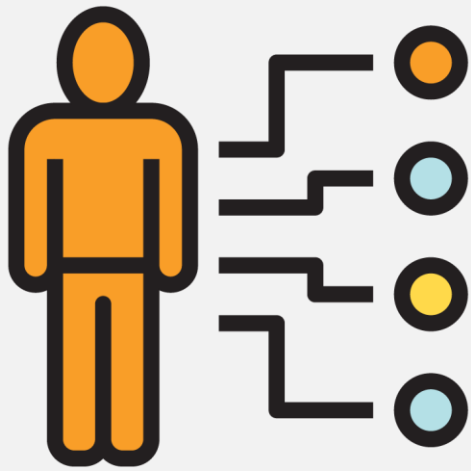


The Opportunity



Recovery Corps helps organizations **expand capacity, attracts new skilled employees** to the recovery sector, and **improves the lives** of participants seeking recovery support right in your community

The Program



Recovery Navigators

Recovery Navigators have lived experience with at least **one year of recovery** from a substance use disorder and are trained to **support participants one-on-one**.

They provide assistance with things like:

- Goal setting and action planning
- Resource navigation to recovery community supports, benefits/services
- Healthcare and employment searches

The Program



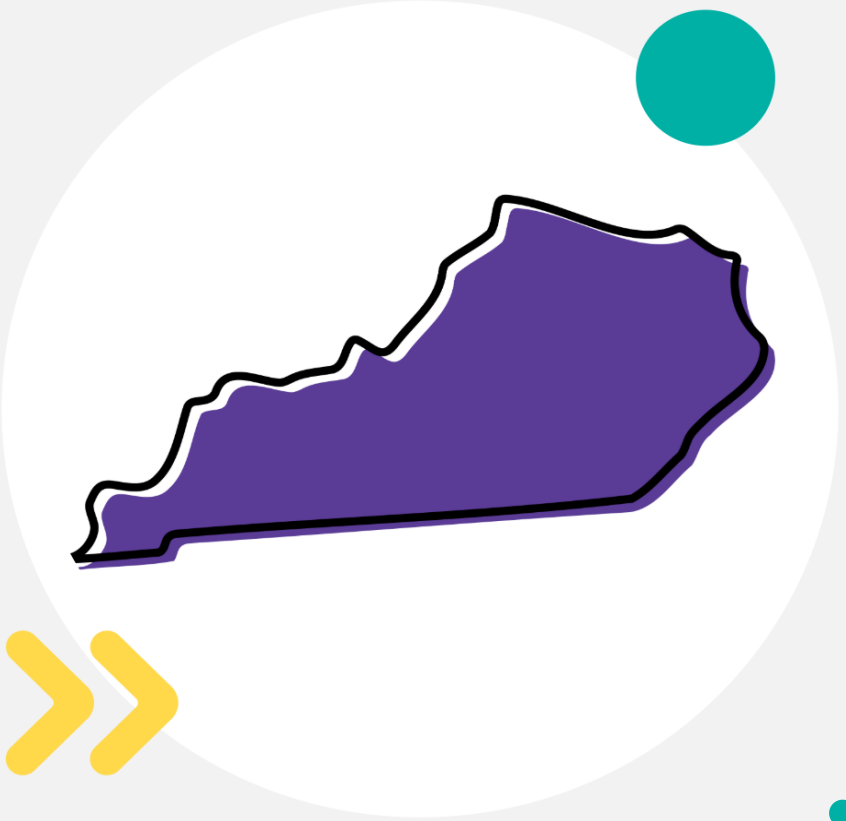
Project Coordinators

Project Coordinators work with their sites to create and follow a service plan to **build capacity**.

They provide assistance with things like:

- Program development
- Community outreach
- Overdose prevention services & trainings
- Data collection
- Volunteer coordination

Looking Ahead



For our second term (26-27)
in Kentucky,
we are mobilizing members
starting **September 8, 2026!**





The People of Recovery Corps



AmeriCorps



Ampact

Member



“ I thought I could never get a job like this unless I went to college. After two terms with Recovery Corps, I got a full-time job at the Health Department, and I'm using the skills I learned from service. I'm not sure I ever would have pursued a Peer Recovery career if I didn't hear about Recovery Corps.”

- Dakota, Recovery Navigator

Member Commitment



Recovery Corps members serve **full-time** (40 hours/week)

With start dates typically in September, October and January, members commit to **serve up to 1700 hours or 11 months.**



Partnership



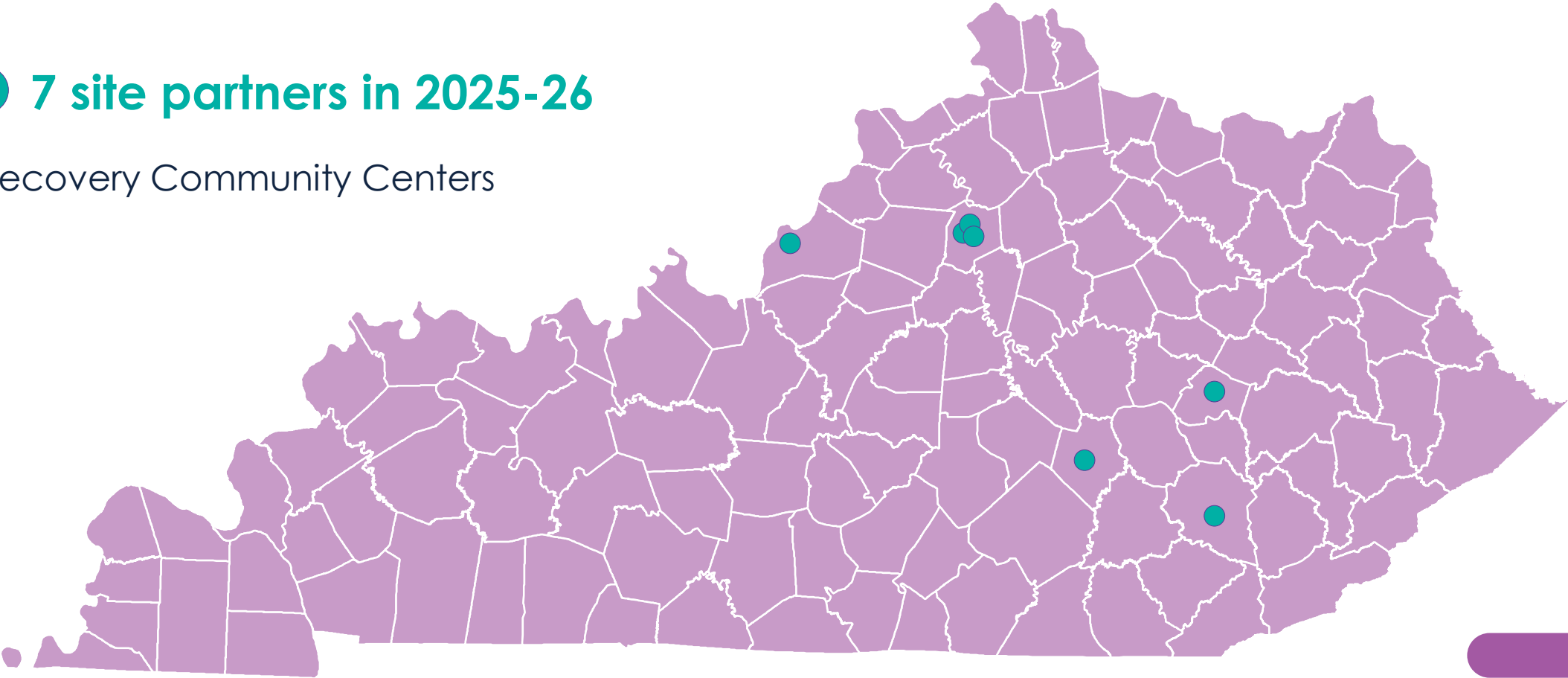
AmeriCorps



Ampact

● 7 site partners in 2025-26

Recovery Community Centers



Eligibility

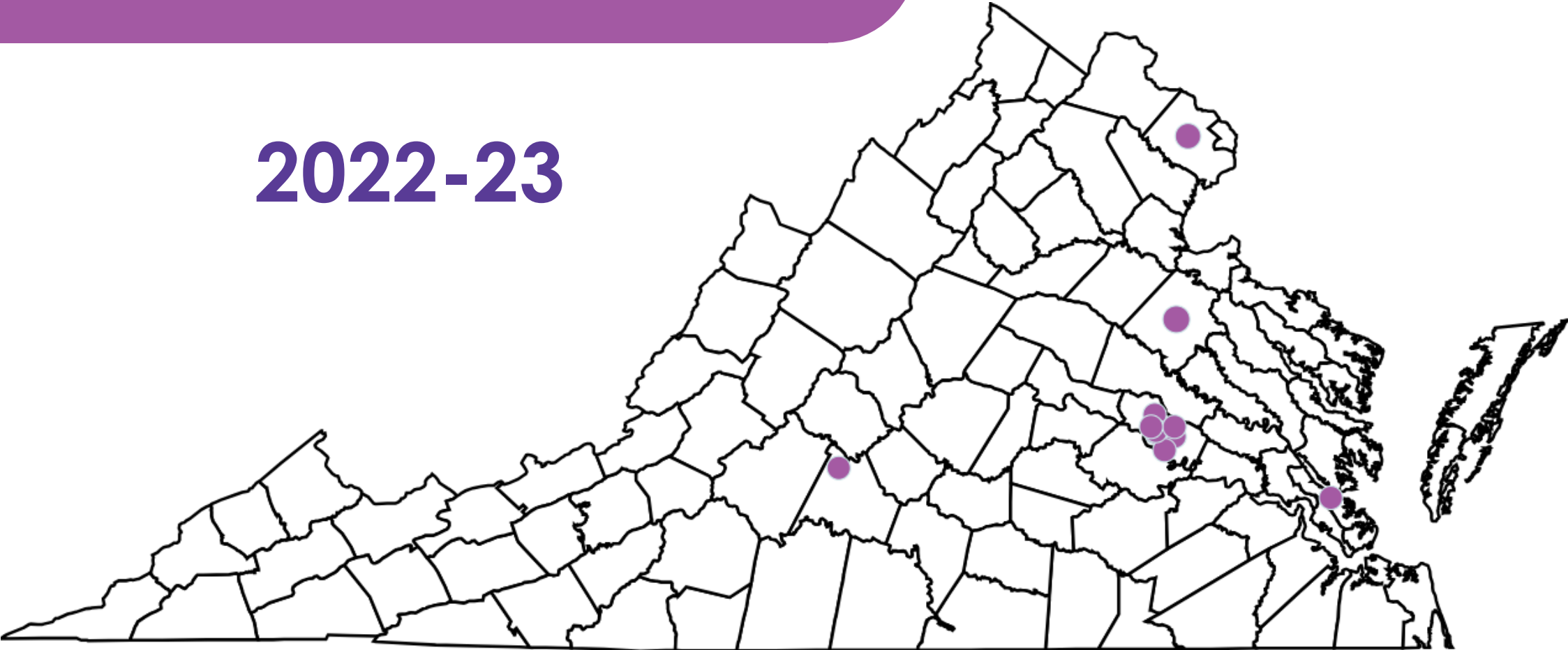
Who is Eligible to Host a Member?

- Public entities (local, regional, state, tribal)
- Nonprofit organizations
- Educational institutions that serve individuals in recovery

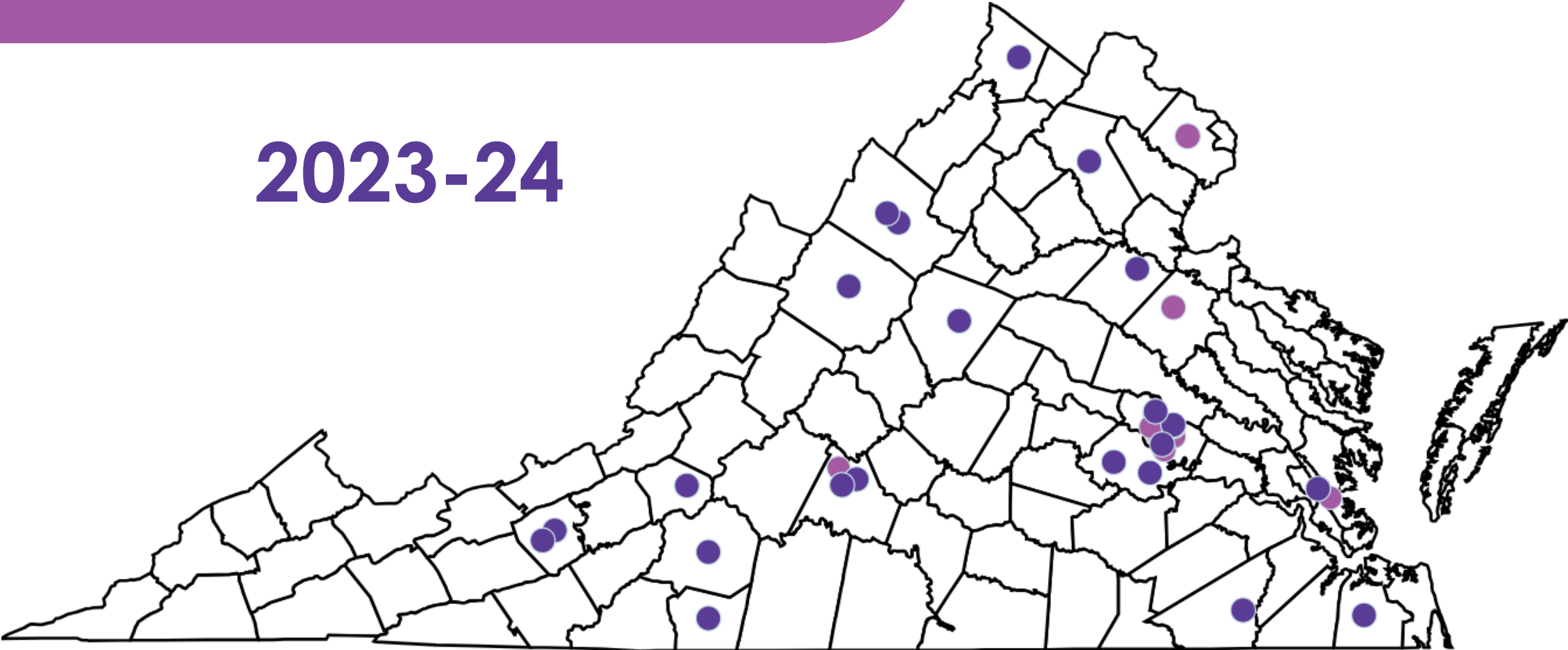


Partners must have a demonstrated need for additional capacity for recovery related services that can be delivered by a Recovery Corps member

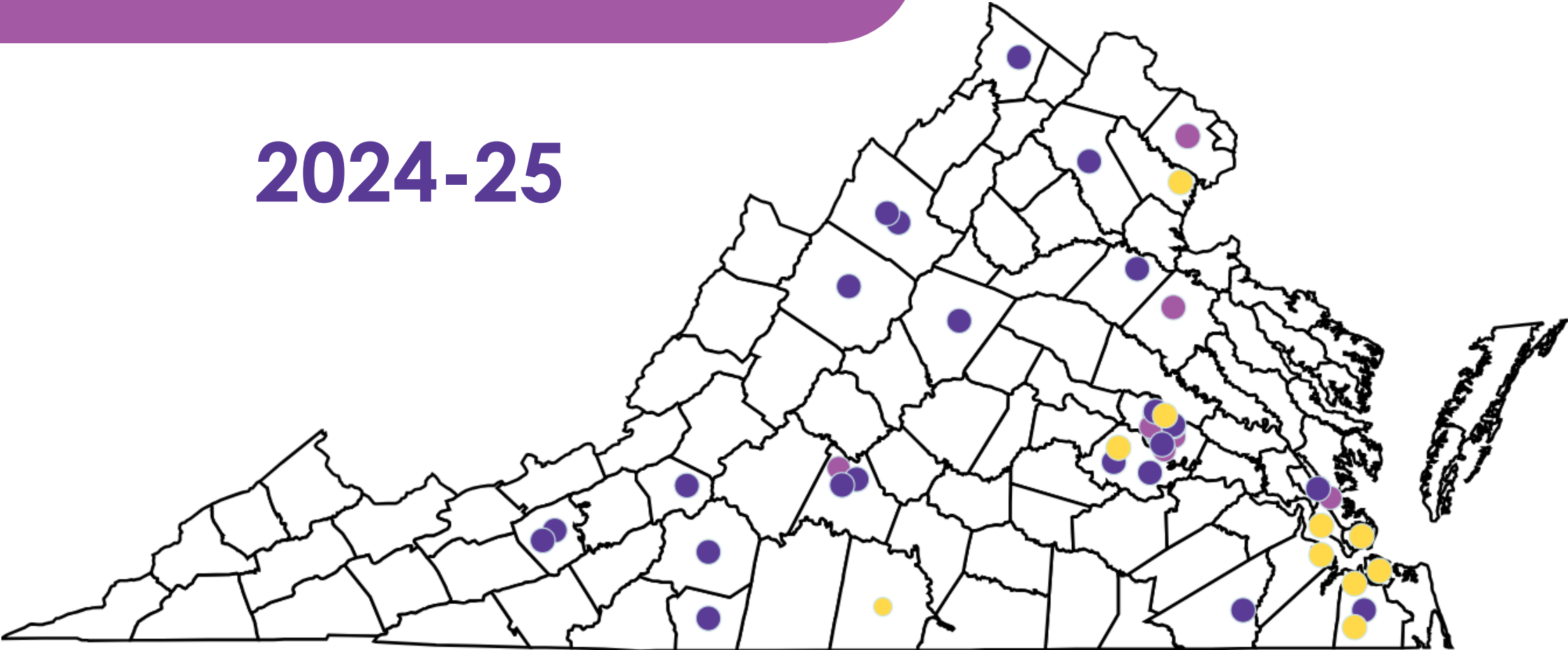
2022-23



2023-24

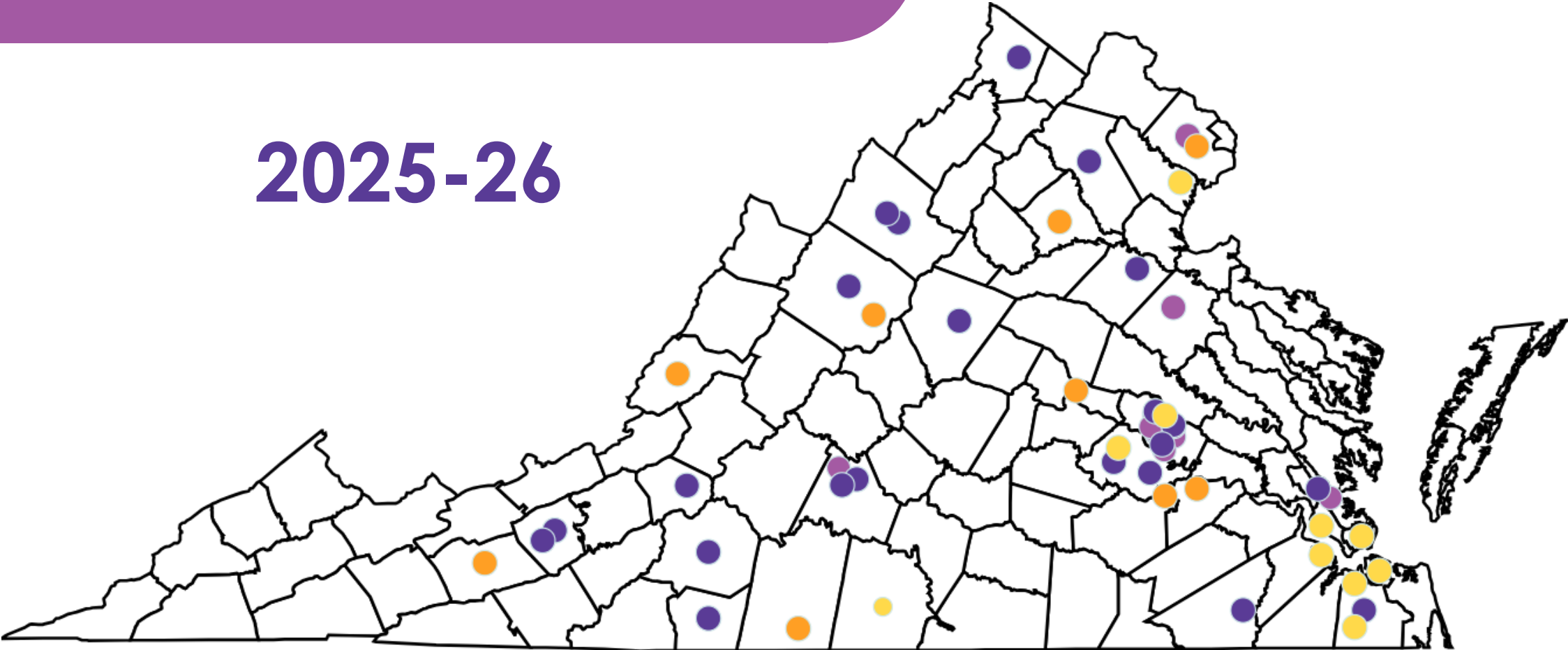


2024-25



Virginia's Growth

2025-26



Member Benefits and Compensation

- Stipend paid every 2 weeks + up to \$7,395 for tuition or student loans
- Free individual health insurance (for members serving full-time)
- Childcare Assistance (based on income and family size)

Expert support and ongoing assistance from a dedicated Program Coaches

Training/professional development
Navigators 63 hours (not including PRS training)
Coordinators 53 hours





People Power for Capacity and Growth

- A dedicated member (or members) 40 hours weekly
- Term of up to 11 months

Technical assistance and ongoing support from a program coach

Access to a skilled talent pool for future employees



What You Give



- **Site Supervisor** for on-site support, mentorship and managing caseload
- Physical **workspace and tools** (computer & WIFI access, phone)
- Assistance **recruiting & referring local people** to serve
- A site fee - \$10,000 per member*
*If this is a barrier, please reach out to discuss potential scholarships

What We Achieve Together



Increased capacity

Improved outcomes

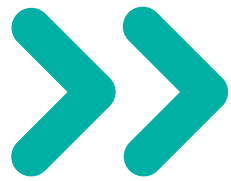
Healthier communities
with more people
supported in recovery

Greater skilled workforce

Virginia Project Coordinator Output	#
Community members reached	5,875
Internal Agency/organizational staff reached	757
Community organizations reached	1,785
Surveys or assessments distributed	575
Communications Produced	702
Permanent resources produced or updated	877

Project Coordinators in VA initiated and managed a collective **224 projects**


 **196 (86%) of these projects were fully completed**



1,245 Participants Served in Virginia
(3,308 program wide)

A collective **2,422** participant recovery goals were undertaken in VA
(7,575 Program Wide)

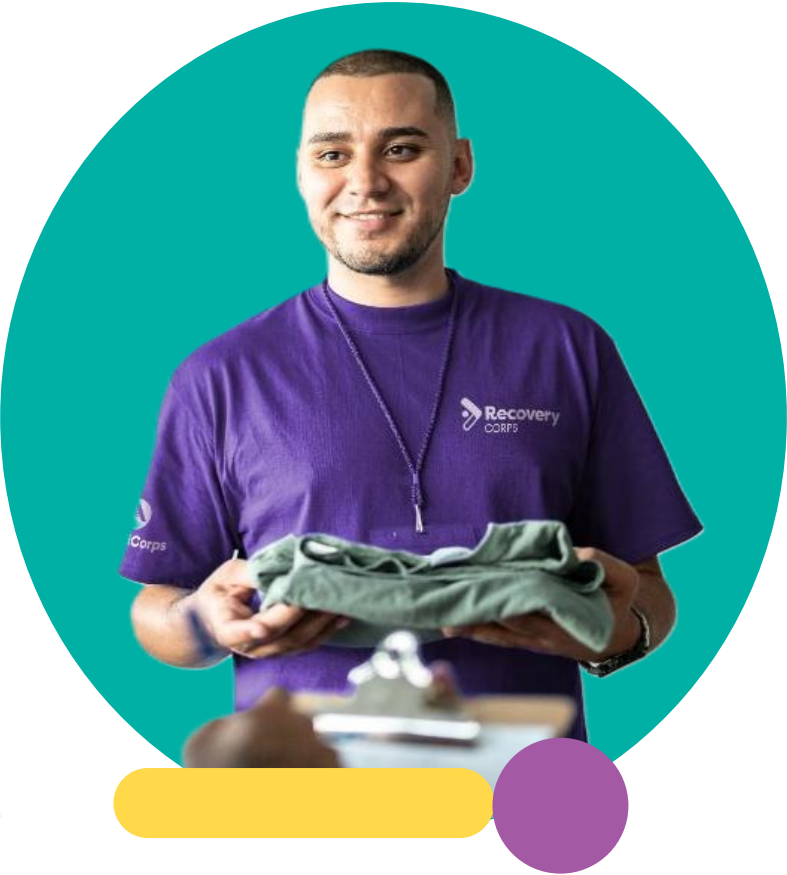
550 (62%) Participants served improved their health, as measured by BARC-10 scores
(1,317 Program Wide)

987 (41%) of those goals were achieved
(3,416 Program Wide)

891 (72%) Participants served in VA have pre/post health & quality of life data
(2,101 Program Wide)



Of the people served in 24-25 by Virginia Navigators:



Average
age of
participants

40.5

60%
Male

Primary substances used:
**Opioids, Cocaine &
Alcohol**

40%
Female



Demographics

Of the people served in 24-25 by Virginia Navigators:



65%

Reported
mental health
co-occurring

54%

Unemployed

72%

Receiving
public
assistance

Program Timeline

March



Member & Site
Applications
launch

May-July



Recruitment &
Onboarding
for Sites and Members

September-
January



Members Begin Service
(September, October,
& January)

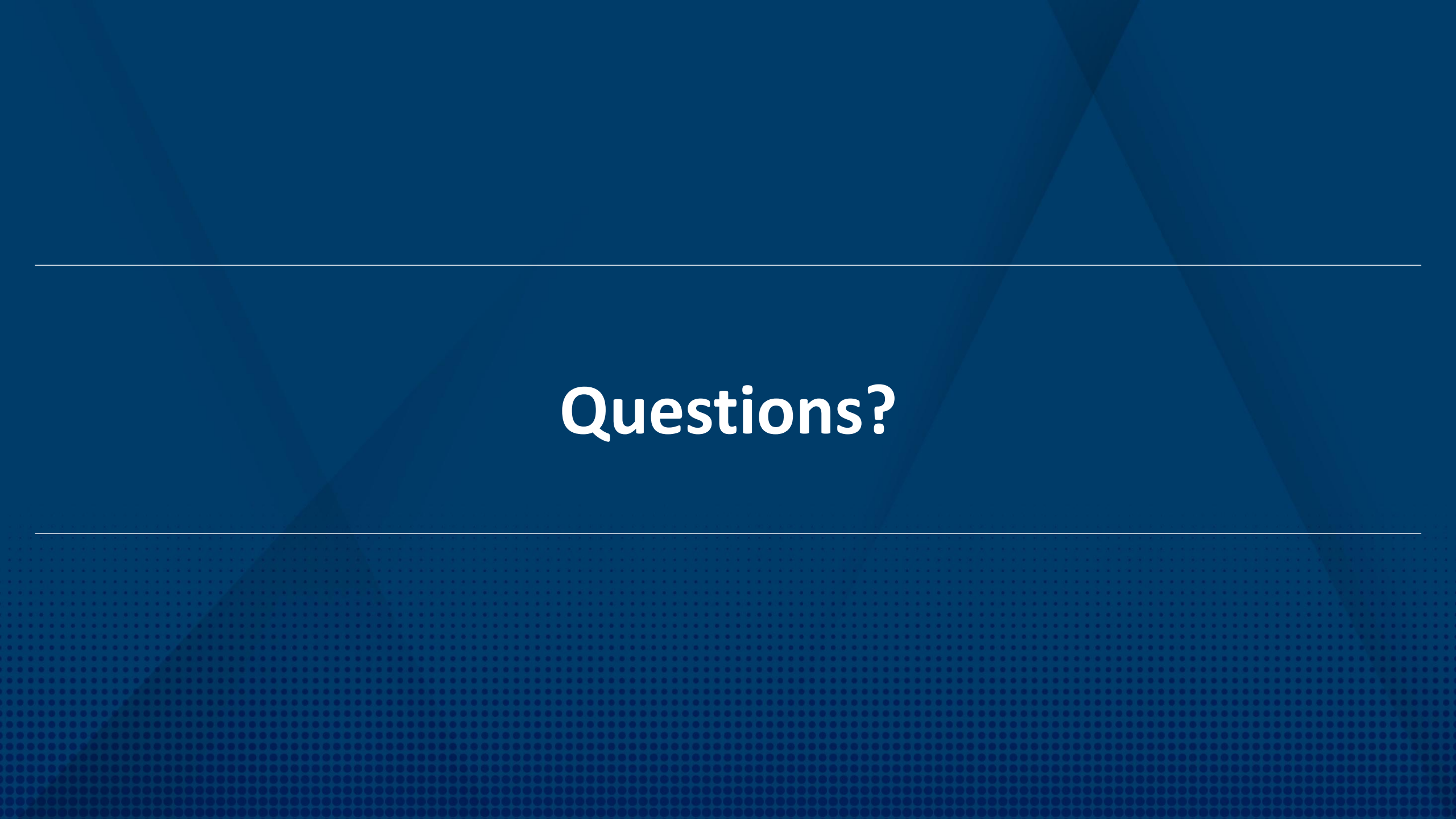
We accept site applications on a rolling basis until all positions are awarded.

Next Steps



- Review [Guide to Partnering](#)
- Reach out with any questions
katie.thompson@ampact.us
- Complete [26-27 Site Application](#)

Questions?



KACo Opioid Solutions Learning Opportunities



Check out KACo's resource library for continuing education opportunities highlighting how counties are using their opioid settlement funds in innovative, effective, and sustainable ways. You'll find best practices on topics such as youth prevention, peer support, access to treatment, quick response teams, and more. Stay tuned for new resources and updates!

KACo Opioid Settlement Resource Library



Opioid Settlement Resource Library

**Frequently Asked
Questions**

**Kentucky Opioid
Abatement Advisory
Commission**

**Settlement
Agreements and
Exhibits**

**Archived Trainings
and Recordings**

**Tools, Templates and
Planning**

**Approved Uses and
Resources**

Opioid Settlement Advisor



- Guidance on opioid settlement use
- Review of allowable expenses
- Support for long-term and strategic planning
- Access to templates and standardized forms
- Assistance with mandatory reporting requirements
- Review of best practices and peer examples
- Training and education opportunities
- Referrals to qualified practitioners and subject-matter experts

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