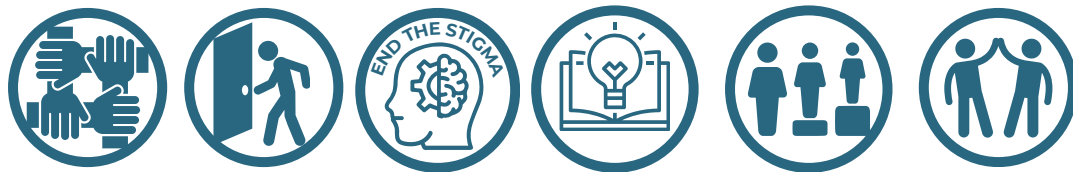
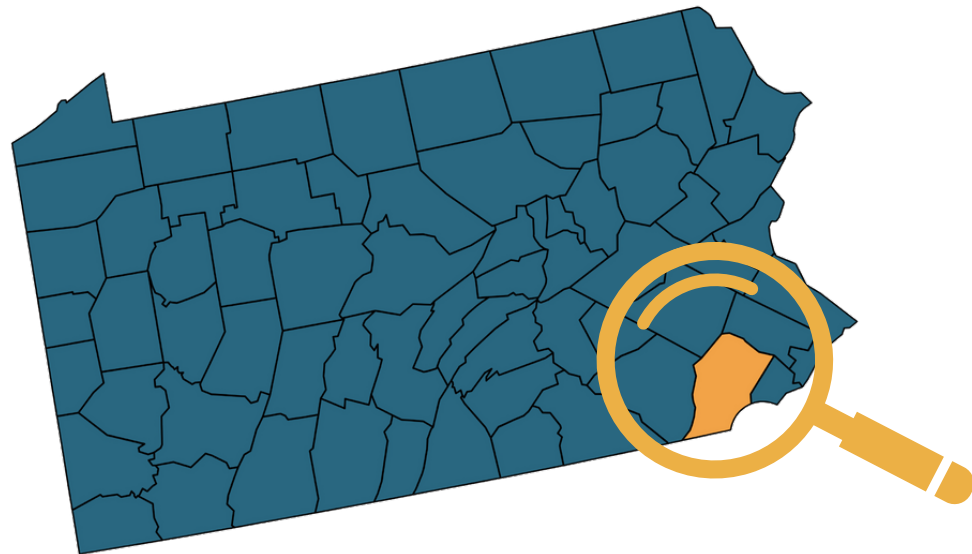


A GLIMPSE INTO THE 2022 COSSUP PROJECT: PHASES I & II

CHESTER COUNTY, PA



*Saving lives through our pillars of:
Collaboration, Access, Reducing Stigma, Education, Equity, & Support*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chester County, located in southeastern Pennsylvania, is one of five sites part of the 2022 COSSUP Project. COSSUP provides financial and technical assistance to states and other units of government to develop, implement, or expand comprehensive efforts to identify, respond to, treat, and support those impacted by illicit opioids, stimulants, and other substances. This includes an emphasis on promoting racial equity and implementing public health harm reduction strategies to reduce overdoses among probation and reentry populations in Pennsylvania and, ultimately, saving lives. From January to June 2023, JSP conducted a comprehensive needs assessment within the Chester community to identify its assets and gaps in the public health and criminal legal systems in an effort to build a comprehensive community-driven plan for the COSSUP funds.

In conducting this assessment, JSP carefully planned an inclusive approach, providing a platform for directly impacted individuals to articulate their experiences firsthand. Local subject matter experts were hired to provide expertise and assist the JSP team in gathering and capturing the voices of the community members who are often left out of decision-making processes. Stakeholders from various spheres, including those who work in the system, criminal legal system-involved people with SUD/OD and their loved ones, community-based service providers, and community members in general, were invited to contribute their insights. Twenty-eight (28) individuals from these groups took part in the needs assessment process in Chester County. However, there was a noticeable disparity in the participation rates of Black and Brown individuals compared to their white counterparts, echoing broader systemic issues seen in the criminal legal system. Recognizing this discrepancy and the significance of locally owned businesses such as Black and Brown beauty salons and barbershops, future actions by JSP include a collaborative endeavor to leverage these vital community anchors as partners in the fight against the opioid epidemic, beginning with the county home to Pennsylvania's capital city, Dauphin County. We hope that fostering these partnerships will expand access to substance use recovery support services and resources.

The culmination of the needs assessment phase yielded a set of well-thought-out recommendations tailored specifically for Chester County to use its COSSUP funding effectively and in a meaningful and sustainable way. These recommendations, addressing critical areas such as collaboration, access to resources and treatment, stigma reduction, education, equity, and support, were instrumental in shaping the tactical planning phase of the project and can be found on the preceding pages. Inspired by the identified gaps and overarching principles, the project was renamed COSSUP CAREES, symbolizing a commitment to comprehensive care and equitable solutions. The pillars of collaboration, access, stigma reduction, education, equity, and support form the cornerstone of COSSUP CAREES, interwoven to create a holistic framework for action. Looking ahead, the JSP team aims to navigate these pillars through intentionally collaborative, multi-disciplinary approaches. By recognizing the interconnectedness of these elements and addressing both barriers and solutions, COSSUP CAREES endeavors to effect meaningful change and save lives within Chester County.

OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE USE IN CHESTER COUNTY

Pennsylvania's overdose death rate ranks among the highest in the nation. Chester County, Pennsylvania, has not escaped the devastation caused by the opioid epidemic.

111

Reported accidental drug overdose deaths in Chester County in 2022.

15%

of overdose deaths in 2022 were experienced by Black individuals, despite comprising only 6% of the Chester County population.

66%

of drug overdose cases listed fentanyl as the primary drug.

47%

Of 2021 New Commit Drug Screened Admissions in the Chester County Department of Corrections reported Opioid Use.

75%

Of 2021 New Court Admissions in Chester County had a Diagnosed Substance Use Problem.

33%

Of 2021 New Court Admissions in Chester County reported Opioid use in the last year.

Data obtained from:

OverdoseFreePA. 2022 Chester County Death Data.
<https://www.overdosefreepa.org/know-the-facts/view-overdose-death-data/>

Open Data Pennsylvania. Inmate Admissions with Substance Use Year 2016 - Current Quarterly County Corrections.
https://data.pa.gov/Opioid-Related/Inmate-Admissions-with-Substance-Use-Year-2016-Cur/bvin-4fk2/about_data

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE JSP TEAM

It is important to understand that not every recommendation we make can be implemented. However, based on our findings, we have compiled the top recommendations to consider. It is up to each county to determine what is realistic to achieve with the COSSUP funds.

- ★ Develop a community engagement plan to include creating a community advisory board with community members with SUD/ODU lived experience, criminal legal agencies, law enforcement, community providers, the jail, and hospital administrators to strategize how to involve and work with the local community to help reduce overdose deaths in Chester County.
- ★ Hire, fund, or expand culturally responsive peer support and certified recovery specialists in Chester County in the following spaces: the jail, probation department, hospitals, and medical and behavioral health providers.
- ★ Create a funding pool to pay for people to stay at recovery houses while building a coalition to develop a longer-term plan.
- ★ Leverage funding to local providers who can provide inpatient/outpatient treatment and case management to criminal legal system-involved people experiencing SUD/ODU.
- ★ Hire case managers for the local probation office to help support the reentry and substance use treatment probation officers in connecting people on supervision experiencing SUD/ODU to treatment services.
- ★ Expand Harm Reduction approaches to include access to naloxone (Narcan), medication-assisted treatment (MAT), xylazine and fentanyl testing strips, and drug lock boxes throughout Chester County, specifically in communities of color and rural areas. Utilize the PA Overdose Prevention Program to request a supply of naloxone and/or testing strips for yourself or your organization.
- ★ Contract with local providers to develop a schedule of regular “pop-up” service provision days to reach criminal legal system-involved people in the rural areas of Chester County in need of SUD/ODU services and treatment. This approach can address geographic equity concerns.

COSSUP STRATEGIES

1

Strategy #1

Provide maintenance of MAT medications for qualifying individuals in Chester County Jail. Medications include Sublocade, Subutex, Suboxone, Methadone, Vivitrol, and Naltrexone.



2

Strategy #2

Provide funding for maintenance of the MAT program, including drug screens, laboratory testing, Medical Staff (performing assessments, counseling, medication administration, aftercare planning), and data collection and tracking.