



Greene & Scott County R.O.S.C.

Recovery Council

**Community Needs
Assessment
2024 Update**

Overview of GSRC

The Greene & Scott County Recovery Council (GSRC) will work to build a thriving coordinated network of community-based services and supports (or infrastructure) that are person-centered. GSRC works as an advocate because people can and do recover in our community and recovery is a community responsibility and value.

GSRC Mission:

Empowering and improving connections to ourselves, our families, and our communities within the Greene and Scott County areas to improve recovery outcomes, reduce stigma and educate our community, therefore, improving health, wellness, and the quality of life for all.

GSRC Vision

To build a thriving recovery system within Greene and Scott County that will reduce the risk of substance use and mental health challenges to improve recovery outcomes for all.

Community Needs Assessment

Since 1969 the Greene County Health Department has been driven by its mission to assure access to resources with a focus on prevention, health education, home health, and resource support to tirelessly serve the residents of our region. The team carries out that mission through the:

1. Advocacy for mental health
2. Emergency Preparedness
3. Environmental Health Protection
4. Home Health Access & Care
5. Health Education
6. Personal Health Services
7. Substance Use Prevention
8. Recreational & physical activity improvements

This project really began in 2021, during which time the department conducted numerous focus groups and listening sessions in addition to conducting a community needs assessment. Out of this, our community set the priorities for the department which includes developing and building services and supports to meet the needs of mental health and substance use within our communities. This project sparked what can only be described as a movement and led to the development of the Recovery-Oriented System of Care Project or ROSC Project which blossomed into the Greene & Scott County Recovery Council (GSRC). While our work began with a focus on Greene & Scott, a regional effort emerged as the project ramped up and the community assessment analysis was conducted.

In 2022, the Greene & Scott County Recovery Council team met with and conducted a combined 115 key informant interviews in preparation for the 5-year Strategic plan. These interactions included a focus on individuals with lived experience in addition to law enforcement, faith-based organizations, educators, treatment professionals, judicial representatives including the bench & probation offices, and other community stakeholders. Additionally, the department conducted a thorough analysis of collective community needs assessments from across the

region. Of the interviews conducted by the Council, 100% reported that substance use and 97% said that mental health is an issue in our area, which includes the communities throughout the region. Local law enforcement collectively identified psychostimulant events area sharply rising within the region and syndromic surveillance confirms this increase.

Throughout 2023 and into 2024, each month the GSRC met for the monthly meeting where participants, which included persons with lived experience with mental health or substance use and community partners met to review the work of our council and strategized on efforts taken thus far. A separate committee was established that is made up entirely of persons with lived experience with mental health and/or substance use and justice-involved individuals. Our assessment of the needs within our community didn't just stop in year one, these discussions took place on a routine basis as the council continued evaluating the ever-changing needs and dynamics within our community.

Collectively, our region lacks the support necessary to adequately meet the needs of the mental health and substance use crisis. 98% of the individuals interviewed recognized that there is little to no support in our region. The bulk of the available resources are located well outside of our immediate vicinity. This includes treatment for mental health and substance use, counseling services, and support groups. 88.8% identified a top priority was the development of infrastructure within our own community with the top priority being developing a system for which the community can receive assistance navigating resources followed by the need for treatment providers and support group infrastructure.

Of the total respondents, 38% identified Locust Street Resource Center as the most significant service provider within our area. Locust St Resource Center provides services in Greene but on a limited basis. The organization also maintains a central location in Carlinville that creates additional transportation.

47.8% indicated the lack of support or resources as being the biggest contributing factor with lack of meeting infrastructure coming in at 15.7%. Other factors included mental health challenges, generational learning, lack of family supports, and financial resources 84.5% of key informants who identify with having lived experience identified stigma and education as a community challenge as they have been victim of discrimination and/or harassment.

Stakeholders-focused stigma efforts included healthcare providers, employers, educators, and law enforcement. A significant portion of key informants identifying as an individual with lived experiences indicated risky health behaviors. 68% indicated tobacco use, and 77% indicated alcohol use at a rate of more than 2 drinks per day.

29.3% self-reported depression symptoms within the last 30 days with 29% indicating no primary care physician. Of the persons with lived experience, 23% self-reported a lack of medical insurance despite 98% living at or below the poverty level. 37% of PLEs identified transportation as a barrier while 7% of stakeholders indicated as such.

In our community needs assessment in 2022, Greene's per capita overdose fatality rate has increased substantially from 19.89 to 39.4. The lack of significant infrastructure to address the social determinants of health inequities are major contributor to this rise. 2.61% identified overdose as a significant challenge. Scott's data is omitted to prevent disclosure of PII.

Contributing factors to substance use and mental health challenges mentioned in the community are trauma, transportation, food access, housing, generational learning, domestic violence, poverty, education, healthcare access, and stigma. A significant portion of key respondents identifying as a person with lived experience maintaining recovery indicated substance use as a result of mental health challenges, 44%.

Where We Stand

In response to these barriers, the council developed a long-term Strategic Plan that aimed to address these while working to mitigate and eliminate many of them along the way. The following are the actions our council has taken in our first fiscal year in relation to our Strategic Plan:

Our work in 2024

1. The council significantly grew during our fiscal year and to ensure continued engagement, the team developed creative ways to ensure our partners have what they need from us and to ensure they are regularly updated on our work together. This includes individualized contacts such as 1:1 meetings, email, touchpoint meetings, etc. This outreach and engagement have grown the council into having representatives across more than 20 sectors, maximizing our reach within the community.
2. To raise awareness about the council and our work to address stigma, the council sponsored and participated in many events, including the Greene County Fair, the Greene County Health and Job Fair, school events, organizational events, memorials, celebrations, and more.
3. Social media efforts have grown significantly reaching nearly 70% of the combined population in Greene/Scott. This work aimed to educate our community about recovery, reduce stigma, and connect our community to recovery resources. The team also found new ways of reaching our community by launching a podcast, updating our internet presence, launching recovery information on our app, and even boots on the ground face to face, door to door engagement on a routine basis. We launched a PSA campaign that aims to further educate our community on the stigma and normalize the conversations around mental health/substance.



4. In addition to helping facilitate the development of numerous support groups in our region, the team partnered with the Recovery Corps which provided our community with a recovery navigator that is working to bridge the gaps between clinical and non-clinical recovery. A health and wellness-based group Lifting Spirits was introduced in partnership with the Brickhouse in White Hall, the introduction of Guide Paths, and monthly “coffee talks” enabled individuals in recovery to network, discuss challenges, and develop healthy coping strategies and more. Efforts also included advocating for new support group options, eventually leading to the introduction of a new 12-step group in 2 communities in the area.
 - a. Partnering with local organizations and advocates in mental health/substance use, we hosted numerous events that centered on providing valuable education about recovery, stigma, and the many pathways to support one’s mental health/substance use challenges.
 - b. The establishment of the Executive Committee, a branch of ROSC dedicated specifically to PLE engagement was also leveraged as an opportunity to build recovery capital, educate on various resource support options, and gain valuable feedback and participation in ROSC work.
5. The team partnered with the Health Management Associates or HMA to expand MAR availability and access to the different pathways to recovery. This project aims to serve as an inflection point, reaching individuals when they need it most. This work will introduce telehealth options that will reduce the demand on the workforce within the center and advance efforts to improve overall mental and physical health while expanding our ability to further build recovery capital. Work is underway on this project.
6. We worked to provide safe family friendly recreational events including movie nights, art nights, game nights, bowling nights, and more. These events provided opportunities for individuals to network with other members of the recovery community, connect with recovery navigators, and identify additional resources needed to support and maintain long-term recovery. Throughout the year more than 120 people took part in these events.

7. Partnering with Greene County Sheriff's Department, which also serves as a justice center for justice-involved individuals from Scott, the team began weekly meetings at the jail, connecting individuals with recovery resources and working to build recovery capital. In 2023, we served a total of 19 individuals as a result of this partnership and built long-term relationships with many of them who continue to be engaged in the council's work.
8. We connected with individuals in the Illinois Department of Corrections, working to build a support system early on with the goal of long-term successful re-entry.
9. The introduction of the Recovery Education series, Life Skillz worked to build valuable skills necessary to support and sustain recovery capital that most often serves as a barrier. Monthly meetings are held on topics including employment skills like resume writing, interview skills coping mechanisms, stigma reduction, and more.
10. The team found creative ways to address recovery barriers like transportation and worked hard to ensure individuals had access to basic needs by linking individuals to insurance providers, housing supports, and even transportation providers. We partnered with our regional providers to reduce the barriers to scheduling transportation and helped provide alternative means when these efforts were not successful in meeting individuals' needs.
11. We have successfully advocated for the expansion of clinical treatments within Greene/Scott and launched new partnerships to meet the needs within our community. The partnerships will work to bridge the gaps using telehealth. Using creative solutions, we were able to successfully place new telehealth hubs in the areas that need them most. These efforts will provide resource connections and help reduce the strain on the system within our community and provides expanded access to additional healthcare resources, improving wellness.
12. Advocacy and engagement efforts with local employers have helped multiple individuals find gainful employment within the region and combined with our work to build recovery capital have helped over 100 individuals build the skills or connect with vital resources necessary to maintain long-term recovery.
13. We developed a prevention program that specifically targets youth, hosting events in the schools and within the community. This work reached every corner of our community helping connect youth to services and support and to normalize the conversations around mental health/substance use.
14. We deepened our connections with local first responders and law enforcement by using diversified funds (multiple funding streams) to support actionable collaboration and enhance data coordination on overdose prevention and response. This partnership has enabled us the ability to identify trends more easily in overdose data and more quickly respond to emergent threats.
15. As a part of our work to improve overall health/wellness, the team worked hard to diversify funding that enabled expanded capacity to address the various challenges faced by the mental health crisis. This work successfully helped us introduce creative programs centered around supporting mental wellness in youth which included sensory and "Livingroom" programs in our school districts and helped facilitate numerous workforce development opportunities. These efforts also further deepened our connections with community partners and enhanced collaboration. Creative efforts helped us identify previously unmet

needs and improve relationships through the placement of AEDs, engagement on the Drug Court, improved efforts to advance health equity, and more.

16. We provided support and space to PLEs who identified clothing as a barrier to employment within the recovery community. This work encouraged the development of the Next Impressions Clothing Shoppe. This program is entirely PLE-led and developed and provides professional clothing to those in need and works to drive a sense of purpose and passion in community service.
17. Workforce development opportunities for the ROSC team helped the team gain valuable knowledge and further develop the skills necessary to continue our work, in addition to helping inspire growth within the peer support workforce. In combination with our other Community Health Programs, and awarded scholarships, the team was able to attend the RX Summit, complete the educational requirements necessary to achieve CPRS certification, present at and attend national conferences, and network with countless other recovery-centered organizations/groups..
18. Throughout the year, ongoing, regular, productive planning discussions about RCO development and long-term work to address community needs continued.. We were able to explore on a deeper level the gaps that exist within the “system” and introduce short-term solutions to reduce these gaps including our partnership with the Recovery Corps, our engagement work within the Greene County Sheriff’s Dept, our partnership with the Greene/Scott County Drug Court/Probation, the establishment of the recovery support program, resource navigation efforts, and more.
19. The team worked hard to identify safe places within our community for people to turn to when looking for resources or support. Our satellite office in Roodhouse slowly grew into the hub of the recovery movement as we outgrew our original space and the number of individuals looking to build recovery capital increased. Recognizing there is always a member of the team in the office, the North Greene facility, a central location in between Greene/Scott, became recognized as a safe place to turn to for help and now serves as the primary location of the Greene & Scott County Recovery Council.
20. Harm reduction efforts provided training to more than 200 people and helped us strategically place almost 600 doses of naloxone in the first year of the GSRC’s existence. This victory alone goes to show how our efforts to reduce stigma have advanced the community's openness to recovery. The team also improved access to and distributed fentanyl test strips and opioid education within the regional organizations and connected several individuals with syringe access programs.
21. In 2023, the ROSC advisory committee established a goal of addressing housing as a long-term plan and in the short term, working to address employment, transportation, and recovery support options. The team was able to identify potential solutions that would progress this project forward and help us achieve this goal, including identifying resources to support this work. In October 2023, they established a formal planning committee that is tasked with finalizing the steps necessary to achieve these objectives through the development of an RCO, a branch off our ROSC.
22. We conducted a total of 45 warm handoffs for substance use and a further 29 for mental health, ensuring people from across the community had access to vital recovery support services often located well outside our area.

Conclusion

We accomplished a lot in 2023, laying the groundwork for an intricate network of services and support within our community. None of this would have been possible without the direction and guidance of our council. Our continued collaboration and coordination is the key to our success. As we move forward, building permanent solutions to address the barriers to recovery will be the key to our continued success. Our top priority must be in identifying funding streams that will enable us to put in place long-term sustainability rather than short-term fixes. The development of an RCO that builds upon our prevention/education work and expands our recovery support program will be a steppingstone of this council's work. An RCO will provide permanent solutions into addressing the transportation and will provide a permanent "safe place" for individuals to turn to to support their recovery and navigate resources.

The following are barriers the council's work will continue to address:

1. Transportation
2. Access – Clinical support & resource navigation
3. Recovery support/Peer Support
4. Housing