

Community Needs/ Resource Assessment FY25 Edgar County ROSC Council

Region: ROSC Region 4

Agency: Hour House

ROSC County: Edgar County

Contacts:

ROSC Coordinator, Nicki Hanks

ROSC Program Supervisor, Jenna Hays

Purpose of the Community Needs/ Resource Assessment: This research details a community resource assessment and describes how resources were evaluated in the context of local needs. The evaluation of local resources is an important initial step in partnership development and is essential for the success of health promotion and disease prevention interventions.

Executive Summary- Edgar County

<i>Leadership Center Agency:</i>	Hour House
<i>Type of Report:</i>	Community Needs Assessment- Edgar County
<i>Setting:</i>	Rural
<i>Total Number of Residents:</i>	16,334
<i>Number of School-aged Youth:</i>	2,626 in public schools and 96 in private schools; a total of 2,722 school-aged youth
<i>Total Number of Schools:</i>	13 public schools and 1 private school
<i>Total Number of Institutions of Higher Learning:</i>	0
<i>Total Number of Treatment Facilities:</i>	0-inpatient 1-outpatient
<i>Total Number of Coalitions/ROSC Councils:</i>	1 Coalitions, 1 ROSC Council

Demographics

Edgar County is predominately White alone at 97.1%. Hispanic or Latin accounts for 2.7%, African Americans 0.9%, Asian alone 0.4%, American Indian and Native Alaskan alone 0.0%, and two or more races 1.1% (United States Census Bureau QuickFacts, July 2024).

Persons under the age of 5 years old account for 4.7%, ages 5-18 years old 19.6%, ages 18-64 50.8%, and ages 65+ are 24.9% (United States Census Bureau QuickFacts, *Edgar County IL, 2024*). Females account for 50.9% of the population and males 49.1% (United States Census Bureau QuickFacts, July 2024).

The median household income is \$56,909 with the persons in poverty rate at 12% or 1,946 people (*Illinois State poverty Percentage map*, Illinois Extension). The number of households for 2019-2023 is 7,612 with the average number of persons per household being 2.13 (United States Census Bureau QuickFacts, July 2024).

With this data, it can be determined most of the population in Edgar County is White, with average income, and between the ages of 18-65 years old.

Gap Analysis:

This document identifies and evaluates the current gaps from the Community Resource Assessment between their actual performance and identify potential/desired action steps/plans and strategies to fill these gaps.

Summary of Identified Gaps Across the Continuum:

- 1. Health Promotion:** General lack of education and understanding regarding Substance Use Disorder, leading to increased community stigma.
- 2. Prevention:** Limited access to early intervention services for at-risk populations.
- 3. Intervention/Harm Reduction:** A Need for increased education and promotion of harm reduction programs and services.
- 4. Treatment:** Lack of access to transportation, treatment facility waitlists and staffing shortages, lack of broadband access.
- 5. Recovery Supports:** There is a lack of transportation and a Lack of access to treatment due to a lack of knowledge of available resources in our community.

Point on Continuum	Identified Gap: Edgar County	Ideas for Community Action Steps	Ideas for Partnerships with Outside Groups/Organizations	Ideas for Changes at the State Level- How can state funders help bridge this gap?
Health Promotion	Lack of education/community understanding regarding substance use, resulting in increased stigma.	Provide Substance Use Disorder Education and statistics to identified sectors, provide recovery testimonies to the community, provide recovery educational groups, create culturally relevant digital content for social media and local websites to increase engagement.	Partner with HRC, CARE, and ECPHD to provide SUD awareness information to the community, partner with local people with lived experience to share their testimonies.	Increase state funding for public awareness initiatives.
Prevention	Limited access to early intervention services for at-risk populations.	Offer parenting workshops on SUD prevention and adolescent risk factors., expand school-based mental health and SUD prevention programs.	Partner with HRC Prevention for K-12, partner with school resources officers to promote SUD prevention in local schools, partner with faith-based organizations for family support programs.	Increase funding for school-based prevention efforts in rural communities, mandate employer-supported prevention programs, expand access to family-based counseling and support services.

Intervention/Harm Reduction	Need for increased education and promotion of harm reduction programs and services.	Create fliers and social media posts with places in the community to access harm-reduction materials and services, train community members, first responders, and businesses on overdose prevention and response.	Work with partnering agencies to share social media posts and physical flyers, partner with local law enforcement and EMS for crisis response collaboration.	An updated statewide list of harm reduction services and materials, fund mobile harm reduction units in rural and underserved areas.
------------------------------------	---	---	--	--

Point on Continuum	Identified Gap: Edgar County	Ideas for Community Action Steps	Ideas for Partnerships with Outside Groups/Organizations	Ideas for Changes at the State Level- How can state funders help bridge this gap?
Treatment	Lack of reliable transportation.	Create a list of volunteers willing to transport, work with local organizations and coalitions to identify driver volunteers, expansion of public bus system operation hours.	Potential partnerships with churches and buses, potential partnership with HRC and their transportation vans.	Expansion of transportation service contracts, expand Medicaid reimbursement for integrated care models.

Treatment	Lack of access to treatment due to lack of knowledge of available resources in our community.	Make the asset map widely available to the county, strengthen outreach through community champions, enhance digital and social media campaigns.	Distribute the community asset map to local churches, law enforcement, and first responders to ensure they know the available resources in our community, partner with local media outlets to develop public service announcements and stories on local recovery efforts.	Mandate stakeholders in the community to widely distribute documents that highlight resources in the county.
------------------	---	---	---	--

Point on Continuum	Identified Gap: Edgar County	Ideas for Community Action Steps	Ideas for Partnerships with Outside Groups/Organizations	Ideas for Changes at the State Level- How can state funders help bridge this gap?
Recovery	Lack of recovery housing	Increase understanding of the various types of housing, get community buy-in, and explore funding opportunities.	Engage community champions in the concept of recovery housing and gain their support by presenting statistics and sharing experiences from surrounding counties.	Employer/landlord incentives increased funding for recovery homes.
Recovery	Lack of second-chance employment opportunity.	Have a community-wide second chance employment fair, and create a list/brochure of local second-chance employers.	Partner with Staff Quick and other staffing agencies for second-chance employment.	Provide incentives to employers for on-the-job training to those who may have a gap in their employment history or a criminal record

Continuation of Gap Analysis (paragraph form)

Lack of education and community understanding regarding substance use has resulted in increased stigma within Edgar County. While collecting responses for our community survey, many community members told me the survey did not concern them. Another individual asked me what it was for, and I explained, “It’s to gauge the public’s awareness of available resources in Edgar County and opinions on substance use disorder and recovery.” He laughed and replied, “My brother needs to take the survey.” When responding to the statement, “People who use drugs deserve respect,” 7.6% of 805 respondents answered “strongly disagree” or “disagree,” while another 27.1% said they “neither agree nor disagree.”

Edgar County faces significant challenges in providing early intervention services for at-risk populations, further exacerbating the struggles individuals face in accessing timely and effective care. Limited availability of mental health and substance use services means that many individuals must travel to neighboring counties, placing additional strain on an already overburdened system. Transportation barriers further complicate access, as the county offers few options for local or out-of-county travel. Survey results indicate that nearly 30% of respondents disagree that all individuals in the community have equal access to recovery support, regardless of identity, sexual orientation, or citizenship status, while another 22.7% remain neutral on the issue. These statistics highlight the urgent need for expanded services, increased education, and harm reduction initiatives to ensure equitable access to care for all at-risk populations. Addressing these gaps through community-driven solutions and policy changes will be essential in fostering a more inclusive and supportive recovery network.

There is a critical need for increased education and promotion of harm reduction programs and services in Edgar County, as many community members remain uncertain or skeptical about their effectiveness. Harm reduction initiatives, such as Narcan distribution and syringe service programs, play a vital role in reducing the risks associated with drug use and preventing overdose deaths. However, survey results reveal a significant gap in public understanding and support for these services. While 21.6% of respondents agree and 13.3% strongly agree that harm reduction services reduce drug-related risks, a substantial portion—38.8%—remain neutral, indicating a lack of awareness or confidence in these programs. Additionally, 17.3% of respondents disagree, and 8.9% strongly disagree, further highlighting the presence of stigma and misconceptions surrounding harm reduction. Without proper education and advocacy, individuals struggling with substance use may not seek or receive life-saving interventions. Addressing these gaps through community outreach, awareness campaigns, and expanded access to harm reduction resources will be crucial in fostering a more informed and supportive environment for recovery.

A significant barrier to accessing treatment in Edgar County is the lack of reliable transportation, which limits individuals' ability to seek necessary care. While 85.2% of survey respondents reported having access to reliable transportation, 11.5% indicated they do not, highlighting a portion of the population that may struggle to attend medical appointments, counseling sessions, or recovery

programs. This issue is further compounded by a lack of knowledge about available treatment services within the community. Many individuals remain unaware of the resources that exist to support substance use recovery, leading to missed opportunities for early intervention and care. Without proper education and outreach efforts, those in need may continue to suffer in silence, believing that help is either unavailable or out of reach. Addressing these gaps requires a two-fold approach: expanding transportation options to ensure accessibility for all and increasing awareness efforts to connect individuals with the support systems that can aid in their recovery journey. By bridging these gaps, the community can foster a more inclusive and effective approach to substance use treatment and recovery.

The gaps identified in the lack of recovery housing are multifaceted and pose significant challenges for individuals in recovery. One of the main issues is the insufficient availability of safe, supportive housing options for individuals transitioning from treatment programs or other recovery-related services. This shortage leads to situations where individuals may relapse due to the lack of a stable, recovery-oriented environment. Regarding the community survey question, "Do you currently live in a household with more than one family?" 20.6% of the 795 respondents answered "yes" or "I prefer not to answer".

The gaps identified in second-chance employment opportunities highlight significant challenges for individuals in recovery seeking stable work. Many individuals face barriers to employment due to past substance use, criminal history, or lack of relevant job skills, which can make it difficult to find sustainable employment. These barriers often contribute to a cycle of instability, as individuals struggle to secure jobs that provide financial security and opportunities for growth. The community survey results shed light on the current state of employment for individuals in recovery. When asked, "Do you feel you have stable employment?" 70.8% of the 794 respondents answered "yes," indicating that a majority have found some level of stability in their employment. However, 16.4% responded "no," pointing to a significant portion of individuals who are still facing employment instability. Additionally, 12.7% of respondents chose "I prefer not to answer," which may suggest a reluctance to share personal information about their employment situation. These findings illustrate the ongoing gap in second-chance employment opportunities, emphasizing the need for employers to offer more inclusive hiring practices and for additional resources to help individuals in recovery build the skills and experience necessary for stable, long-term employment.

SWOT Analysis:

A SWOT Analysis consists of assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within a community. Within ROSC, we will be assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to substance use treatment and recovery in Edgar County.

SWOT Analysis of Edgar County

Strengths

- Strong community partnerships and collaborations.
- Engaged stakeholders from multiple sectors (healthcare, law enforcement, recovery, etc.).
- Established relationships with local treatment providers.
- Grassroots community support.
- Direct connection to people in recovery and their families.
- Understanding of local recovery needs and challenges.
- Ability to mobilize volunteers and community resources.
- Experience in organizing recovery-focused events and programs.

Weaknesses

- Limited consistent funding sources.
- Rural location may restrict access to some resources.
- Reliance on volunteer workforce.
- Gaps in specialized treatment services.
- Limited public transportation options for accessing services.
- Varying levels of participation from stakeholders.
- Challenges in maintaining consistent meeting value for participants.
- No recovery housing.

Opportunities

- Expanding partnerships with healthcare systems.
- Growing awareness of recovery support needs.
- Potential grant funding through state and federal programs.
- Increasing focus on peer support services.
- Expanding partnerships with local schools & businesses.
- Integrating with other community wellness initiatives.
- Developing recovery-friendly workplace programs.

Threats

- Changing political priorities affecting funding.
- Dependence on grant funding.
- Stigma surrounding addiction and recovery.
- Economic pressures on partner organizations.
- Declining population in Edgar County.
- Competition for limited grant resources.
- Burnout among volunteers and leaders.
- Unknown impact of leadership changes at local treatment provider agencies.

Community Readiness

Throughout FY25, the ROSC Council has made effective and substantial strides in raising awareness of substance use disorder and recovery through family-oriented events, presentations to key stakeholders, and continuous outreach to members and organizations in Edgar County. Despite this progress, opposition to the topic remains extensive due to generational beliefs, rigid perspectives shaped by work environments, and the pain families have experienced due to the nature of this disease. Stakeholders with community influence are wary of prevention and harm reduction efforts, while many community members lack education and awareness about substance use disorder, as well as access to local resources. Even so, Council members have been willing to share their personal or family experiences with substance use disorder with faith-based leaders, local businesses, and other helping

organizations. By doing so, they are breaking down barriers and fostering conversations around this sensitive topic—because that is where change begins.

Priorities for Expansion/ Technical Assistance for Expansion

Based on the SWOT analysis, the Edgar County ROSC will require ongoing commitment and involvement from its stakeholders to overcome the risks and challenges associated with implementing community-wide change. Potential risks to this effort include member complacency, the exclusion or absence of key stakeholders, lack of funding, loss of buy-in or interest, an overwhelming number of perspectives that make the council unwieldy, groupthink regarding certain priorities, and other unforeseen issues that may arise as the initiative progresses. With this in mind, the following measures are necessary to ensure the continued growth and expansion of the ROSC:

- Continual Council membership recruitment.
- Provide training and education within the ROSC framework.
- Educational sessions such as Disease Concept, Stigma Reduction, MAR Services, 12 Steps, Different Recovery Paths, Racial Equity, Pathways to Spirituality, etc.
- Sustained research of services and supports offered to individuals covering areas of the recovery spectrum.
- Identify community champions willing to lead efforts in bringing recovery housing to the county.
- Provide trainings and education surrounding harm reduction and the benefits of harm reduction.