



2024 Annual Report

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Advocacy

Training

Service

Take Action Today receives the

**2024 Illinois Association
of Addiction Professionals**

**Recovery Support
Program of the Year**



Agency Overview

Take Action Today Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit that grows recovery resource capacity in Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, and Williamson Counties and throughout Southern Illinois. Founded in 2020, the not-for-profit launched a Recovery Community Organization. TAT works to advocate for the needs of the recovery community on local, regional, state, and national levels, develop training opportunities for people in recovery, and create service opportunities for people in recovery to give back to their communities. TAT is committed to developing the Peer Recovery Specialist role and delivering non-clinical support services that help increase a person's chances of successful long-term recovery.

Vision:

Create a vibrant, grassroots recovery community that fosters long-term recovery in the lives of those at risk of/or experiencing substance use and/or homelessness.

Mission:

Take Action Today provides peer-based recovery support services to people seeking recovery from lifestyles of substance use and/or homelessness.

Advocacy

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A word from our Founder

“But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn’t have deep roots, they died.”

“...and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times...”

Matthew 13

Reflecting on 2024, Take Action Today stands resilient in the face of challenges. Despite a brief closure due to delayed reimbursements and funding adjustments, our team's unwavering commitment to serving our community shines through. Like the parable of the sower, we recognize the importance of nurturing deep roots within our community to ensure lasting impact and sustainability.

This year, we've expanded our support for individuals experiencing chronic housing instability, investing in our team's skills to serve our community better. We've embraced person-centered approaches, recognizing the strengths and potential in every individual we serve.

While navigating financial hurdles, we've emerged stronger, adapting to a 3.5% revenue decrease with creativity and determination. We focus on empowering those facing housing and substance use challenges, fostering hope and engagement.

We're committed to growing our impact, strengthening community bonds, and creating pathways to stability and success for all.

Mike Tyson, Director of Community Development

A Word from our Interim Executive Director

“For such a time as this...” Esther 4:14

“The opposite of addiction...is human connection.” - Johann Hari

As I step back and observe the challenges and successes of the communities we serve, I see a few sides of the spectrum.

People who stay in addiction feel there is no hope, no good, no reason to press on, and/or no one who cares or understands. Those who stigmatize the homeless for lack of knowledge stay part of the problem, not the solution. Community members that want to help but do not know how. And those actively working together to connect and unify all the above to improve our communities.

No matter if you have been directly or indirectly affected by homelessness, mental health issues, or addiction, YOU are still an important part of your community.

Take Action Today’s team meets people where they are to see how we can be part of their recovery journey. We also advocate with our community partners that we can and do recover sometimes against all odds, especially in a community that thrives in connection.

More people than ever are experiencing the effects of a world that focuses on too full of a plate to stop and smell the roses, causing higher rates of overdose, mental health issues, substance use, financial challenges, and homelessness. I have had the opportunity to recover from trauma, substance use, and homelessness, and I believe that God spared me to do the work I passionately do at Take Action Today and in southern Illinois for such a time as this.

Chrystal Cantrell, Director of Operations

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Recovery Support Program

A Year of Growth and Impact

This year has been full of progress and meaningful milestones. I am so proud of our staff's dedication to supporting our participants' growth and success. Their hard work shines through in the numbers and stories from this year, and I am excited to share our impact!

Dan Pyles - Assistant Director/Director of Programs

Participants- In 2024, we are proud to have 85 participants in our Recovery Support Program! Each person is taking essential steps toward growth, accountability, and positive change, and we are honored to be part of their journey.	2024 Transportation and Referrals: 345 transports to ensure participants had access to essential services, including detox, residential treatment, outpatient programs, and homeless shelters. 429 referrals to partner agencies, connecting participants with the help they needed. Essential Needs Support (Across 4 Resource Centers): 3,976 meals served to individuals in need. 1,289 showers provided , offering a safe and clean environment. 1,005 loads of laundry completed for participants. 948 sets of clothing were distributed to help participants feel comfortable and cared for	Graduates- We proudly share that 7 people graduated from our 2024 Recovery Support Program! This year-long program focuses on goals, growth, and accountability. Each graduate worked hard and stayed committed to their journey.
Direct Service- In 2024, our Recovery Support staff provided an impressive 3,641 hours of direct service to program participants. This includes one-on-one coaching, meaningful interactions, and transportation services.		Training and Education- In 2024, our staff completed 2,511 hours of professional training. This covered key topics like ethics, professionalism, and recovery coaching, ensuring we continue to provide the highest level of support to those we serve.
Staff Certifications— This year, 4 staff members completed the requirements to pursue state certification as Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS). This included 100 hours of training and 2,000 hours (one year) of work experience. We are proud of their dedication and commitment to supporting others on their recovery journeys!		Drug Courts— In 2024, our staff dedicated 780 hours supporting drug courts in Williamson, Jackson, and Jefferson counties. This included providing peer recovery support, attending court hearings, collaborating with court teams, assisting participants in creating recovery plans, and connecting participants with resources.

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A Graduate's Story

Here is what one of our incredible graduates shared about her journey with our Recovery Support Program:

"In 2020, my sister passed away from stomach cancer, which led me into depression. In 2022, I was arrested for possession of meth. While in Franklin County Jail, I participated in and graduated from Take Action Today's Jail Program. After bonding out, I participated in and graduated from Take Action Today's Recovery Support Program. Seeing the progress and triumphs of people who were once in my very shoes gave me the hope and courage to push forward for a better life for me and my children. Because of this program, I have built a stronger relationship with God, which I rely on daily to make it to the next. I am 2 years and 5 months sober, and this is just my beginning!"

-Zandalee, PLE



Looking Ahead As we close out 2024, we reflect on the lives touched, the barriers overcome, and the progress made. We are deeply grateful for our staff, participants, and community partners who make this work possible. Together, we are building brighter futures, one step at a time.

Here is to continue this incredible journey in 2025!

Harm Reduction Movement

At Take Action Today, we believe that harm reduction is about meeting people where they are, providing life-saving resources, and building trust within our communities. This past year, our Harm Reduction Program has made incredible strides in expanding access to NARCAN, overdose prevention training, and emergency response tools. The numbers speak for themselves, but the real impact is on the lives saved, the hope restored, and the connections built through our work.

By the Numbers: 2024 Impact



8,579 boxes of NARCAN were delivered to community members and partners, equivalent to **715 cases** of this life-saving medication.

288 individuals trained on how to administer NARCAN in an overdose emergency.

21 overdose response kits were distributed, each containing first aid supplies, NARCAN, fentanyl test strips, and resources for TAT's services.

23 ONEbox units were installed across Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, and Williamson counties, ensuring businesses and public spaces have access to on-demand overdose response training and medication.



In 2024, Peer Recovery Specialist Torie Patton became TAT's first Certified Harm Reduction Specialist.

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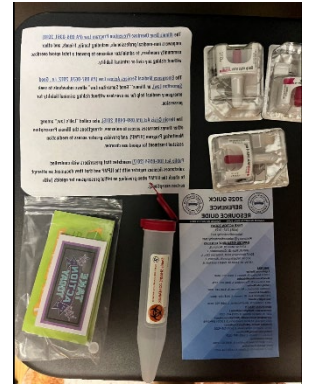
Praise Reports

At a September event in Carbondale, a man and his family received food, showers, and a harm reduction kit containing education materials and four doses of NARCAN. Weeks later, a young woman, overwhelmed after her first overdose, called TAT. She had found our contact information inside one of those purple bags. Through quick action, she was connected to detox, then a long-term treatment program, and continued to stay engaged in her recovery journey.

A West Frankfort community member requested NARCAN training in mid-October. She then shared the information with her church, leading to the distribution of two full cases of NARCAN. Days later, one of those doses saved a life.

In November, an ER nurse in Benton contacted TAT for harm reduction resources for a patient recovering from an overdose. The following day, we provided overdose response kits and service referrals. As a direct result, a patient engaged in peer recovery services just days later.

These stories are a testament to the power of harm reduction and the dedication of our team. Whether through a single dose of NARCAN, a supportive conversation, or a connection with support services, our actions make a difference. As we move into another year, we remain committed to expanding our reach, building stronger partnerships, and ensuring that no one must face an overdose alone.



Low Barrier Shelter

TAT operates a Crisis Warming Center each winter to support people experiencing chronic homelessness during the coldest months. Along with a warm, safe place to sleep, the low-barrier shelter offers guests two hot meals daily and access to showers and laundry service.

Guest Testimony: Alisha A— "It has been a good experience...the staff has been great, and the meals have been fantastic."

During the 2023-24 season, the Crisis Warming Center operated for **91 days**, served **67 different people**, served **1,975 meals**, and connected **49 people** to other long-term services.

During the first two months of the 2024-25 season, the Center served **52 people**, provided **1,378 meals** and **92 showers**, and connected **24 people** to other long-term services.

Unlike other TAT services, the warming center is not backed by significant grants and depends on local funds, donations, and community support. In 2024, \$19,555.00 was raised to support the warming center. Contributions were used for occupancy and utility expenses, food and food serving supplies, cleaning supplies, and personnel salaries. To operate the center in 2024, \$18,400.00 was spent on supplies and \$30,000 on personnel salaries (this number only accounts for one peer recovery specialist working 12 hours per night and does not account for additional support.)



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Franklin/Williamson County ROSC

FWRC Vision:

To build and sustain a vibrant recovery community empowered by intentional and unified stakeholders, allies, and those in or seeking recovery.

FWRC Mission:

We will develop partnerships that are rich and diverse in the communities we serve, to provide a flexible system of services that is responsive to multiple pathways of recovery. Through education, we can reduce the stigma surrounding substance use and other co-occurring disorders.

In 2024, the FWRC:

- Hosted **12 monthly council meetings.**
- Attended **9 outreach events.**
- Hosted **3 “Pop Up” events.**

Hosted **4 outreach events**, including:

- 1 overdose awareness event for International Overdose Awareness Day
- 1 Public Narcan training event
- 1 Evidenced-based Recovery Coaching in a ROSC Educational Event
- 1 Free Laundry Day event

The FWRC also hosted a Ribbons to Remember Project decorating the Benton city square for National Recovery Month.



International Overdose Awareness Day Event



Free Laundry Day Event Met

52 community members

151 Loads washed.

84 units of Naloxone distributed.



For the second year, TAT decorated the Benton city square with purple ribbons for National Recovery Month

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Perry/Jackson County ROSC

PJRC Vision:

To sustain recovery support within the community by unity and intentional collaboration among allies, stakeholders, and those in or seeking recovery.

PJRC Mission:

We will build and empower communities of recovery by developing a council comprised of recovery allies, community leaders, and people with lived experience working together to reduce stigma surrounding substance use and other co-occurring disorders while embodying the philosophy that there are countless pathways to recovery.



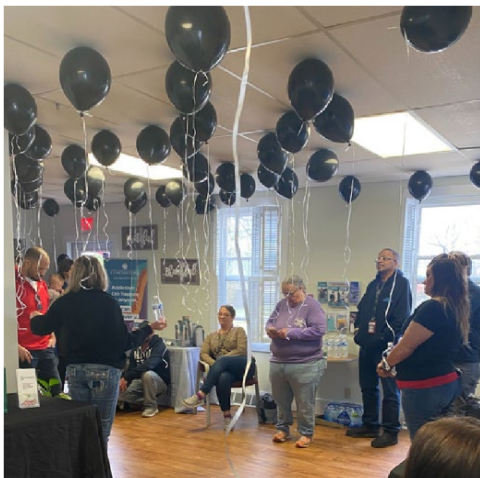
32 PLEs attended an event in Carbondale for National Recovery Month.

Free Laundry Day Total

- Individuals met: 14
- Loads: 41
- Narcan Units: 24

“Pop Up” Total

- Individuals met: 26
- Narcan Units: 66
- Personal Hygiene Packs: 24



Black Ballon Event with 2nd Chance recovery.

In 2024, PJRC:

- Hosted **12 monthly council meetings**
- Attended **8 outreach events** offered by other community agencies.
- Hosted **4 “Pop-Up” events**

In 2024, the PJRC partnered with other community resource providers to host **4 outreach events:**

- 1 Recovery Month Event,
- 1 Public Narcan Training,
- 1 Evidenced-based Recovery Coaching in a ROSC Educational Event
- 1 Free Laundry Day Event.

PJRC also traveled to Chicago for the “National Recovery Rally” and Normal, IL to attend the Statewide ROSC Conference.



Evidenced-based Recovery Coaching in a ROSC Educational Event at John A Logan College

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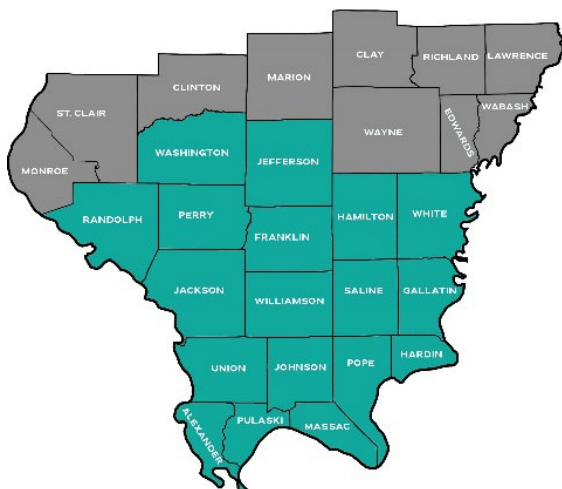
ROSC Coordinator Mandy Hagen was selected for the
2024 Illinois Association of Addiction Professionals Rising Star Award!!!



Impact Statement

"During my time working with ROSC, I have been impressed with their ability to identify community needs and work together to improve lives. By organizing and effectively impacting those in recovery or other hardships, they provide hope and help. Their leaders truly care and inspire others to keep going one more day!"

-Anthony Arington, Chief Operations Officer, Southern Illinois Reentry/Dismas House of St. Louis



The **Southern Illinois Recovery Network (SIRN)**, led by Take Action Today, is a regional initiative aimed at supporting individuals impacted by substance use and mental health challenges. The network brings together organizations, service providers, and community members to improve recovery resources and foster a supportive culture. SIRN works to expand access to prevention education, recovery support, and workforce development, empowering individuals to reclaim their lives and

contribute to their communities. With a focus on collaboration and resource mobilization, SIRN is transforming recovery efforts in rural Southern Illinois, ensuring everyone can access the tools and support needed for lasting recovery. Together with Take Action Today, the initiative addresses substance misuse, particularly among youth and families, and strives for a healthier, more resilient future for the region.

TAT serves as the lead agency for the Illinois Recovery United Task Force. The Task Force meets bi-monthly to coordinate and grow regional recovery support capacity. It also hosts a quarterly technical training event titled Building Capacity for a Recovery Ready Southern Illinois, free for grassroots organizations to attend.

In 2024, TAT and SIRN hosted **4 Task Force meetings** and **1 Technical Training event**.



RECOVERY UNITED
Illinois Task Force

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BASE Project



The **Southern Illinois Youth Empowerment Network (SIYEN)** is a comprehensive youth-focused program that fosters youth leadership, workforce development, and expanded substance use prevention efforts for 6th-12th graders in all Southern Illinois Counties. Utilizing the **BASE (Build, Amplify, Support, Empower)** framework, SIYEN will establish coalitions, engage with schools and communities, and empower youth to address immediate challenges and lay the foundation for long-term success. By incorporating evidence-based practices and partnering with key organizations such as the Massac County Drug Awareness Coalition and Southern Illinois Resource and Advocacy Center, SIYEN will provide youth with the tools and support needed to drive positive changes within their communities. SIYEN aims to increase youth engagement in prevention, leadership, and workforce development across Southern Illinois through a multifaceted approach guided by the National Coalition Institute and SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework.

National Recovery Rally



21 staff, allies, and community members attended the National Recovery Rally in Chicago to celebrate National Recovery Month.

It was very inspiring, and going with the people from Southern Illinois made me proud to be a part of some of the people from Southern Illinois in recovery.

-Jesus T., PLE



**Illinois
Faith & Recovery
Collaborative**

at Center for Community Engagement

The Illinois Faith & Recovery Collaborative seeks to support and empower faith communities in their work by providing training, toolkits, networking opportunities, and connections to local resources.

In 2024, TAT delivered **12 hours** of training related to mental health, substance use, suicide, and overdose prevention.

17 people participated in the training.

3 different organizations became Certified Recovery congregations.

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General Finances

Revenue	2023	2024	Expenses	2023	2024
Community Funding	\$30,234.00	\$35,585.00	Personnel	\$629,856.00	\$702,455.00
Grants	\$1,091,185.00	\$986,577.00	Operations	\$327,957.00	\$404,672.00
Contracted Income	\$17,000.00	\$76,350.00	Benevolence	\$7,857.00	\$8,639.00
Total	\$1,138,419.00	\$1,098,512.00	Total Direct Costs	\$965,670.00	\$1,115,766.00
			Indirect Costs	\$4,371.00	\$105,013.00
			Total Cost	\$970,041.00	\$1,221,439.00

Funding Agencies



**ILLINOIS OPIOID
SETTLEMENTS INITIATIVE**



**Williamson County
Mental Health**



Take Action Today is a proud member of the following organizations:

*Benton/West City
Area Chamber of
Commerce*

*West Frankfort
Chamber of
Commerce*

*Marion Chamber
of Commerce*

*Carbondale
Chamber of
Commerce*

*Alliance for
Recovery-
Centered
Organizations*

*Supportive
Housing
Providers
Association*

*Southern Illinois
Continuum of
Care*

*Heartland
Rotary*

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<i>SI SUPRT ROSC</i>	<i>Healthy Community Alliance ROSC</i>	<i>J City Center for Hope and Renewal</i>	<i>Massac County Drug Awareness Coalition</i>
<i>Williamson County Drug Court</i>	<i>Jefferson County Drug Court</i>	<i>Jackson County Drug Court</i>	<i>Franklin County Sheriff's Office</i>
<i>Franklin County Emergency Management</i>	<i>The City of Benton</i>	<i>Benton Elks Lodge 1234</i>	<i>Southern Illinois Resource and Advocacy Center</i>
<i>Beyond the Walls the Movement</i>	<i>Christopher Rural Health</i>	<i>Benton/West City Ministerial Alliance</i>	<i>Renew Second-hand Store</i>
<i>Centerstone</i>	<i>Caring Counseling Ministries</i>	<i>Gateway Foundation</i>	<i>Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities</i>
<i>Williamson County Mental Health Board</i>	<i>Southern Illinois Healthcare</i>	<i>Hour House</i>	<i>Community of Faith Church</i>
<i>Lucas Accounting Solutions</i>	<i>Legal HQ</i>	<i>SPERO Coalition</i>	<i>Lighthouse Shelter</i>
<i>First Christian Church of Duquoin</i>	<i>2nd Chance Recovery</i>	<i>Carbondale Warming Center</i>	<i>Egyptian Health Department</i>
<i>West Frankfort Rotary Club</i>	<i>Herrin House of Hope</i>	<i>4 Good Community</i>	<i>Saline County Outreach</i>
<i>Arrowleaf</i>	<i>Ezra Church Ministries</i>	<i>The Promise Mission</i>	<i>Chestnut Health Systems Center for Community Engagement</i>
<i>Regional Office of Education 21 McKinney Vento</i>	<i>Sisters Rise Women's Ministry</i>	<i>Dr. Dhru and Company</i>	



We want to thank Gambit Coffee Bar in West Frankfort for hosting our first-ever TATtalks. Their coffee and atmosphere are second to none. If you haven't visited, we strongly encourage you to do so.

It would take a book to acknowledge all local agencies and community members who supported our organization in 2024.

Though we cannot list everyone, we are grateful for you all.



Training

Service

Looking Forward

As we celebrate four transformative years at Take Action Today (TAT), our vision for the coming year is rooted in hope, community, and empowerment. In 2025, TAT will remain steadfast in its commitment to enhancing recovery support, fostering the growth of the peer recovery support workforce, and moving Southern Illinois toward a more recovery-oriented system of care.

A significant focus this year will be the launch of our new Homeless Outreach and Overdose Prevention (HOOP) initiative, which will revamp our overdose prevention program by integrating harm reduction strategies and outreach services for those experiencing homelessness. In collaboration with the Illinois Public Health Institute, we will also enhance Medical Respite Capacity in Franklin County, offering a safe, supportive environment for individuals recovering from medical conditions without stable housing.

Additionally, TAT is expanding its workforce to include Community Health Workers (CHWs), who will play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between healthcare and the community, assisting individuals in navigating recovery resources and improving overall well-being.

To further our mission, TAT will establish a thrift store in Benton, Illinois, as part of our Recovery Ready Community Model. This initiative will provide job skills development and mentorship for individuals affected by chronic homelessness and substance use. This initiative is paramount in ensuring our community members have the resources necessary for successful recovery.

We will continue to build coalitions and raise awareness around recovery-oriented approaches to substance use and homelessness, ensuring that no individual in our community has to navigate these challenges alone. Together, we can foster an environment of support and resilience, empowering our community for a brighter future.



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