

FIRST-RESPONDERS COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT **Evaluation Report**

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS BY







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FR-CARA Evaluation Report

Introduction

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Aging, Adult, and Behavioral Health Services (DAABHS) was awarded funding by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in September 2016 for the Arkansas Prescription Drug/Opioid Overdose (PDO) Prevention Program. The goal of the PDO grant is to develop a comprehensive prescription-drug misuse prevention program designed to do the following:

- 1. Reduce the number of prescription drug/opioid overdose-related deaths and adverse events among Arkansans 18 years of age and older
- 2. Address behavioral health disparities among racial/ethnic minorities
- 3. Replicate a successful local police department naloxone program

While the original PDO grant ended in 2021, efforts have been continued through the State Targeted Response (STR) to the Opioid Epidemic grant (no-cost extension ended in 2020), State Opioid Response (SOR) grant (ended 2020), SOR II grant (ended 2022) and currently the First Responders-Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act Grant (FR-CARA).

Through a combination of funding sources and methodologies, all 75 counties and targeted state agencies, including Arkansas Community Corrections (ACC) and school nurses, have been selected for program implementation since the first intervention year (2017–2018). As shown in **Figure 1**, 14 of these counties (Benton, Boone, Carroll, Craighead, Crawford, Crittenden, Franklin, Miller, Pope, Saline, Scott, Sebastian, Sharp, and Woodruff) were funded through PDO funds; one (Lonoke) was funded through PDO carryover funds; seven (Baxter, Garland, Izard, Marion, Pulaski, Poinsett, and White) were funded through the STR grant; four (Greene, Jefferson, Logan, and Washington) were funded through the STR no-cost extension; two (Cleburne and Faulkner), along with additional funds for Pulaski County and state agencies, were made available through the SOR grant; nine (Cleveland, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Johnson, Lincoln, Pike, Stone, Van Buren, and Ouachita) were funded through the SOR II grant; and nine (Columbia, Conway, Grant, Howard, Little River, Madison, Montgomery, Polk, and Searcy) were funded through the SOR III grant.

In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021, the state was awarded FR-CARA, which is being utilized for funding 20 additional counties (Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot, Clay, Cross, Desha, Drew, Independence, Jackson, Lawrence, Lee, Mississippi, Monroe, Phillips, Prairie, Randolph, St. Francis, and Union) and adding additional funding to two counties (Greene and Woodruff). Four of these counties (Arkansas, Independence, Mississippi, and Randolph) were reached in FFY2021; five additional were reached in FFY2022 (Union, Lawrence, Cross, Clay, and Ashley); another five were reached in FFY2023 (Jackson, St. Francis, Lee, Drew, and Chicot); the final six counties were reached in FFY2024 (Bradley, Calhoun, Desha, Monroe, Phillips, and Prairie). DAABHS acts as FR-CARA program coordinator. The University of Arkansas at Little Rock MIDSOUTH provides planning and administrative oversight. The Criminal Justice Institute conducts program implementation activities. The Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care (AFMC) performs program evaluation.



Figure 1. Funding source by county

Background

CJI was contracted under SOR II funding to extend SOR-, STR- and PDO-related grant prevention services to additional communities in Arkansas. The prevention services target communities at high risk of opioid overdose deaths, according to criteria outlined in the annual opioid needs assessment. As part of the prevention services, CJI purchased and distributed naloxone kits to first responders. The naloxone kits contain two doses of naloxone, disposable medical gloves for the administrator to wear for personal protection, alcohol prep pads, and a substance abuse treatment referral card to be given to a person after an overdose is reversed with naloxone. CJI also held training events for opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment centers' staff and clients' families who were undergoing treatment for OUD. Many of the events were considered "train-the-trainer" events that would equip the trainee to teach others how to properly administer naloxone in the future. At these training events, CJI provided one naloxone kit for each person trained.

CJI was also tasked with training families, OUD providers and community health centers' staff on recognizing the signs of OUD. Prevention efforts also include an ongoing media campaign to

provide information to the public about protections provided by the Good Samaritan law. The media campaign included the creation of the Arkansas Overdose Program Facebook page ("Don't Run Call 911") in April 2019. Related billboards, social media posts, print ads, news stories, and broadcast presentations were introduced in target communities. CJI also distributed health literacy materials and medical handbooks to pharmacies, local councils, and health expo events as part of the prevention efforts in SOR II-funded communities.

During each county's intervention year, they received naloxone, training, media, and assistance with the consortium. Typically, the naloxone is distributed after trainings are conducted in each county. They received these services as soon as CJI was able to establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the agency involved, which included hiring a medical director. The MOU was developed by CJI to help support buy in by the first responder agencies by providing best practices, medical rules and regulations, and legal protection for the agency. Each selected county could receive these services during the federal fiscal year in which they were selected.

PDO-funded communities in FFY2018 consisted of five high-risk counties that were combined to form three recipient communities: Crawford/Franklin, Sebastian/Scott, and Sharp. With the addition of the STR funding, prevention services were increased to include two additional communities per year. Using the 2017 opioid needs assessment, AFMC identified two communities as high risk: Marion/Baxter and Garland counties, which received STR funding in FFY2018.

In FFY2019, counties were no longer combined to form recipient communities due to programmatic, logistic, and administrative problems that arose from attempts to combine county efforts. The counties identified as having the highest need for the FFY2019 PDO grant were Boone, Craighead, and Saline. The two STR-expansion counties for that year were Poinsett and Pulaski. STR carry-over funds became available in late 2018 and allowed the State to add two additional STR counties: White and Izard.

Beginning in FFY2020, the PDO grant-funded prevention efforts in Benton, Carroll, Woodruff, and Pulaski counties transitioned to funding from the SOR grant. The availability of STR No-Cost-Extension (NCE) funds resulted in four additional counties being identified as high-risk to receive funding for prevention efforts (Greene, Jefferson, Logan, and Washington). In FFY2020, Faulkner and Cleburne counties also began receiving SOR funding for prevention activities.

The First Responders-Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act grant, which targets 20 Arkansas Delta counties that are unlikely to be selected as communities for PDO, STR or SOR grants, began in FFY2021. Four of these counties (Arkansas, Independence, Mississippi, and Randolph) were reached in FFY2021 (Greene and Woodruff were previously reached by other grants in FFY2020); five additional were reached in FFY2022 (Union, Lawrence, Cross, Clay, and Ashley); another five were reached in FFY2023 (Jackson, St. Francis, Lee, Drew, and Chicot); the final six counties were reached in FFY2024 (Bradley, Calhoun, Desha, Monroe, Phillips, and Prairie).

When SOR II funding became available on September 30, 2020, six high-risk counties were selected to receive grant funding for prevention efforts for FFY2021: Cleveland, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Johnson, Lincoln, and Pike. In FFY2022, three additional counties: Ouachita, Stone, and Van Buren were selected to receive SOR II funding, resulting in nine total SOR II-funded counties.

Results

Community Kickoff Roundtable Meetings

CJI facilitated an in-person Community Kickoff Roundtable Meeting in each selected county in which information about the FR-CARA grant activities and local data were presented. Attendees also had the opportunity to discuss their unique perspectives regarding the opioid epidemic in their counties with other community members and the State. CJI also broadcasted each meeting on Facebook Live.

After the initial kickoff meetings in each selected county, CJI staff worked with local community members to establish an advisory council. CJI attends and helps facilitate subsequent advisory council meetings and trainings in each county. Dates for each kickoff and total attendance are shown in **Figure 2**. On a monthly basis, CJI reports information regarding the events of each county kickoff and subsequent activities in a REDCap data collection tool designed and maintained by AFMC. Summaries for each county are shown below.

Fiscal Year	County	Kickoff Date	Attendance	Kits Distributed^
	Arkansas	July 23, 2021	22 (167 views)	N/A
2021*	Independence	June 17, 2021	20 (166 views)	N/A
2021**	Mississippi	July 27, 2021	14 (112 views)	N/A
	Randolph	June 24, 2021	20 (106 views)	N/A
	Ashley	March 29, 2022	31 (73 views)	N/A
	Clay	April 28, 2022	22 (50 views)	N/A
2022		February 15,	51 (218 views)	N/A
2022	Cross	2022		
	Lawrence	March 2, 2022	31 (91 views)	N/A
	Union	July 14, 2022	28	N/A
	Chicot	May 4, 2023	20	13
	Drew	April 4, 2023	35	33
2023	Jackson	March 21, 2023	29	29
	Lee	June 20, 2023	31	26
	St. Francis	June 7, 2023	41	39
		February 29,	46	32
	Bradley	2024		
	Calhoun	August 14, 2024	5	5
2024	Desha	May 30, 2024	28	21
	Monroe	May 1, 2024	61	18
	Phillips	December 15, 2023	49	49

Figure 2. Kickoffs by county and fiscal year, 2021-2024

Prairie	May 1, 2024	197	23
	were selected to receive uring FFY2020 when they v		unding in FFY2021. These to receive previous grant

^Prior to 2022, the number of distributed kits were not reported for kickoff meetings.

Arkansas County

funding.

Dr. Cheryl May did a radio interview with Eric Mahfouz on July 16, 2021, to promote the Community Roundtable. Sharon Young of Tri-County helped with set up and takedown of the event. The Arkansas County Community Roundtable was held July 23, 2021, at the Courthouse Annex in Stuttgart with 22 people attending and 167 views on the Facebook Live broadcast. The speakers were Paul Colvin of Community Organization on Drug Education; Taneisha Lewis, Regional Prevention Representative; Chief Mark Duke of Stuttgart Police Department; and Ron Worbington, a peer recovery specialist with Arkansas Recovery Ministries 180.

Ashley County

On March 8, 2022, project staff attended the virtual Drug-Free Ashley County Coalition meeting. The group discussed the community roundtable event scheduled March 29, 2022, and distribution of flyers to the community, treatment facilities, and local churches. At the time, the group had recently inquired about a grant to assist with drug treatment services for faith-based treatment programs. They broke up into groups, in-person and virtual to come up with strategies for community change. Sharon Mims, State Drug Director's Office shared information with the group on the seven strategies and descriptions for community change from the National Coalition Institute.

The Ashley County Community Roundtable was held on March 29, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church Multi-Ministry Center with 31 community members present and 73 views on the Facebook Live broadcast. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations.

The driving issues discussed were people having accessibility to extracurricular activities, nothing to do within the county, high school students stating people don't care and adults, and high suicide rate. The possible solutions were to provide more education to the parents, make people more accountable, assist families and parents that are in denial, network for more recovery services, make more people aware of drugs within the community, and parents, ministers, and doctors should be held more accountable with assisting those with a substance use disorder.

Bradley County

The Bradley County Community Roundtable Event was held on February 29, 2024, at the Southeast Arkansas Community-Based Education Center (SEACBEC) in Warren, AR. 46 people attended the event, and 32 naloxone kits were distributed. Mayor Gregg Reep, City of Warren, provided welcoming remarks; Dr. Cheryl May, Director of the Criminal Justice Institute discussed the scope of the opioid epidemic in Arkansas; Mrs. Sydney Lewis, Supervisor of Data Sciences at AFMC, discussed local statistics for Bradley County; Mr. Ron Worbington, Peer Support Specialist with Arkansas Rural Health Partnership, shared his story of recovery; Investigator James Slaughter, 10th Judicial District Drug Task Force, discussed the extent of the opioid problem in Bradley County; and Ms. Cheryl Smith, Operations Manager of the Emergency Ambulance Service discussed what emergency responders are seeing in the county. Mr. Jamal Williams, Project Director, Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Adult and Behavioral Health Services, led the roundtable discussion where factors driving opioid misuse in the county and possible solutions to the epidemic were discussed.

Attendees included representatives from SEABEC, Warren School District, Pinnacle Pointe Hospital, Warren Police Department, Arkansas Rural Health Partnership, Emergency Ambulance Services, Warren Fire Department, Arkansas Food Bank, Bradley County Sheriff's Office, Hermitage School District, and 10th Judicial District Drug Task Force. There were also several high school students and a social worker in attendance.

Community members identified some factors driving opioid misuse in the county such as doctors overprescribing medications, poverty, COVID lockdown, and lack of education for the youth. There is a large logging and lumber mill industry in the county that could create a greater number of injuries and prescriptions for opioids. The group also discussed the fact that Bradley County is one of the top-ranked high-risk counties in the state for poverty. They said that some community members may be self-medicating and that there were a lot of relapses during COVID due to the mandatory lockdown. Others said that some in the community were dealing drugs due to the amount of money they could make from it. Possible solutions discussed included more education for the community and, specifically, the youth and placing naloxone in the schools. They also discussed the importance of disposing of unused medications.

Calhoun County

The Calhoun County Community Roundtable event was held on August 14, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. at the Office of Emergency Management. There were five attendees, and the event aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not provided. Invitations to the event were sent to local law enforcement, government agencies, schools, the area chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations within the community. Donna Steelman, Coroner and Office of Emergency Management Coordinator; Vernon Morris, Sheriff; and Andria Blackwood, Ph. D Associate Research Scientist Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC), served on the community panel. Dr. Cheryl May, Director of CJI, presented information on the scope of the opioid epidemic and provided an overview of the project. Mr. Jamal Williams, Project Director of the Division of Aging Adult and Behavioral Health Services, led the roundtable discussion.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- 1. The large number of mature and aging adults in the county using medications
- 2. Industrial companies with employees injured on the job
- 3. Interstate access brought drugs into the community

The possible solutions discussed by the attendees included:

- 1. Give more prevention education and material in the community about the dangers of opioids
- 2. Try to prevent some of the injuries at the industrial plants and educate them on opioids
- 3. Educate the elderly about the dangers of opioids

Attendees received a presentation folder and yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage, and disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acryl-fentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids and pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and med bags, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, "Don't Run Call 911" magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow "Don't Run Call 911" t-shirts, bumper stickers, and five-easy to avoid overdose steps information cards. Five naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees.

Chicot County

The Chicot County Community Roundtable event was held on May 4, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. at the Lake Village Expo Center with 20 attendees. The event was aired via Facebook Live broadcast, but streaming numbers were not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- Lack of knowledge about the difference between fentanyl and hydrocodone prescriptions
- Understanding why people abuse illicit fentanyl
- No incentives for bringing in trained peer specialists to assist law enforcement agencies, hospitals, and courts
- Increased training for law enforcement
- Communication about prevention and how to get the word out to employers and families
- Questioning the doctors before taking prescription medications
- Securing the border so the cartel cannot bring drugs in the country
- Getting people to seek treatment services
- Limited treatment services in the area
- Stigma associated with substance use

The possible solutions discussed by the members were adding more peer specialists to local law enforcement agencies, getting more people to get involved and speak out about the dangers of opioids, bringing more education and awareness of prescriptions, and contacting Phoenix Youth and Family Services to assist with treatment. All attendees received a yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage and disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acryl-fentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids and pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and medication bags, round fans, fidget blocks, mop topper stylus pens, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, "Don't Run Call 911" magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow "Don't Run Call 911" t-shirts, bumper stickers, first aid kits, five-easy to avoid overdose steps

information cards, and an invitation to our Community Advisory Forum, July 24-25, 2023 in Jonesboro. 13 naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees.

Clay County

The Clay County Community Roundtable was held on April 28, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at the M.B. Ainley, Jr. Community Center with 22 attendees and aired via Facebook Live Broadcast. There were 50 views of the live event. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- Why Clay County is double the national average on the number of prescriptions written
- Clay County has large elderly population, many of which are prescribed pain medication
- The need for additional education in schools
- The older generation may be suffering from early dementia or other cognitive impairments that make them more vulnerable to overdose

Members of the roundtable discussed expanding the D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program, opening more outpatient centers in the county, and having access to more educational information.

Cross County

The Cross County Community Roundtable was held on February 15, 2022, at the Technology Center for the Delta in Wynne, AR, at 1:00 p.m. with 51 people in attendance. There were 218 views on the Facebook Live Event page. Wayne Wooten, Celebrate Recovery Lead Minister; Kent Thompson, AFMC; David West, Cross County Sheriff; Kory Ward, Wynne Fire Department Captain; and Kendon Gray, Regional Prevention Representative, spoke at the event.

Desha County

The Desha County Community Roundtable event was held on May 30, 2024, at Dumas Community Center. There were 28 attendees, and the event aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to local law enforcement, government agencies, schools, the area chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations within the community. AFMC Supervisor of Data Sciences Sydney Lewis; Peer Support Specialist, Ron Worbington; Desha County Sheriff, Mitch Grant; and Desha County Investigator, Alan Hernandez, served on the community panel. Dr. Cheryl May, Director of CJI, presented information on the scope of the opioid epidemic and provided an overview of the project. Mr. Jamal Williams, FR-CARA Project Director, Division of Aging Adult and Behavioral Health Services, led the roundtable discussion.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- 1. High poverty rate
- 2. Frequent drug abuse exposure
- 3. Overly trusting physician prescriptions

The possible solutions discussed by the attendees included:

- 1. Identify drug dealers
- 2. Increased peer support specialist intervention
- 3. Create a support pipeline
- 4. Increased support from faith-based organizations

Attendees received a presentation folder and yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage and disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acryl-fentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids and pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and medication bags, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, "Don't Run Call 911" magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow "Don't Run Call 911" t-shirts, bumper stickers, five-easy to avoid overdose steps info cards, and an invitation to the Community Advisory Forum, July 22-23, 2024 in Jonesboro. 21 naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees

Drew County

The Drew County Community Roundtable event was held on April 4, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. at the University of Arkansas at Monticello with 35 attendees and aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- Lack of knowledge about the difference between fentanyl and hydrocodone prescriptions
- Understanding why people abuse illicit fentanyl
- No incentives for bringing in trained peer specialists to assist law enforcement agencies, hospitals, and courts
- Increased training for law enforcement
- Communication about prevention and how to get the word out to employers and families
- Questioning the doctors before taking prescription medications
- Securing the border so the cartel cannot bring drugs in the country
- Getting people to seek treatment services
- Limited treatment services in the area
- Stigma associated with substance use

Members of the roundtable discussed adding more peer specialists to local law enforcement agencies, getting more people to get involved and speak out about the dangers of opioids, bringing more education and awareness of prescriptions, and contacting Phoenix Youth & Family Services to assist with treatment. All attendees received a yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage & disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acryl-fentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids & pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and medication bags, round fans, fidget blocks, mop topper stylus pens, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, "Don't Run Call 911" magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow "Don't Run Call 911" t-shirts, bumper stickers, first aid kits, and five-easy steps information cards. 33 naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees.

Independence County

The Independence County Community Roundtable was held on June 17, 2021 at the Batesville Aquatics Center at 1:00 p.m. with 20 people in attendance. There were 166 views of the Facebook Live Event. Speakers were Sydney Lewis of AFMC, Joshua Ramsey, the peer specialist for the 16th Judicial District Comprehensive Opioid Substance Abuse Program (COSAP) grant; Zach Bailey of the Independence County Sheriff's Office; Geoffrey Watts of the 16th Judicial Drug Task Force; and Lindsey Bower with the opioid outreach program from White River Medical Center.

Jackson County

The Jackson County Community Roundtable event was held on March 21, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. at the Newport Chamber of Commerce with 29 attendees and aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- Nothing to do within the county
- Need more education about what services are available in the community
- Loss of employment
- Injuries
- Thinking prescriptions are safe because they're prescribed by doctors

Members of the roundtable discussed participation in the Arkansas drug takeback program, providing more educational awareness information to youth and families, and where to find more resources and treatment services within the community. There were 29 kits distributed to the attendees.

Lawrence County

The Lawrence County Community Roundtable was held on March 2, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Lawrence County Library Community Room with 31 community members present and 91 views on the Facebook Live broadcast. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations.

The driving issues discussed at the roundtable included:

- Doctors over-prescribing medications, not being held responsible, and doctors making prescription drugs too accessible
- The normalization of drugs and values associated with drug use lead to misuse
- Community perception that EMTs (emergency medical technician), judges, and law enforcement do not care about the drug users

- Lack of recovery centers available in the community
- Naloxone is not available or affordable

The possible solutions were to go after the doctors and pharmacists for over-prescribing, keep a count of the number of prescriptions filled in the community, have more programs for women, make naloxone more affordable and available to the community, find more help and recovery centers, have a system in place to help people instead of arresting them for having an addiction, and have more training for superiors.

Lee County

On June 19, 2023, Berta McMahon, with KXJK 950 AM/KBFC 93.5 FM radio station, conducted a radio interview with Project Director, Jamal Williams, on the Prescription Drug /Opioid Overdose Prevention Project and resources available for Lee County.

The Lee County Community Roundtable event was held on June 20, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. at the Marianna Civic Center with 31 attendees and aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations. Kent Thompson of AFMC, Peer Support Specialist, Desi Sims, Deputy County Coroner, Kevin Caffey, Marianna Police Department Sergeant, Eddie Adamson, and Regional Prevention Representative, Kendon Gray, were the keynote speakers.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- Not enough activities for the kids
- Kids feeling powerless against the threat of drugs and alcohol
- Resource-poor communities

The possible solution discussed by the attendees is to create a recreation center in the community that offers sports and other activities for the kids to get involved with. There needs to be education and ongoing training to assist in changing the mindset of community members. They also mentioned providing more vocational training to teach the kids a valuable skill they can use to earn a living.

Many of the issues and solutions provided by attendees at this event that pertain to youth are outside the scope of the current grant program which addresses opioid prevention in adults over 18 years of age. Project staff provided contact information to attendees on programs specifically focused on youth.

All attendees received a yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage and disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acrylfentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids and pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and medication bags, round fans, fidget blocks, mop topper stylus pens, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, "Don't Run Call 911" magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow "Don't Run Call 911" t-shirts, bumper stickers, first aid kits, five-easy to avoid overdose steps information cards, and an invitation to the Community Advisory Forum, July 24-25, 2023 in Jonesboro. 26 naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees.

Mississippi County

The Mississippi County Community Roundtable was held on July 27, 2021 in the Governor's Ballroom of Arkansas Northeastern College at 1:00 p.m. with 14 people in attendance and 112 Facebook views. Speakers were Blytheville Mayor James Sanders, Luxora citizen Finda Robertson, Sydney Lewis of AFMC, Blytheville Police Chief Ross Thompson, Drug Task Force Agent Bobby Elijn, Regional Prevention Provider Lisa Perry, and Robb Robinson of Midsouth Health Systems. Tri-County staff distributed health literacy and public awareness materials at 15 different organizations in Mississippi County.

Monroe County

The Monroe County Community Roundtable event was held on May 1, 2024 at Clarendon High School. There were 61 attendees, and the event aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to local law enforcement, government agencies, schools, the area chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations within the community. Peer Support Specialist, Bonnie Baker served on the community panel and shared her personal story. Sydney Lewis of AFMC reported on local data. Dr. Cheryl May, Director of the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI), presented information on the scope of the opioid epidemic and provided an overview of the project. Mr. Thomas Fisher, Arkansas State Drug Director, provided information from the Drug Enforcement Administration about opioids. Mr. Jamal Williams, Project Director, Division of Aging Adult and Behavioral Health Services, led the roundtable discussion.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included inadequate education on the dangers of Fentanyl and opioids. No possible solutions were suggested by attendees.

Attendees received a presentation folder and yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage and disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acryl-fentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids and pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and medication bags, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, "Don't Run Call 911" magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow "Don't Run Call 911" t-shirts, bumper stickers, five easy to avoid overdose steps information cards, and an invitation to the Community Advisory Forum, July 22-23,2024 in Jonesboro. 18 naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees.

Phillips County

The Phillips County Community Roundtable event was held on December 15, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. at the University of Arkansas for Medical Services campus in West Helena. There were 49 attendees, and the event aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to local law enforcement, government agencies, schools, the area chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations within the

community. Lieutenant Cameron Hogan, Phillips County Sheriff's Office; Fire Chief Roderick Brown, Helena-West Helena Fire Department; and Regional Prevention Provider, Kendon Gray, were the keynote speakers.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- 1. High elderly population in the community
- 2. An increase in overdoses due to fentanyl being mixed with other illicit drugs
- 3. Lack of education in the schools on the dangers of drugs

The possible solutions discussed by the attendees included mandating schools to educate students on substance misuse, sincere conversations with leadership about the drug issues in the community, and greater access to naloxone.

Attendees received a presentation folder and yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage and disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acryl-fentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids and pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and medication bags, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, "Don't Run Call 911" magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow "Don't Run Call 911" t-shirts, bumper stickers, five-easy to avoid overdose steps information cards, and an invitation to the Community Advisory Forum, July 22-23, 2024 in Jonesboro. 49 naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees.

Prairie County

The Prairie County Community Roundtable event was held on May 1, 2024 at Des Arc High School. There were 197 attendees, and the event aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to local law enforcement, government agencies, schools, the area chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations within the community. Peer Support Specialist, Crystal Holland; and Chief Deputy Jeffery Bokker, Prairie County Sheriff's Office, served on the community panel. Sydney Lewis of AFMC reported on local data. Dr. Cheryl May, Director of CJI, presented information on the scope of the opioid epidemic and provided an overview of the project. Mr. Thomas Fisher, Arkansas State Drug Director, provided information from the Drug Enforcement Administration about opioids. Mr. Jamal Williams, FR-CARA Project Director, Division of Aging Adult and Behavioral Health Services, led the roundtable discussion.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- 1. The availability of opioids
- 2. Economic issues
- 3. Patterns of generational use
- 4. Lack of awareness of the dangers of opioids

The possible solutions discussed by the attendees included:

- 1. Public awareness
- 2. Say "Hell No" to drugs

3. Keep children away from prescriptions and proper disposal

Attendees received a presentation folder and yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage and disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acryl-fentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids and pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and medication bags, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, Don't Run Call 911 magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow Don't Run Call 911 t-shirts, bumper stickers, five-easy to avoid overdose steps info cards, and an invitation to the Community Advisory Forum, July 22-23, 2024 in Jonesboro. 23 naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees.

Randolph County

The Randolph County Community Roundtable was held on June 24, 2021 at the Eddie Mae Herron Center in Pocahontas at 2:00 p.m. with 20 people in attendance. There were 106 views of the Facebook Live Event. The speaker was Joe Veer, peer specialist, who told his story of recovery. The participants were very engaged and anxious to go to work.

St. Francis County

The St. Francis County Community Roundtable event was held on June 7, 2023 at Arisa Health (dba MidSOUTH Health Systems) in Forrest City with 41 attendees and aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations. Keynote speakers were Captain Allen Jones of the St. Francis County Sheriff's Office, Chief Ronald Broussard of the Forrest City Police Department, St. Francis County Coroner Miles Kimble, and Regional Prevention Representative Kendon Gray.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable included the following:

- Drugs are too accessible in the community.
- Fentanyl being added to drugs
- Lack of education
- Lack of youth programs and ways to get the kids off the streets

The possible solutions discussed by the attendees were to implement prevention education campaigns in elementary schools. The education needs to be continuous, and not only for a few days or weeks. They also discussed using School Resource Officers as a valuable tool in educating students and bringing more youth programs to the community. There is also a need to educate grandparents and parents in the community on the dangers of opioids.

All attendees received a yellow tote bag containing pamphlets on drug abuse, prescription storage and disposal, naloxone for opioid overdose, fentanyl, heroin, oxycontin, Desomorphine, acrylfentanyl, pink, gray death, furanyl-fentanyl, Carfentanil, prescription to addiction, recognizing overdose, opioids and pain management, drug treatment resource cards, "How to Talk to Your Doctor" handbooks and medication bags, round fans, fidget blocks, mop topper stylus pens, need treatment nARcansas app cards, postcards, nARcansas magnets, "Don't Run Call 911" magnets, eyeglass cases, bookmarks, hand sanitizer, yellow "Don't Run Call 911" t-shirts, bumper stickers, first aid kits, five-easy to avoid overdose steps information cards, and an invitation to the Community Advisory Forum, July 24-25, 2023 in Jonesboro. 39 naloxone kits were distributed to the attendees.

Union County

The Union County Community Roundtable was held on July 14, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at SouthArk Library with 28 attendees and aired via Facebook Live broadcast. The number of Facebook Live views was not recorded. Invitations to the event were sent to law enforcement, local government, schools, chamber of commerce, faith-based groups, and civic organizations.

The driving issues putting the county at risk discussed at the roundtable are listed below:

- Low perception of harm
- Easy accessibility of drugs
- Lack of prevention, treatment, and recovery resources

Activities

Naloxone

Purchases

Throughout the funding period, CJI made 12 naloxone purchases totaling 5,040 doses and 2,520 kits that were purchased (**Figure 3**). Since FFY2018, CJI has managed naloxone purchases and distribution for multiple federal grants. Therefore, distribution numbers may be higher than the number of purchases due to overflow from previous grants.

Year	Total Purchases	Doses Purchased	Kits Purchased
2021	3	840	420
2022	4	1,560	780
2023	2	600	300
2024	3	2,040	1,020
Total	12	5,040	2,520

Figure 3. FR-CARA naloxone purchases by year, 2021-2024

Distribution

In total, CJI reported 206 naloxone distribution activities during the FR-CARA grant period. Across all activities, 3,065 naloxone kits were distributed, resulting in 6,130 doses of naloxone. Each kit contains two doses of naloxone (**Figure 4**). The number of distribution activities per month is shown in **Appendix A**.

Year	Distribution Activities	Naloxone Doses Distributed	Naloxone Kits Distributed
2021	12	692	346
2022	32	2,074	1,037
2023	69	1,920	960
2024	93	1,444	722
Total	206	6,130	3,065

Figure 4. CJI naloxone distribution activities by year, 2021-2024

Administration

From 2019 to 2024, there have been 85 naloxone administrations in FR-CARA counties (**Figure 5**). Of the 20 FR-CARA counties, just over half (n=11, 55.0%) reported naloxone administrations (**Figure 6**). Independence County had the highest number of reported naloxone administrations (n=23, 27.1%). However, Cross County had the highest rate of grant-funded naloxone administrations per 100,000 people (96.4). 2023 was the year with the highest number of administrations (n=30, 35.3%) (**Figure 7**). Of the 85 does of Naloxone administered and reported in the region, 7 does were administered between 2019 and 2020, these were not obtained through FR-CARA and were instead obtained through the Blue & You grant.



Figure 5. Locations of naloxone administrations in FR-CARA counties, 2021-2024

County	Administrations	Rate of Administrations per 100,000
Arkansas	2 (2.4%)	12.1
Ashley	1 (1.2%)	5.4
Bradley	1 (1.2%)	9.9
Cross	16 (18.8%)	96.4
Drew	1 (1.2%)	5.9
Independence	23 (27.1%)	60.6
Jackson	3 (3.5%)	18.0
Lawrence	5 (5.9%)	30.9
Mississippi	16 (18.8%)	41.1
St. Francis	11 (12.9%)	49.0
Union	6 (7.1%)	15.9
Total	85 (100.0%)	34.2

Figure 6. Total naloxone administrations in FR-CARA counties, 2021-2024

Figure 7. Naloxone administrations by year in FR-CARA counties, 2019-2024

Year	Administrations				
2019*	1 (1.2%)				
2020*	6 (7.1%)				
2021	14 (16.5%)				
2022	16 (18.8%)				
2023	30 (35.3%)				
2024	18 (21.2%)				
Total	85 (100.0%)				
*Administrations prior to 2021 come from the					
Blue & You grant	•				

Trainings

In total, CJI facilitated 116 trainings on the proper administration of naloxone during the FR-CARA funding period. In total, 1,284 people were trained. Of the 116 trainings, CJI issued naloxone to training participants at 114 trainings (**Figure 8**). The number of trainings per month is shown in **Appendix B**.

Figure 8. CJI naloxone trainings by year, 2021-2024

Year	Trainings	People Trained	Trainings with Naloxone Issued
2021	19	420	17
2022	33	352	33
2023	22	195	22
2024	42	317	42
Total	116	1,284	114

Of the 1,284 people trained, demographic data was provided for 1,213 participants. Of the 1,213 participants, the majority (68%, n=821) were White (**Figure 9**). Most of the participants reported that they were not Hispanic (**Figure 10**). Additionally, there were more male participants (45%, n=548) than female participants (43%, n=521) (**Figure 11**). It should be noted that the total number of participants whose gender was reported totals 1,223. This is most likely due to a data entry error that occurred during 2021. Since then, AFMC modified the REDCap data collection tool to contain automatic data checks that alert users to inconsistencies in the data. This has prevented similar data entry errors from occurring in subsequent years.

Figure 9. Training participants by race, 2021-2024



Figure 11. Training participants by gender, 2021-2024







Of the 116 training sessions, the most common groups of people trained were family members of individuals with SUDs (39%, n=45) and first responders (38%, n=44) (**Figure 12**). It should be noted that the types of trainings were not listed for two (2%) of the training sessions. These were the training sessions in which naloxone was not issued to participants.



Figure 12. Types of training, 2021-2024

Media

During the FR-CARA grant funding period, CJI produced nearly 300 media campaigns across the state. Of all the media campaigns, billboards were the most common (n=111) (**Figure 13**). In total, there were nearly 100,000,000 total impressions.

Figure 13.	FR-CARA	media	campaigns	by type
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Media Campaign Type	Total Campaigns	Total Materials	Total Impressions
Billboards	111	169	79,046,452
Newspaper Ads	3	1	10,633
Facebook Posts/Ads	61	271	2,393,700
Other Social Media	5	7	5,384,568
Posts/Ads			
Other Advertisements	3	14,051	2,690,654
Television	6	6	634,298
Website	27	15,243	134,630
Mobile App	21	733	3,134
Audio/Display Ads	9	9	551,021
Video Display Ads	10	10	1,528,135
YouTube	29	144	447,369
Total	285	30,644	92,824,594

Discussion

The FR-CARA grant provided significant resources to combat the opioid crisis in Arkansas, particularly in the Delta region. Through the grant, CJI procured 2,520 naloxone kits, each containing two doses, for distribution across 20 counties. Additionally, 3,065 naloxone kits were distributed to first responders, libraries, and other community members, utilizing surplus kits from previous grants. To support effective naloxone use, 1,284 individuals participated in 116 training sessions, with naloxone provided to attendees in 98% of these sessions (n=114). Thanks to the FR-CARA grant and other SAMHSA opioid initiatives, Arkansas achieved full naloxone saturation in 2024, meaning that naloxone distribution has successfully reached every county in the state.

During the four years of the FR-CARA grant, 78 naloxone administrations were reported to AFMC's Naloxone Reporting Tool, with over half of the funded counties (n=11, 55.0%) documenting cases of naloxone use. Furthermore, seven naloxone administrations had already been reported in the years leading up to the grant.

The grant also funded 300 media campaigns, including digital ads on social media and billboards, which achieved an impressive 100 million impressions, further raising awareness and contributing to the ongoing fight against opioid misuse in Arkansas.

Despite being selected using results from the opioid needs assessment, some first responders in selected counties felt like the opioid epidemic had not reached their community yet. In FFY2023 and 2024, many of the selected counties ranked very low on the needs assessment. FR-CARA counties lie in the State's Delta region, which is one of the most rural areas of the State. Due to the rurality of the counties, some had not reported any overdose-related deaths in several years, contributing to the low needs assessment ranking. It could be beneficial to reframe future programs to explain to community members that although they might not think many people are currently overdosing from opioids, many of these overdoses go unreported and it is crucial to participate in order to monitor trends and prevent future overdoses. CJI should also identify and educate new stakeholders to increase buy in and acceptance of the naloxone program in selected counties.

Appendix

Year	Month	Distribution Activities	Naloxone Doses Distributed	Naloxone Kits Distributed
2021	January	-	-	-
	February	-	-	-
	March	-	-	-
	April	-	-	-
	May	2	86	43
	June	1	100	50
	July	2	114	57
	August	3	184	92
	September	-	-	-
	October	3	186	93
	November	1	22	11
	December	-	-	-
2022	January	1	2	1
	February	1	32	16
	March	2	50	25
	April	1	114	57
	May	3	74	37
	June	4	582	291
	July	3	174	87
	August	4	742	371
	September	4	158	79
	October	1	36	18
	November	3	18	9
	December	5	92	46
2023	January	1	24	12
	February	2	30	15
	March	2	62	31
	April	3	78	39
	May	4	186	93
	June	3	144	72
	July	2	46	23
	August	5	294	147
	September	7	308	154
	October	36	594	297
	November	1	36	18
	December	3	118	59
2024	January	2	38	19
	February	5	78	39
	March	11	94	47
	April	3	46	23

Appendix A. CJI naloxone distribution activities by month, 2021-2024

May	7	158	79
June	4	120	60
July	25	510	255
August	7	52	26
September	29	348	174
Total	206	6,130	3,065

Appendix B. CJI naloxone trainings by month, 2021-2024

Year	Month	Trainings	People Trained	Trainings with Naloxone Issued
2021	January	-	-	-
	February	-	-	-
	March	-	-	-
	April	2	20	2
	May	3	45	3
	June	2	62	2
	July	3	87	3
	August	6	183	4
	September	2	12	2
	October	-	-	-
	November	1	11	1
	December	-	-	-
2022	January	-	-	-
	February	4	66	4
	March	5	33	5
	April	7	102	7
	May	3	42	3
	June	3	8	3
	July	1	3	1
	August	5	45	5
	September	1	1	1
	October	2	27	2
	November	1	5	1
	December	1	20	1
2023	January	2	14	2
	February	1	11	1
	March	1	4	1
	April	3	19	3
	May	-	-	-
	June	-	-	-
	July	-	-	-
	August	1	13	1
	September	-	-	-
	October	4	91	4
	November	1	18	1

December	9	25	9
January	3	19	3
February	2	4	2
March	5	35	5
April	3	23	3
May	2	14	2
June	6	88	6
July	5	15	5
August	8	29	8
September	8	90	8
Total	116	1,284	114
	January February March April May June July August September	January3February2March5April3May2June6July5August8September8	January 3 19 February 2 4 March 5 35 April 3 23 May 2 14 June 6 88 July 5 15 August 8 29 September 8 90