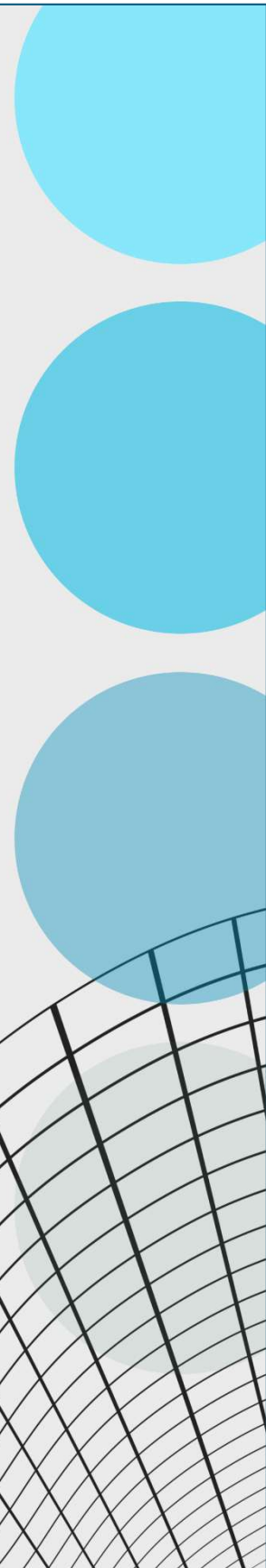


Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery

**Narrative Summary for
Calendar Year 2025**

January 2026



Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR)

C. Jamie Edwards, MA, M.Ed, LCAS, CCS, CPS – Director

Purpose

The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery Serves Surry County Organizations and Residents Seeking Health and Wellness Improvement, Self-Direction, and Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Change and Recovery.

Values

Ensuring Rigorous Ethical Standards and Expertise, the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery Respects the Dignity and Welfare of All People, Promotes Self Determination and Honors Our Community - While Acting with Humility, Passion, Unity, Servanthood and Gratitude.

Vision

The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery Empowers Surry County Organizations and Residents Through Partnerships Advancing Community Health and Safety.

Mission

Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery is dedicated to aiding in the development of a healthy and safe community. We support individuals through prevention, treatment, recovery support services, and educational services within the justice system and the community. Our mission is to provide valuable resources for those impacted by substance use and justice involvement, and to foster purpose-driven lives that lead to positive and lasting change.

Key Messages

Breaking Generational Cycles - We are committed to breaking the cycle of substance use and criminal behavior through support, treatment, and subject matter expertise.
Empowering Personal Growth - We guide individuals on their journey to become the best version of themselves by connecting them with resources, support, and hope.
Invested in Prevention and Community Well Being - We focus on prevention and education to strengthen the health, safety, and resilience of our Surry County.

*Every response to addiction and recovery is incomplete – but every response is also essential.
We must work together, combining our efforts with humility and openness to truly support lasting recovery.*

Introduction to SCOSAR

The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR), a division of Surry County Government, is dedicated to building a healthier, more resilient community through a comprehensive, evidence-based system of care that addresses substance use prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery. In 2025, SCOSAR continues to implement a robust set of strategies designed to meet the evolving needs of Surry County residents affected by substance use disorder.

At the core of SCOSAR's approach is strategic planning, utilizing the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) and Results Based Accountability (RBA) methodology. These models ensure that all programs are data-driven, outcome-focused, and responsive to community input. Through collaborative assessment and planning, SCOSAR addresses opioid misuse, addiction, overdose, and related challenges, engaging both staff and the broader community in the process.

SCOSAR's employment services provide vital workforce development opportunities for individuals in treatment or recovery. These services include job training, job skills development, job placement, interview coaching, resume review, access to professional attire, and short-term, in-demand training courses. The goal is to empower participants to achieve meaningful employment and long-term stability.

Early intervention and substance use prevention services are a cornerstone of SCOSAR's mission. Programs and trainings are designed to encourage early identification and intervention for children and adolescents at risk, with outreach extending to parents, caregivers, teachers, school staff, and other community members. Prevention efforts focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed practices, with the distribution of medication lock boxes, drug deactivation kits, and naloxone kits to those in need.

Recovery support services have expanded to include enhanced transportation options for community members seeking treatment, medical, and recovery services who lack other means of transportation. A pilot transportation program, launched in late 2024, aims to provide rides from a recoveree's residence to their place of employment for a limited duration. Additionally, SCOSAR has provided funding to support the launch of the Accountability and Recovery Court (ARC), with a dedicated coordinator position established in late 2024 and court operations that started in Summer 2025.

The Post Overdose Response Team (PORT) is a critical component of SCOSAR's continuum of care, connecting individuals who have experienced non-fatal overdoses to addiction treatment, recovery support, primary healthcare, and other essential services. PORT is staffed by a peer support specialist with lived experience, working in partnership with the Surry County Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Team from Emergency Medical Services to provide a seamless, compassionate response.

A key initiative within SCOSAR's portfolio is the Surry Transition Project (STP). The STP is designed to support justice-involved individuals as they transition from the Surry County Detention Center back into the community. The project offers substance use screening, group counseling, reentry planning that begins before release, and connections to treatment, mental health care, transportation, employment, and basic needs. Participants also have access to job skills training, employment certifications, and GED services while in custody. The STP collaborates closely with the Accountability and Recovery Court to ensure a coordinated, supportive reentry process that reduces recidivism and promotes long-term recovery and self-sufficiency.

Through these integrated strategies and the innovative Surry Transition Project, SCOSAR stands as a beacon of hope, recovery, and opportunity for individuals and families across Surry County.

Types of Clients Served

SCOSAR serves a diverse population, with a focus on individuals facing significant barriers to employment, recovery and criminal justice involvement.

Individuals in Recovery

- People with Substance Use Disorders: Clients are often in various stages of recovery from opioid, stimulant, alcohol, or polysubstance use.
- Clients with Co-Occurring Disorders: Many have both substance use and mental health challenges, requiring integrated support.

Individuals Facing Socioeconomic Barriers

- Unemployed and Underemployed: Many clients have limited work history, gaps in employment, or lack of credentials.
- Clients with Transportation Needs: 64% of participants in the RTW program reported transportation as a major barrier.

Clients Needing Basic Needs Support

- Homeless or Unstably Housed: Some clients require assistance with housing, clothing, and food, especially after release from incarceration.
- Clients with Family Responsibilities: The program also supports clients who are caregivers or have dependents, including helping with childcare and family reunification when possible.

Employers and Community Partners

- Local Businesses: SCOSAR initiative supports employers and community agencies in hiring and retaining individuals in recovery, providing education and ongoing support to create recovery-friendly workplaces.

Strategic Planning Updates

Council of Lived Experience (COLE): First Three Months

The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR) launched the Director's Council of Lived Experience (COLE) in September 2025. COLE is an advisory group of 6-10 residents with personal experience in recovery, reentry, or related life challenges. Its purpose is to ensure that the voices of those with lived experience inform local substance use and recovery services. Members attend monthly meetings, share their experiences, and provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness, relevance, and accessibility of local programs. COLE members receive specialized training and support, including transportation assistance and refreshments, but the role is unpaid. The council's early months have focused on building trust, sharing stories, and beginning to shape policy and program feedback for SCOSAR and community partners. Interested residents can apply online or contact SCOSAR directly for more information.

Community Perspectives on Substance Use and Family Impact

Substance use is recognized as a pervasive and complex challenge in Surry County, deeply affecting individuals, families, and the broader community. The "Surry County Community Perspectives on Substance Use and Community Impact" report, published in November 2025, draws on extensive interviews and survey data. Key findings include:

- High community awareness of substance use issues, but persistent gaps in understanding and engagement.
- Stigma, resource gaps, and uneven knowledge hinder prevention and recovery.
- Substance use is closely linked to mental health, trauma, poverty, and generational cycles.
- Community members call for expanded education, early intervention, accessible treatment, and a shift from punitive to rehabilitative justice approaches.

- The impact of substance use extends to family systems, schools, workplaces, and the justice system.
- SCOSAR's mission is to build a comprehensive “continuum of care” that removes barriers to treatment and recovery, emphasizing evidence-based, data-driven approaches and community collaboration.

Understanding and Combating Stigma: A Surry County Case Study

A 2025 anti-stigma survey conducted by SCOSAR, in partnership with the Addiction Policy Forum and University of Delaware, revealed:

- 73% of respondents believe addiction is a disease, while 21% see it as a choice.
- Stigma remains a significant barrier: 37% view people in recovery as “unpredictable,” 6% as “dangerous,” and 14% as “to blame for their own problems.”
- Over half of respondents feel anxious or nervous around people in recovery, especially in personal settings (e.g., only 16% would have someone in recovery as a child’s caretaker).
- However, there is strong support for public health approaches: 80% support naloxone access, 72% support increased government spending on treatment, and most oppose punitive measures.
- The findings highlight the need for targeted anti-stigma interventions, leveraging existing community knowledge and support for public health policies, and fostering greater comfort and trust in personal interactions with those in recovery.

Tobacco Retailer Characteristics and Youth Substance Use

In May 2025, SCOSAR published a data dashboard and printable report on tobacco retailers in Surry County, focusing on the impact of underage tobacco use and its association with other drug use. The study included environmental scans of 54 out of 134 known retailers, with special attention to those near schools and vape shops. The data provides context for prevention efforts targeting youth substance use and informs local policy and education initiatives.

Tracking Progress: Surry County’s Battle Against Substance Use and Economic Hardship

SCOSAR’ 2025 reports highlight a comprehensive, evidence-based system of care integrating prevention, treatment, recovery, and post-overdose response. Key initiatives and outcomes include:

- Early intervention programs in schools, such as “Resist the Influence,” reaching over 460 ninth graders in 2024-2025.

- Expansion of recovery support services, including transportation, client satisfaction surveys, and the Recovery to Work Transportation Program.
- Launch of Surry County’s Accountability and Recovery Court.
- Employment services with a 95% certification rate in NC DOT Flagger Training and a 77% interview-to-hire conversion rate.
- Post-Overdose Response efforts providing MAT induction, Suboxone, Naloxone kits, and recovery housing connections.
- Adoption of Results Based Accountability (RBA) for outcome-driven service delivery.
- Community surveys and data collection to inform ongoing strategy and measure progress.

These efforts are supported by multiple funding sources, including the North Carolina Opioid Settlement Fund, CDC, and ARC, and are guided by a multi-year strategic plan for a Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC).

Substance Use and Its Impact on Families

A 2025 family impact survey revealed the profound and far-reaching effects of substance use disorder (SUD) on families in Surry County:

- Families face limited access to treatment, fragmented services, and significant stigma.
- Emotional tolls include anxiety, confusion, and the burden of caring for children when parents are unable.
- Families need more than information—they need practical support, clear pathways to services, and community recognition of SUD as a health condition.
- Stories from families highlight both the challenges and the hope found in recovery, emphasizing the importance of breaking generational cycles and supporting both individuals and their loved ones.

Recovery Support Services

The Surry County Substance Abuse Recovery Transportation Program, widely known as “Ride the Road to Recovery” (RRR), continues to serve as a vital resource for Surry County residents who lack reliable transportation to access substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and recovery services. RRR offers no-cost, non-emergency, door-to-door transportation for individuals seeking connections to SUD treatment providers, court appearances, probation meetings, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings, Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) sessions, and scheduled non-emergency medical appointments. The service operates Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, excluding County holidays, and is available throughout Surry County.

RRR functions as a demand-response service, meaning vehicles do not follow fixed routes but instead travel according to each client's specific needs. To ensure efficient scheduling and maximize the use of limited vehicles and drivers, clients must reserve rides at least two business days in advance. This allows RRR staff to coordinate routes and match transportation requests with available resources.

In 2025, RRR expanded its impact through several key developments. The program launched the "Recovery to Work Transportation" initiative, providing limited-time transportation (typically two weeks) to clients with the greatest need, particularly those transitioning into employment. The program also enhanced its focus on transportation for treatment services in response to increased demand. To improve service quality and safety, RRR implemented customer service surveys, began collecting BARC-10 data to monitor social capital improvements, and developed new protocols for ride requests, delay notifications, and cancellations. Staff training was strengthened with courses in Mental Health First Aid, driver safety (in partnership with the Sheriff's Department), and overdose response (with Emergency Services). For added safety, panic buttons were installed in staff vehicles.

RRR's team grew in 2025, with the addition of a part-time driver and ongoing recruitment for afternoon coverage. The program's commitment to client-centered care is reflected in its evolving policies, including updated informed consent documents and clear communication standards. RRR remains an integral part of the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR), supporting clients from the Post Overdose Response Team, Recovery to Work Program, and a broad network of community agencies and service providers. Recent success stories highlight the program's role in fostering independence and recovery—such as clients who, after relying on RRR, regained their driver's licenses, secured employment, and achieved greater stability.

Early Intervention and Substance Use Prevention Services

Early intervention refers to identifying and addressing risk factors, problematic behaviors, or early signs of substance use and mental health challenges in children and adolescents before these issues escalate into more serious problems. It bridges the gap between universal prevention (aimed at everyone) and treatment (for those already experiencing significant issues). Early intervention is proactive, aiming to reduce harm, prevent progression, support mental health, and reduce stigma by normalizing help-seeking and providing timely support. It can occur in various settings—at home, in schools, in community organizations, or through healthcare providers—and often involves parents, teachers, peers, and professionals noticing changes in behavior and offering support, education, or resources before risky behaviors become entrenched.

Prevention activities are broader efforts designed to stop substance use and related problems before they start. These include education, skill-building, community engagement, and policy initiatives that address risk and protective factors at the

individual, family, school, and community levels. Prevention aims to create environments and relationships that support healthy development and reduce the likelihood of substance use and other risky behaviors. The goal is to help young people develop the social, emotional, and decision-making skills needed to thrive and avoid long-term negative outcomes such as addiction, school dropout, or involvement with the justice system.

Examples of Early Intervention and Prevention Activities provided by SOCSAR

School-Based and Youth Programs

- **Resist the Influence:** Four-day curriculum for 9th graders covering mental health, alcohol, marijuana, and polysubstance use. Focuses on facts, refusal skills, positive coping, and decision-making. Includes interactive games, handouts, and certificates.
- **Media Detective:** 10-lesson program for 4th graders teaching critical thinking about media and substance use advertising, helping students become informed consumers and resist pro-substance messages.
- **Girl's Circle:** Weekly support and skill-building groups for girls ages 9-18, integrating relational theory, resiliency practices, and strengths-based activities to increase confidence, school attachment, and self-efficacy.
- **Mount Airy High School "The Claws" Prevention Club:** Student-led club promoting alcohol awareness and positive decision-making, especially during high-risk times like prom season.

Community and Family Engagement

- **PaCEs Initiative:** Partnership with local churches and community groups to develop youth engagement strategies, provide training, and support community events like "Flapjack Frenzy."
- **Family Fun Day:** Collaborative event for families to play, connect, and learn about healthy choices, strengthening community bonds and protective factors.
- **Seeds of Hope Camp:** Free, faith-based camp for foster, adopted, and at-risk children, providing mentorship, enrichment, and educational activities.

Prevention Campaigns and Education

- **Red Ribbon Week:** Countywide campaign in all schools, providing educational materials, presentations, and interactive activities to promote drug-free lifestyles and strengthen anti-drug norms.
- **Responsible Decision Making (Catch My Breath):** Lessons for elementary students on medication safety, refusal skills, and identifying trusted adults, building a foundation for healthy choices.

Peer and Professional Training

- Peer-Based Programs: 60 peer-based training programs with 1,483 participants, empowering youth and adults to support each other and intervene early when risks are identified.
- Staff Certifications: Ongoing professional development in evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, including Mental Health First Aid and trauma-informed care.

Leadership and Community Voice

- SCOSAR Internship Program: Interns gain experience in prevention, early intervention, and community health, contributing to program delivery and future planning.
- Council of Lived Experience (COLE): Advisory group of individuals with lived experience in recovery, guiding SCOSAR's services to ensure relevance and accessibility.

Employment Related Services

The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR) Recovery to Work (RTW) Program offers a comprehensive suite of services designed to address the multifaceted needs of individuals in recovery, justice-involved populations, and those facing significant barriers to employment. The program's services are both direct (to clients) and indirect (to employers and the broader community), and are delivered in partnership with local agencies, educational institutions, and workforce boards.

Workforce Development and Job Readiness

- Soft Skills Training: Classes focus on communication, teamwork, time management, and workplace etiquette to prepare clients for employment.
- Resume and Job Application Workshops: Individual and group sessions help clients build resumes, complete job applications, and develop interview skills.
- Job Coaching and Placement: Personalized job coaching is provided, and staff work to match clients with appropriate job opportunities based on their skills, interests, and recovery needs.
- Industry-Specific Certification: The program offers access to certifications such as the North Carolina DOT Flagger Certification, which has a 95.5% success rate among participants. Other certifications include forklift operator and other in-demand credentials.

Transportation Assistance

- **Employment Transportation Pilot:** Provides time-limited, no-cost transportation for clients with verifiable needs, ensuring access to job interviews, employment, treatment, and recovery services. This is especially critical for clients without personal vehicles or access to public transportation.

Case Management and Wrap-Around Support

- **Individualized Case Management:** Ongoing support to address barriers such as housing, legal issues, healthcare, and family needs. Case managers coordinate services and provide referrals to community resources.
- **Support for Employers:** The Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) initiative educates and supports local employers in hiring and retaining individuals in recovery, including orientation, formal agreements, and ongoing consultation.

Financial Skills and Life Skills Training

- **Financial Literacy:** Classes on budgeting, managing finances, and building self-sufficiency are provided to support long-term stability.

Basic Needs Assistance

- **Housing and Basic Needs:** Assistance with securing housing, clothing, and other essentials, especially for those recently released from incarceration or in unstable living situations.

Community and Employer Engagement

- **Job Fairs and Panel Discussions:** Annual events connect clients with employers and provide education on recovery-friendly hiring practices.
- **Business Outreach:** Staff visit local businesses to provide information about recovery to work programming and build partnerships.

Surry Transition Project

The Surry Transition Project (STP) is a collaborative, community-based initiative designed to support justice-involved individuals as they transition from incarceration back into the community. The project is a partnership between the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR), the Surry County Sheriff's Office, the Surry County Detention Center and community organizations. Its primary goals are to reduce recidivism, promote long-term recovery, and foster self-sufficiency through a structured continuum of care that includes behavioral health support, case management, and

workforce development. The program is funded through a combination of national, state, and local sources, including opioid settlement funds and a Bureau of Justice COSSUP Grant.

STP operates on the belief that everyone deserves a second chance. With the right support, individuals can break the cycle of addiction, improve their lives, and contribute positively to the community. The program emphasizes honesty, responsibility, respect, and good citizenship, with specific honor codes developed for both male and female participants.

Key Components and Services

- **Substance Use Screening and Group Counseling:** Participants receive evidence-based screening and counseling services while in the Surry County Detention Center.
- **ReEntry Planning:** Planning for reentry begins before release, ensuring a seamless transition to community life.
- **Connection to Treatment Services:** STP connects participants to substance use and mental health treatment, both before and after release.
- **Workforce Development:** The program provides job training, employment readiness, and access to certifications (e.g., Flagger, ServSafe, GED pilot with Surry Community College).
- **Assistance with Basic Needs:** Support includes help with transportation, housing, and other essential needs.
- **Structured ReEntry Services:** Participants receive six months of post-release therapeutic support, including case management and continued counseling.
- **Collaboration with Other Programs:** STP works closely with the Accountability and Recovery Court (ARC).

Program Structure and Process

- **Personalized Support Plans:** Each participant receives a plan addressing substance use disorders, housing, employment readiness, and access to treatment.
- **Pre-Release and Post-Release Services:** Services begin before release and continue for at least six months after, including ongoing therapeutic and case management support.
- **Honor Code:** Participants are expected to uphold honesty, respect, confidentiality, accountability, and a commitment to recovery.

“The STP class has been a tremendous opportunity for me to have a real change when I get released. I have also took advantage of the other classes that’s offered and I am truly happy to be able to say since 2017 I can see a change within the system! So, thank you to the ones who made this possible!” – Detainee

The Surry Transition Project represents a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to supporting justice-involved individuals in Surry County. By addressing substance use, employment, housing, and other critical needs, STP aims to break the cycle of recidivism and foster lasting recovery and community reintegration. The program's collaborative model, robust support services, and commitment to continuous improvement position it as a cornerstone of Surry County's response to the opioid crisis and justice system challenges.

Updated Challenges and Goals for 2025: Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery

Challenges in 2025

The substance use epidemic continues to present complex and evolving challenges in Surry County and beyond. In 2025, the crisis remains severe, with community members and stakeholders reporting that substance use is a visible and pervasive problem affecting individuals, families, schools, workplaces, and the justice system. The pursuit of a single solution is not only ineffective but can also distract from the need for a comprehensive, multi-layered response. Community interviews and surveys conducted as part of the Surry Strategic Framework 2030 highlight persistent barriers such as stigma, limited access to resources, and uneven understanding of substance use and recovery. Stigma remains a significant obstacle, discouraging individuals from seeking help and perpetuating cycles of isolation and hopelessness. Many residents still view addiction as a moral failing rather than a disease, which further complicates efforts to provide support and care.

To effectively address addiction and its associated issues, Surry County must continue to respond from diverse perspectives and foster collaboration across all sectors—families, schools, law enforcement, faith-based organizations, and people with lived experience. The challenge is to ensure that individuals receive the support and care they need while also addressing population-level issues and mitigating the effects of substance use across the county, state, and nation. Community voices in 2025 emphasize the need for expanded education, early intervention, accessible treatment, and a shift from punitive to rehabilitative approaches within the justice system. There is also a strong call for practical supports such as dependable transportation, affordable housing, and accessible mental health resources, as well as youth-focused prevention and creative mentorship programs. Only through coordinated, compassionate, and practical action can Surry County hope to reduce the impact of substance use and foster resilience and recovery for its families and residents.

The Necessity of a Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) in 2025

These ongoing challenges underscore the necessity of a Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) approach. The ROSC model provides a framework for delivering services and supports that promote recovery from mental health and substance use disorders. In 2025, Surry County's ROSC is guided by the following principles:

- **Person-Centered and Self-Directed:** The ROSC model prioritizes the individual's goals and preferences, empowering them to take control of their recovery journey.
- **Strengths-Based Approach:** It acknowledges and leverages the strengths and resilience of individuals, families, and communities to overcome challenges and promote recovery.
- **Community Integration:** The model aims to integrate individuals into their communities, fostering connections and support networks that are essential for sustained recovery.
- **Long-Term Support:** Recognizing that recovery is a lifelong process, ROSC provides ongoing support to maintain well-being and prevent relapse.
- **Holistic Approaches:** ROSC addresses the individual's physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs, promoting a comprehensive approach to recovery.
- **Emphasis on Recovery:** The model centers on the concept of recovery as a journey of healing, growth, and self-discovery.

2026 Goals for the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery

While utilizing the ROSC model, the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR) is focused on the following long-term goals:

- **Improved Outcomes:** Research and local data indicate that the ROSC approach can lead to enhanced outcomes for individuals with mental health and substance use disorders, including higher recovery rates and reduced recidivism.
- **Enhanced Engagement:** Individuals are more likely to participate in treatment and support services when they feel empowered and have a sense of control over their recovery trajectory.
- **Reduced Stigma:** The ROSC model helps mitigate the stigma associated with mental health and substance use disorders by fostering a supportive and understanding environment.
- **Strengthened Community Capacity:** By empowering individuals and communities, ROSC increases the capacity of Surry County to provide effective support for those affected by substance use and mental health challenges.
- **Population-Level Change:** SCOSAR's strategic plan aims for measurable population-level improvements, such as reducing drug overdose deaths and emergency department visits by 2038, as outlined in the Surry Strategic Framework 2030.

These goals are supported by ongoing community engagement, needs assessments, and the implementation of evidence-based practices and data-driven strategies. In 2025, SCOSAR continues to prioritize integrated, person-centered care and broad collaboration to achieve meaningful and sustainable change in the community.