



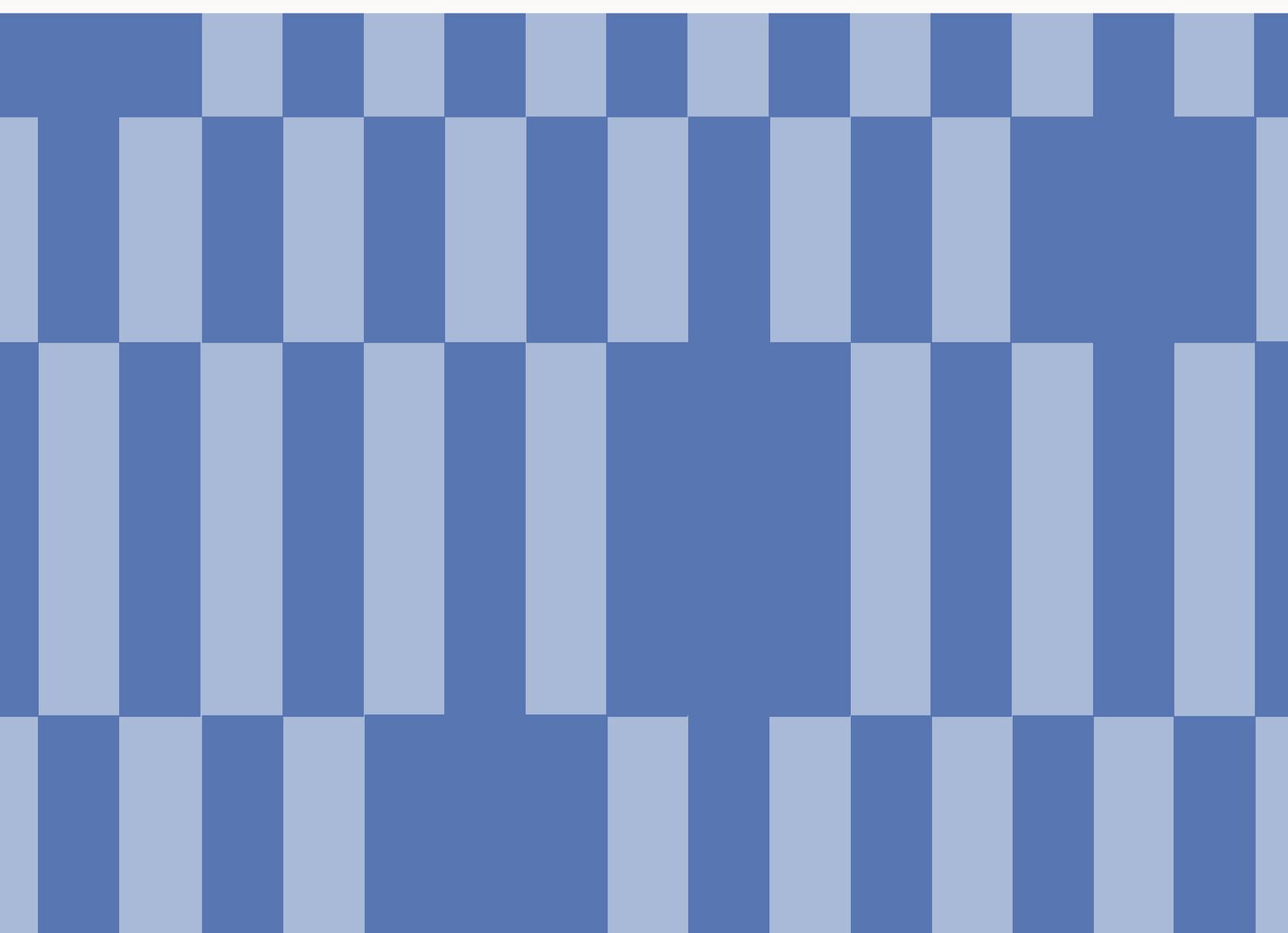
DECEMBER 2025

Omni Institute Report

# Region 4 Opioid Abatement Council

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## Funding Evaluation Report



# Table of Contents

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01	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
02	<b>Transportation Funding</b>	<b>5</b>
	Centennial Mental Health Center	<b>9</b>
	North Colorado Health Alliance	<b>9</b>
03	<b>Treatment &amp; Recovery Funding</b>	<b>13</b>
04	<b>Looking Ahead</b>	<b>17</b>

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# Region 4 Opioid Abatement Council

## Funding Evaluation Report

### Submitted to:

Region 4 Opioid Abatement Council

### For More Information

[Projects@omni.org](mailto:Projects@omni.org)

### Acknowledgments

Omni Institute would like to thank Advocates for Recovery Colorado, Centennial Mental Health Center, Colorado ROOTS, North Colorado Health Alliance, the Region 4 Opioid Abatement Council, and members of Region 4 for their contribution to this report.

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# Introduction

Colorado's Opioid Region 4 includes Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma counties. The goals of the Region 4 Council are to:



## Expand access to care

by addressing provider shortages and funding critical treatment and recovery services across the region.



## Improve infrastructure

to ensure community members can access prevention, treatment, and recovery services.



## Strengthen collaboration

by building shared processes that foster trust, engagement, and data-driven decision-making among partners.



## Track and sustain impact

through ongoing evaluation, transparent reporting, and a long-term plan for using opioid settlement funds effectively.

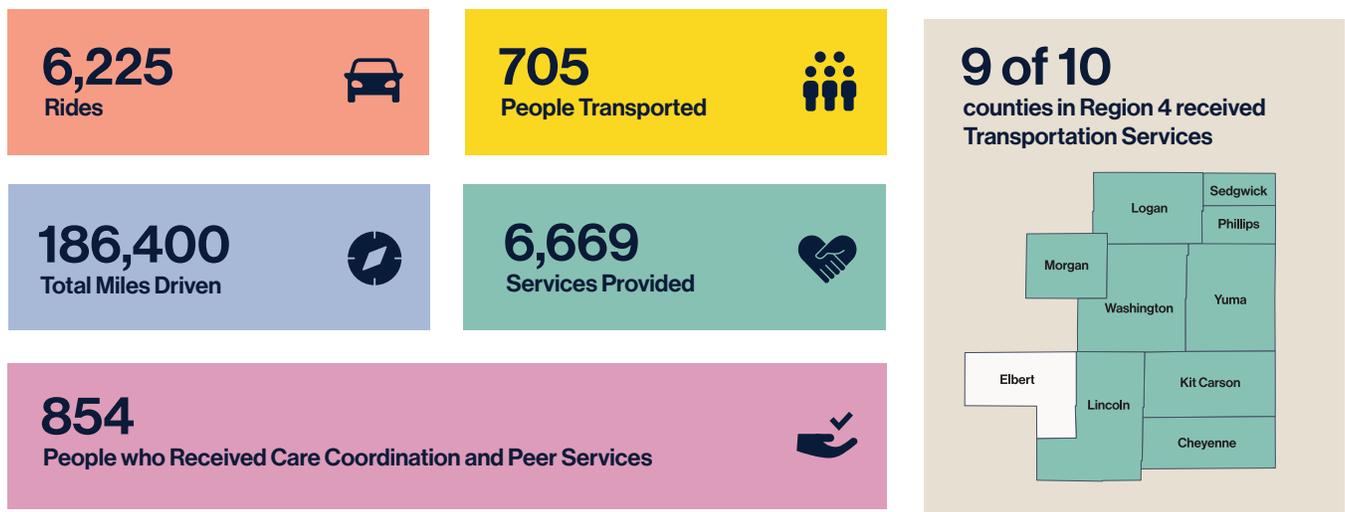
Starting in 2022, Colorado's Region 4 Opioid Council contracted with Omni Institute to assist them in receiving, managing, and reporting on the use of opioid funds. Following a needs assessment and prioritization process, the Region 4 Council released a series of requests for proposals (RFPs). This report provides an overview of the funded programming and its impact on the Region from October 2024 to September 2025.



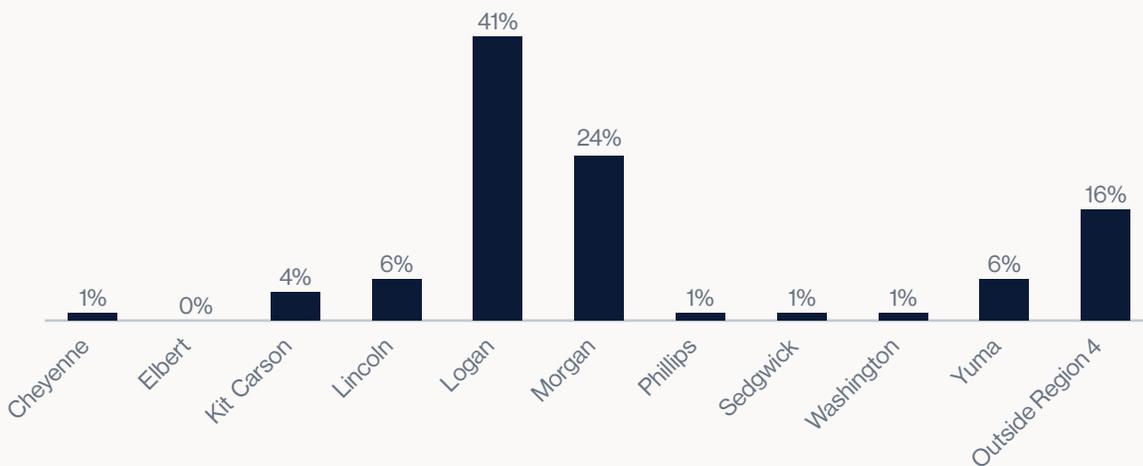
# Transportation Funding

In 2022, the Council released an RFP to fund transportation programs that would help Region 4 residents access substance use disorder (SUD) services. Through this RFP process, two local providers, Centennial Mental Health Center (CMHC) and North Colorado Health Alliance (NCHA), were awarded two-year grants. Over the course of the first year of this funding, these organizations developed transportation services, care coordination, and peer services that have positively impacted the lives of Region 4 residents, increased access to care, and provided greater opportunities for individuals in need, and their families, to overcome the dangers of opioid addiction. In year two, they continued to grow their offerings.

## Year 2 Grant Accomplishments



Percentage of Services Received by County

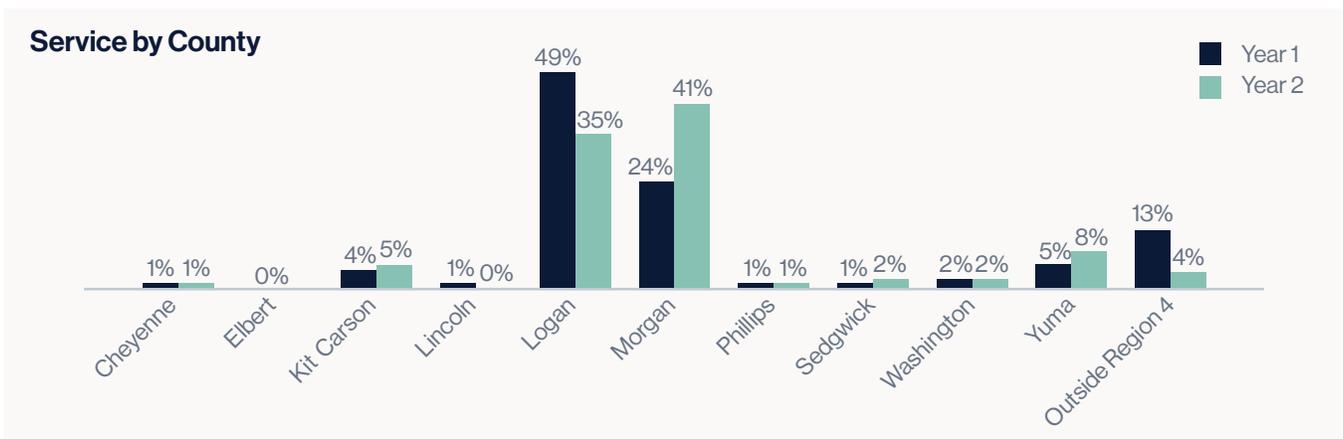
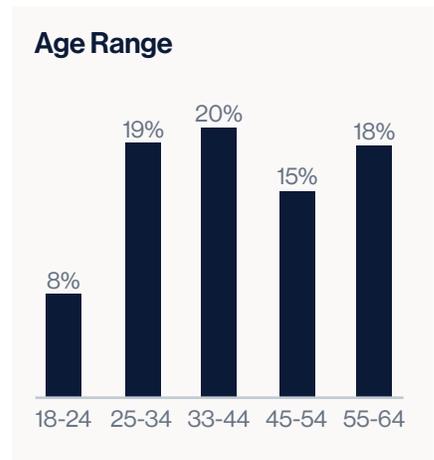
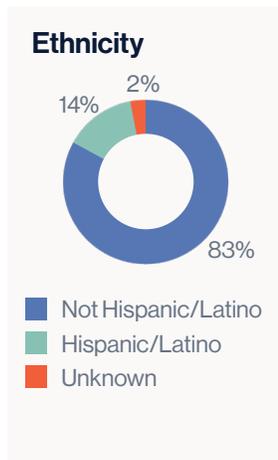
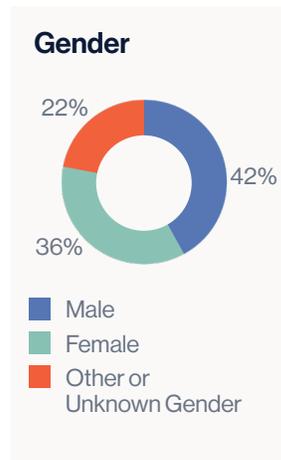
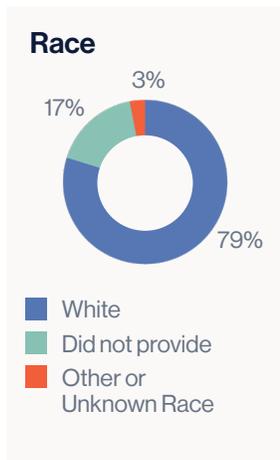


## Centennial Mental Health Center

Over the course of the second year of funding, CMHC has:

- Provided nearly **5,300 rides to 472 individuals**
- In total, CMHC's transportation services drove over **137,000 miles.**
  - › Although the number of individuals that received rides for each quarter varied, on average, more individuals received transportation services in Year 2 (118) than Year 1 (84).
  - › Through CMHC's transportation services, those who received rides were able to access roughly 2,600 service interactions, which may have otherwise not occurred due to a lack of stable transportation.
- Services used over the past year include in-patient and outpatient SUD services, DUI services, sober living housing, group meetings, and emergency SUD services.

This page provides an overview of CMHC's data for year two. Information on CMHC's program for year two of the evaluation can be found at <https://yumacounty.net/grant-evaluations/>.



## CMHC Program Feedback

### Success Stories

Through the second year of funding from Region 4, CMHC has created vital services for the community and their clients appreciate their work. Transportation services have allowed individuals to attend their appointments and meetings, leading to sustained sobriety and improved relationships. Clients reported that their connections with staff have been lifesaving.

#### Trusted Support

*"We have several clients who possess their own transportation; however, they have conveyed their gratitude for our transportation services. When their vehicle breaks down or when they feel uneasy about driving in inclement weather, they contact us and are able to arrange a ride. This ensures that they do not miss their appointments, treatments, and group sessions, as they would otherwise struggle to navigate their day."*

– CMHC Provider

#### Ensuring Access to Care

*"The clients express their gratitude and appreciation to the drivers for the opportunity to arrange rides to and from their appointments, groups, court, UA sessions, and other treatment programs. Without transportation, they would be unable to attend these essential treatments."*

– CMHC Provider

#### Trusted Services and Strong Communication

*"The passengers are increasingly expressing their thoughts and developing a stronger trust in our services. We have enhanced our communication concerning their requirements for transportation."*

– CMHC Provider

#### Providing the Motivation to Attend Appointments

*"When I make a call to cancel the ride, they advise me to consider attending group sessions when I am feeling low. They contribute positively to my mood during the rides. Their assistance is vital in providing the stability I need to attend both groups and appointments."*

– CMHC Client

### **A Year of Sobriety**

*“A client, living 8 miles from the office, has lost his ability to drive and has struggled with addiction issues. Nevertheless, he successfully arranged transportation for his appointments. After being sober for nearly a year, he is now able to spend time with his grandchildren.”*

– CMHC Provider

## **Challenges**

There continue to be challenges in implementing transportation programs. CMHC has emphasized the importance of clear communication with clients so they understand their eligibility and any changes to protocols. CMHC has also found that their transportation program is currently facing a decline in low-value rides as other transportation services are offering complimentary monthly specials or free summer ride programs.

### **Meeting People Where They Are**

The Transportation Team is set to move its offices in Sterling to improve convenience and better support their Non Emergency Medical Transportation service, ultimately enhancing the experience for their clients. Their goal is to minimize the use of multiple staff members, emails, and phone calls when scheduling transportation rides for clients to and from appointments, treatment programs, and groups.

### **Client Understanding**

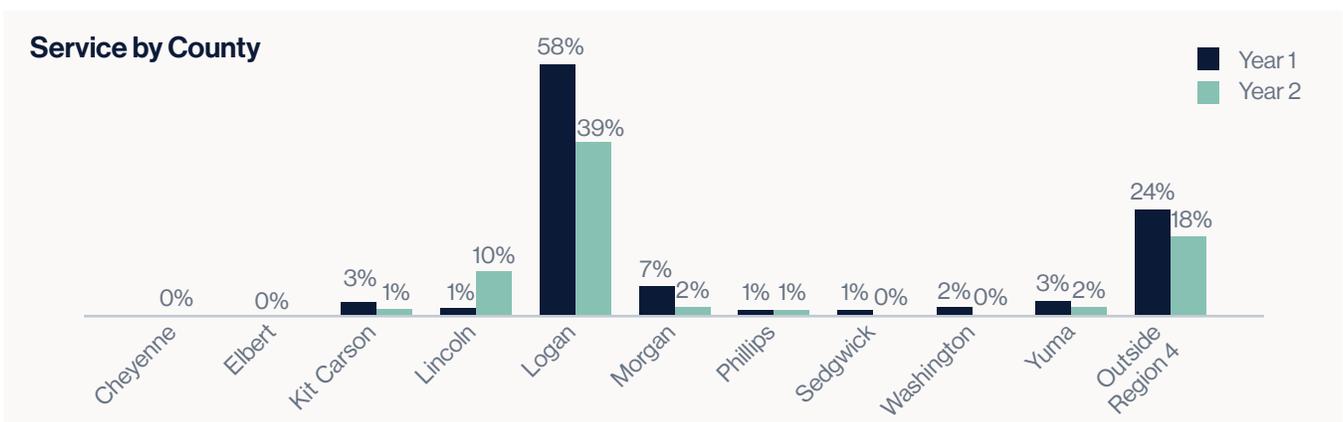
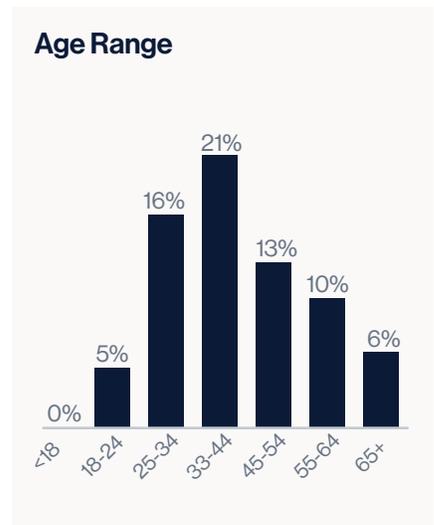
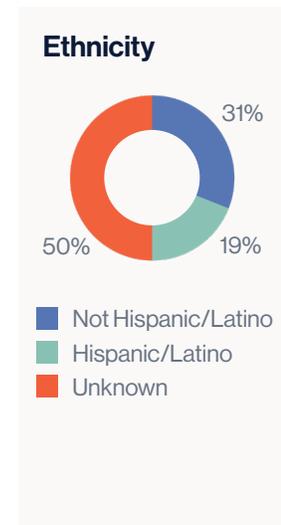
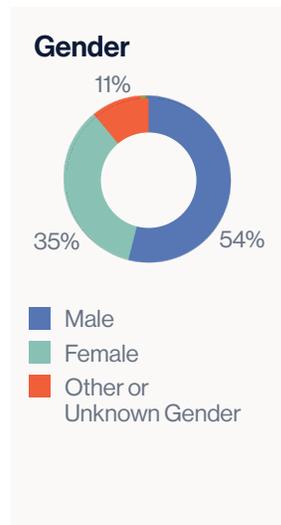
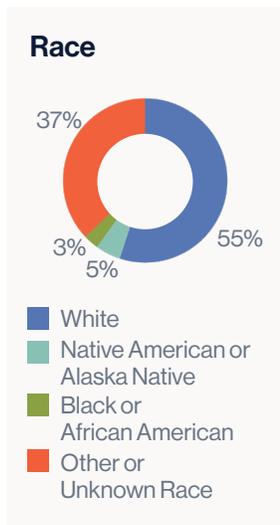
Providers and treatment facilities faced challenges with clients who require additional support in comprehending that having scheduled appointments or a desire to participate in groups does not imply that transportation has been arranged for them to and from those appointments or groups.

## North Colorado Health Alliance

During the second year of funding NCHA, in partnership with Advocates for Recovery Colorado (AFRC):

- Provided **946 total rides to 382 individuals**.<sup>1</sup>
- NCHA's funded vehicles have driven over 30,000 miles to provide access to care for individuals in need.
- In year two, NCHA and AFRC's funded efforts led to nearly 3,000 service interactions, ensuring access to those who may have otherwise gone without treatment or recovery services.
- Of the many services offered by NCHA and AFRC, individuals most often received individual and group peer recovery support, SUD appointment navigation support, individual recovery coaching, peer support referrals, assessments, and client check-ins.

This page provides an overview of NCHA's data for year two. More in-depth information on NCHA's program for year two of the evaluation can be found at <https://yumacounty.net/grant-evaluations/>.



<sup>1</sup>Transportation services did not begin until Year 1 Q2 so no data is present for Year 1 Q1.



## NCHA Program Feedback

### ✓ Success Stories

NCHA has worked to expand outreach efforts across the region. As a result, they have made significant strides in building strong partnerships across multiple counties, with a focus on supporting individuals impacted by SUD. They have conducted outreach to several law enforcement agencies, including police and sheriff departments in Yuma County, Kit Carson County, Washington County, and Logan County. These efforts have been well received, with departments expressing interest in their services and mission.

#### My Care Coordinator Changed My Life

*"[My care coordinator] was one of very few people who fought for me to get help at one of the lowest points in my life. [My care coordinator] always goes above and beyond for me and I'm sure all her clients, she has gone out of her way to help me regardless if it's within business hours or not. She really fought for me to get into treatment and has helped me all the way to the door of the facility if I needed her to be there. I truly appreciate the fact that she is always one phone call away and never makes you feel like your needs come second to what other work she has. She's attentive and passionate about her job and it definitely shows! I'm now 643 days sober and I couldn't have done it without her help. I'm so thankful I met [my care coordinator] and I know that if I ever need anything I can reach out and she's there. She has truly helped change my life so I can only imagine the impact she's had on others! Thanks for all you do." — NCHA Client*

#### Going Above and Beyond to Help Clients Succeed

*"[My care coordinator] has been an integral part of my recovery and has been nothing but an excellent asset to me in all areas of my life that I have been struggling [with] and need help [with]. [My care coordinator] has gone above and beyond in helping me to succeed and I know that she truly cares about me and my success in recovery and the halfway house program. I don't know what I would do without her. Honestly, I cannot thank her enough. Give this wonderful woman a raise!" — NCHA Client*

#### Without these Transportation Services...

*"I would have a warrant for arrest because I wouldn't make it to my appointments."*

— NCHA Client

*"[I would] take the bus, but it doesn't come frequently so [I] would have to walk a long distance and in the cold." — NCHA Client*

*"They thanked our driver for helping them get to their appointment and groups, those help them out so much, and they don't know where they would end up without being able to attend those." — NCHA Client*



### Recovery after Fentanyl Use

*“This member recently called to share that she successfully completed the IRT program at the Sobriety House in Denver, CO. Our journey together had its ups and downs, but she never stopped reaching out for help when she needed it most. With her determination and the support of a treatment scholarship, she entered the program and committed fully. She shared that through this process, she’s regained her self-confidence, along with a renewed sense of purpose and passion. This member was also in active substance use when peer services began. Our early interactions were brief and inconsistent. However, following her most recent incarceration, she made the courageous decision to enter Avenues Recovery. She’s now fully participating in the program and making meaningful progress. After years of fentanyl use, she is beginning to build a new life rooted in recovery.”* — NCHA provider

## Challenges

NCHA and AFRC reported several challenges over the year, both internal challenges and larger external challenges created by the unpredictable nature of behavioral health funding.

### Lack of Staffing Capacity

*“The most common challenge is rooted in capacity across service areas. We have increased staffing by 1.0 FTE and added a vehicle with an additional grant but still find that this remains a barrier.”* – NCHA Provider

*“The needs of individuals seeking support continue to rise and knowledge of services available also continues to rise and we are finding that the capacity will always be a limitation. We have a small staff and are working to pursue additional funds to expand the support we are able to provide to the region. We are hoping that additional collaboration with the Council & Regional Partners will allow for additional collaborative pursuits to increase access to care.”*  
– NCHA Staff Member

### The Unpredictable State of Behavioral Health Funding

The unpredictability of state and federal policy changes has contributed to mounting concerns about the long-term sustainability of behavioral health services and the economic security of those working in the field. This uncertainty is especially pronounced for individuals and families who already face systemic barriers, as they worry about continued access to critical care. These trends underscore the need for consistent, transparent communication and a shared focus on adaptive, future-ready systems of support.

**Staffing Issues**

AFRC experienced temporary staffing challenges this quarter due to the Peer Recovery Coach assigned to the program beginning a 12-week maternity leave in early May. During this period, the Regional Manager stepped in to maintain service delivery. While there was a slight decrease in services during this time, we anticipate service levels will return to normal upon the Peer Recovery Coach's return. NCHA similarly experienced turnover during the reporting period and experienced a decrease in services rendered as a result. However, the vacancy has been filled and the new employee started in July to support the ongoing work of the region.

**Updating the Electronic Health Records System**

This quarter NCHA implemented a new electronic health records (EHR) system. The implementation of the new system led to a temporary gap in the recording of services offered. While these services were still delivered, it required increased efforts to track what services were offered during that time period. The system is now fully up and running and will lead to a more streamlined record keeping and EHR transmission process in the future.

# Treatment and Recovery Funding

In its second round of funding, the Colorado Region 4 Opioid Council awarded the Colorado Rural Opioid & Addiction Treatment System (ROOTS) with funds to improve access to treatment and recovery services in the region through care coordination, educational programming, and technical assistance. The ROOTS network currently comprises over ten Eastern Plains hospitals or health systems as well as numerous addiction treatment specialists and peer support organizations. Through their efforts, providers and individuals with OUD and other SUDs alike are more easily able to access education on comprehensive addiction care and connections to services.

This page provides an overview of ROOTS data for year one of their funding. More in-depth information on ROOT's program for year one of the evaluation can be found at <https://yumacounty.net/grant-evaluations/>.

## Year 1 Grant Accomplishments

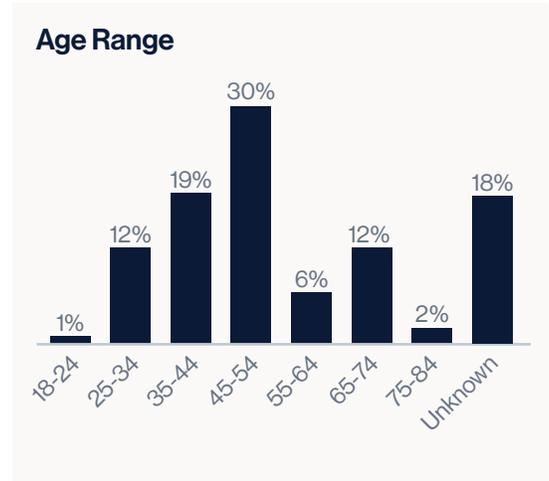
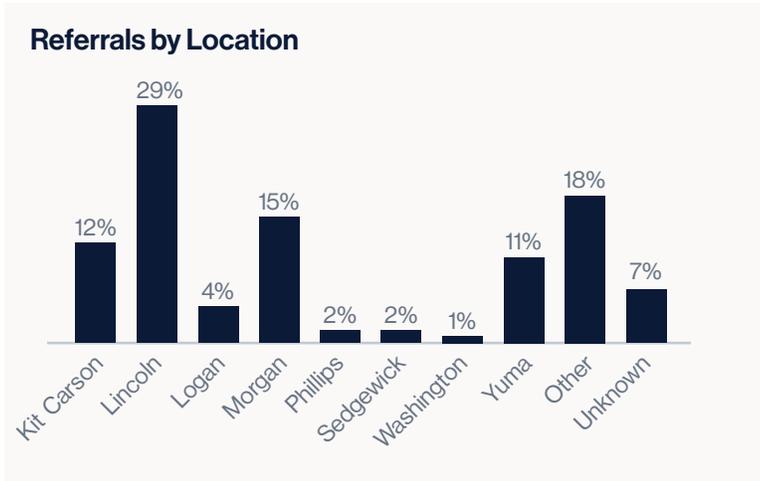


## Care Coordination

ROOTS provides care coordination for referred patients with OUD/SUD to see clinicians who are able to provide appropriate care. Care coordination is provided for each of the four American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) levels of care (Outpatient Care, Intensive Outpatient Program [IOP/HIOP], Residential, and Inpatient) and peer recovery. Hospitals and clinics can refer patients through an online form, available at [www.coloradoroots.us](http://www.coloradoroots.us) or by calling 719-96-ROOTS.

Referral partners include Lincoln Health, Porchlight Health, Watercolor Recovery, HardBeauty, Milestone Community Wellness, and other peer support providers.





## Education and Outreach

ROOTS hosts educational and outreach events for SUD providers in Region 4 intended to foster rural leadership and service implementation, while building relationships between partners. Outreach is done with individual providers and the Eastern Plains Healthcare Consortium (EPHC), which comprises partner hospitals from across Region 4.

Education and Outreach include continuing medical education, collaborative interactions, site visits, virtual and in-person trainings, and community meetings 

**66**  
total education and outreach interactions occurred in year one 

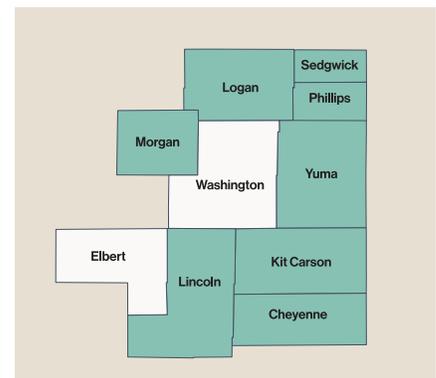
**28**  
providers are receiving the ROOTS Newsletter 

**8**  
virtual trainings held 

**12**  
continuing medical education trainings held 

## Technical Assistance

The ROOTS warmline provides hospitals and prescribing clinicians access to addiction care specialists. Specialists can help guide treatment decisions and aid in the adoption of evidence-based practices. ROOTS tracks warmline utilization and the nature of calls to gain further insights into the training needs of hospitals in the Eastern Plains. ROOTS provided technical assistance to eight of the 10 counties in Region 4, in addition to Kiowa County outside the region.



## Program Feedback

### ✓ Success Stories

During the first year of funding from Region 4, ROOTS took great steps toward building connections to care through provider networking and referrals. Providers and patients alike have expressed appreciation for ROOTS networking efforts, capacity building, and technical assistance.

#### Helping Patients Get the Care they Need

*“We worked with a patient for several weeks, connecting them to Peer, Outpatient services and Inpatient Withdrawal Management. This person was verbalizing being ready for treatment but really was hesitant to take the leap and they kept postponing their detox. We continued to offer services and meet them where they were at. After completing Detox at Lincoln Health, the patient called back simply to thank us for sticking with them, encouraging them to get care and supporting them through this huge step. They had initiated peer coaching and outpatient treatment after detox.”* — Region 4 Service Provider

#### Increased Partnerships and Referrals

*“There has been an increased utilization of the ROOTS referrals portal compared to the two previous quarters. The recruitment of Sterling Regional Medical Center & Haxtun Health as well as initial meetings with Common Spirit St. Elizabeth, means ROOTS has the potential to be partnered with every hospital in the region.”*

– NCO ROOTS Staff

#### Increased Communication

Colorado ROOTS launched their Monthly ROOTS Reports this year which provide community partners with crucial information related to their caseloads and partnership with ROOTS. These reports, developed in partnership with EPHC, provide information on the facility’s ROOTS referrals, patients seen with SUD at their hospital, outcome distributions for their ROOTS referrals, and other crucial SUD-related data for their county.



## Challenges

Although ROOTS has made a great impact in the Region in the first year, providers and the ROOTS staff noted several hurdles over the year. In particular, a lack of withdrawal management services, inconsistent patient screening practices, and stigma and bias within the healthcare system have left some Region 4 residents uncomfortable in seeking the help they need. To help reduce these challenges, ROOTS has worked with each hospital system across Region 4 to develop individualized screening protocols that can be implemented within their social history screening practices. If adopted by the hospital systems, these screening practices would aid in providing a standardized screening protocol to better ensure that each patient receives the services they need. Further, to increase the capacity of local services, ROOTS has been working with a provider in the northeast portion of Region 4 to implement withdrawal management services.

*“There is a lack of in-person local resources. There is not even close to enough mental health and addiction resources in our area. No detox facility, no meetings or programs for groups in this area, a lack of access to withdrawal management services and residential treatment programs. Also, to some extent, travel/distance to Hugo is an issue.”*— Region 4 Service Provider

As ROOTS continues to grow its network and services provided, providers and the ROOTS staff have noted several challenges still present in the Region. Some challenges are linked to the Region’s geography and cannot be mitigated quickly and others are clinical challenges that ROOTS can improve with support from local providers.

- There is no opioid treatment program (OTP) on the Eastern Plains.
- The long distance to drive to Lincoln Health for withdrawal management and outpatient visits remains a barrier for many
- There has been an increase in chronic pain referrals to ROOTS

*“[It is] appropriate for chronic pain to be treated by PCP with support of ROOTS clinicians. [ROOTS] plans to provide additional education around alternatives to opioid treatment for pain management and focus on supporting partner providers in this area of focus.”*— ROOTS Staff Member



# Looking Ahead

The 2024-2025 grant year saw Region 4 expand its transportation offerings, providing over 6,000 rides to community members who require lifesaving SUD services. Access to care continues to be a crucial need for those in rural areas with opioid or substance use disorder. This past year also saw the Council awarding ROOTS with funding to improve access to treatment and recovery services in the region through care coordination, educational programming, and technical assistance. As a trusted partner in Region 4, ROOTS has helped support local hospitals and SUD providers connect to those patients in need. ROOTS will build on their success in year two of the funding contract.

The Region 4 Council has also awarded new RFPs. Below are awardees and a short description of their planned programming:

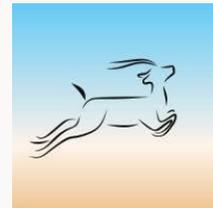
## North Colorado Health Alliance (NCHA)

Renewed and expanded funding to support a collaborative regional model that addresses the opioid crisis in Northeast Colorado through whole-person care.



## Antelope Recovery

Support a six-month outreach and engagement campaign throughout Region 4 to raise awareness of their SUD intense outpatient (IOP) and outpatient (OP) programs, increase program engagement, and build community partnerships.



## Hope House

Provide a structured, one-year, summer after-school programming for substance misuse prevention activities and mentorship for 25 to 35 youths ages 12-18 residing in Sterling and Morgan Counties.



## The Naloxone Project (TNP)

Expand and enhance harm reduction and naloxone distribution programs throughout the region through a Buprenorphine Field Induction Program.

