



West Virginia
City of Charleston
Charleston Quick Response Team

10/01/19 Grant Start → 09/30/22 Grant End

Overview

The Charleston Quick Response Team (QRT) serves the Charleston area, with a population of 47,215 people and covering approximately 31.52 square miles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Charleston continues to see a rise in opioid overdoses and opioid fatalities within city limits. A review of data indicates that city police (CPD) and city fire (CFD) departments have seen an increase in methamphetamine use and other substances laced with fentanyl. In addition, the city is witnessing increased homelessness and a rise in substance use in that population. A high number of individuals are experiencing mental health crises, primarily an increase in suicidal ideations/attempts and untreated mental-health disorders. Through discussions with QRT primary partners, it is apparent that, because of the sheer volume of substance use calls completed by CFD and CPD, there has been an increasing strain on routine duties. The CPD and CFD have reported that several individuals have left

their fields as a result of the growing hardships associated with their professions. Moreover, the city, as a whole, has a lot of work to do regarding empathy and stigma reduction. Negative media attention on the homeless and addicted population has further complicated efforts. Because of the high number of people experiencing mental health and substance use difficulties, many local facilities have reached capacity, cannot intervene owing to a lack of resources, and have experienced a loss in professional staff.

Grant Focus

- Expand law enforcement diversion and first-responder models that connect individuals to substance abuse treatment and recovery support services.

Program Approach

Project Goals for the Charleston Quick Response Team:

- Visit individual(s) at their homes or incident residences within 24–72 hours of an overdose.
- Assess individuals' treatment needs with the assistance of a recovery coach/social service personnel.
- Discuss treatment options and facility requirements with individuals.
- Develop personalized referral plans.
- Contact and connect with local facilities to prepare for individuals' arrival/intake.
- Continue ongoing communication with individuals until treatment is initiated.
- Follow up with facilities to discuss progress and discharge terms.

Data are collected by West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute (WVDII) from emergency medical services (EMS) and statewide platforms to formulate a realistic picture of the drug problem in the area to ensure that the QRT is using resources and engaging the population with a strategic approach.

Project Partners

- West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute
- Thomas Health Systems
- Charleston Police Department
- Charleston Fire Department/EMS

Contact Information

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