



**Report to the Kentucky General Assembly  
FY 2024-25**

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August 31, 2025

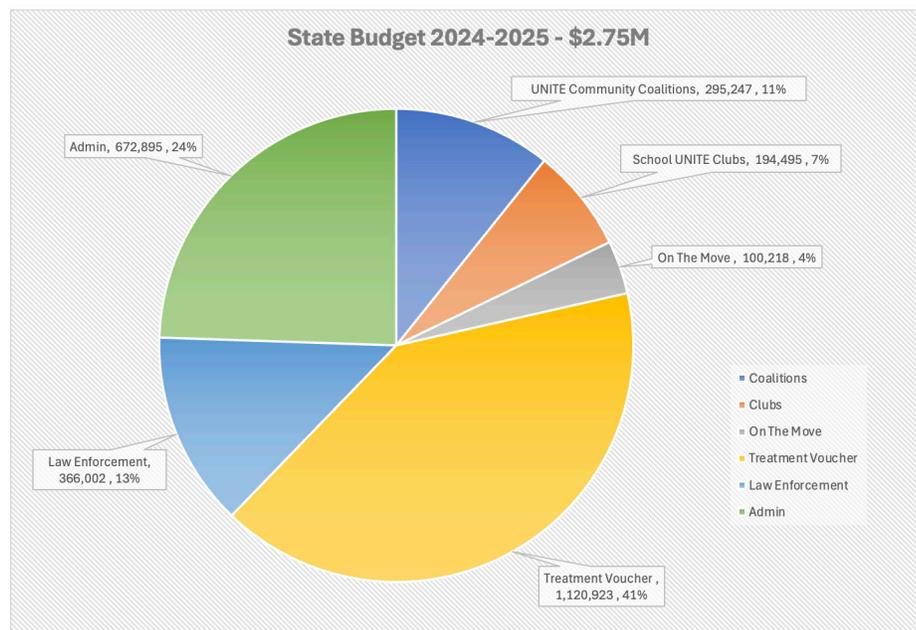


Operation UNITE continues to serve Kentuckians with the provision of core funding provided by the Kentucky General Assembly. Without this funding – that enables Operation UNITE to hire staff and maintain offices throughout its service region – we would not be able to exist. All services are **provided without cost!**

Revenue from the Kentucky General Assembly accounted for **19.3 percent** of Operation UNITE’s **\$13.3 million budget** during FY 2024-25. The Legislature’s investment - **\$1.5 million recurring funds through HB 6 and \$1.25 million in one-time funds from HB 1** - served as a service multiplier, enabling expansion of Operation UNITE’s prevention, treatment, and law enforcement initiatives. Because of the state’s administrative support, the balance of Operation UNITE’s budget came from:

- 1) State contracts and competitive state and federal grants (74.0%).
- 2) Private donations/sponsorships/discretionary funds (6.7%).

## How State Funding Was Used - FY 2024-25



### Treatment Vouchers

Operation UNITE was forced to suspend its treatment voucher program for four months at the end of 2024 due to the lack of funds to meet demand. Toward the end of the fiscal year, Operation UNITE began rationing the number of vouchers that were available each month. Vouchers are provided to low-income residents in its 43-county service region for long-term, residential treatment for a substance use disorder.

In 2024, an analysis by EBSCO estimated the economic costs related to opioid use disorders escalated to \$1.5 trillion in 2020. Direct costs include expenditures on medical care, criminal justice, and social services, while indirect costs reflect lost productivity due to absenteeism and premature deaths. On average, a

person will relapse multiple times before they are able to maintain long-term sobriety. An analysis by NORC at the University of Chicago found the annual average additional costs to an employer for each worker with an untreated substance use disorder had risen 30% in just three years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse, up to 75% of people who experience addiction will go on to recover. Providing treatment enables an individual to once again become a productive member of society. According to the NORC analysis, each employee who recovers from a substance use disorder saves a company over \$8,500 on average. Workers in recovery miss 3.6 less days than an average employee, tend to be strong employees, and help employers avoid \$8,175 in turnover, replacement, and healthcare costs.

	Applications taken	Entered treatment	Completed treatment
FY 2024-25	290	240	103 (42.91%)
Since inception	11,147	5,667	3,288 (58.02%)

➤ State funding provided 98.8% of Operation UNITE’s Treatment Vouchers in FY 2024-25.

County	Apps Taken	Entered Treatment	Completed Treatment	Left Against Staff Advice	County	Apps Taken	Entered Treatment	Completed Treatment	Left Against Staff Advice
Bath	121	68	51	17	Letcher	504	255	156	95
Bell	401	170	96	62	Lewis	3	3	-	1
Boyd	165	94	35	51	Lincoln	96	45	24	19
Boyle	1	1	-	1	Madison	1	1	-	-
Breathitt	280	120	70	2	Magoffin	178	79	41	37
Carter	113	63	27	32	Martin	234	127	69	53
Clay	319	165	88	61	McCreary	260	113	62	50
Clinton	-	-	-	-	Menfee	73	36	24	13
Elliott	22	12	2	2	Montgomery	2	1	-	-
Estill	-	-	-	-	Morgan	85	44	21	22
Floyd	744	389	221	150	Owsley	128	59	35	23
Garrad	-	-	-	-	Perry	680	336	205	122
Greenup	-	-	-	-	Pike	780	343	171	152
Harlan	479	202	100	94	Powell	1	1	-	-
Jackson	151	70	43	25	Pulaski	700	341	213	125
Johnson	344	179	99	72	Rockcastle	344	177	96	73
Knott	288	141	92	45	Russell	-	-	-	-
Knox	727	393	255	126	Rowan	306	204	144	54
Laurel	940	552	326	200	Wayne	279	151	107	42
Lawrence	166	88	53	32	Whitley	816	439	246	179
Lee	131	61	38	21	Wolfe	133	78	43	31
Leslie	152	66	35	21	<b>Inception to Date</b>	<b>11,147</b>	<b>5,667</b>	<b>3,288</b>	<b>2,105</b>

**Recovery Residence/Transitional Housing Assistance**

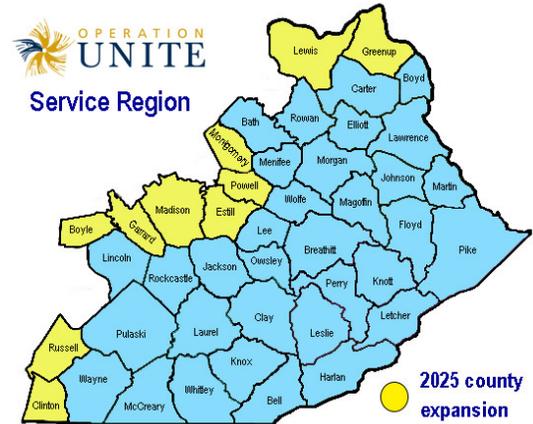
Individuals leaving a substance use disorder treatment program often need assistance with reintegration into the community.

	Applications approved
FY 2024-25	236
Since inception	739

➤ Not paid for with state funds.

**Service Area Expansion**

Operation UNITE expanded its service region by 10 counties during FY 2024-25, made possible with Kentucky opioid abatement grant funds in conjunction with state appropriations. As a result, there are now 43 UNITE Community Coalitions that organize at a grassroots level to provide programs and support based upon local needs. UNITE Community Coalitions may apply twice each year for “Action Plan” funding to implement prevention, education, and recovery support projects. These projects must include a substance use awareness and prevention component and be approved by Operation UNITE’s Board of Directors. **“Action Plan” funding available to coalitions will be reduced by one-third in FY 2025-26 due to a shortage of state funds.**



A UNITE Community Coalitions may obtain medication take-back boxes for their law enforcement agencies residents of those counties are eligible for all education/prevention programs and services – including UNITE Treatment Vouchers - offered by Operation UNITE.

Operation UNITE held two regional Coalition Symposiums in August 2024. These luncheons drew a total of 188 people representing 29 coalitions. The program focused on prevention and education topics designed to empower communities and raise awareness about substance misuse and addiction. Current plans are to expand its primary service region in FY 2026-27 to include **Adair, Bourbon, Casey, Clark, Cumberland, Fleming, Jessamine, Mason, Mercer, Nelson, and Nicholas** counties.

- 55,873 youth and 11,924 adults from all 43 counties were impacted by UNITE Community Coalition programs funded through “Action Plans” during FY 2024-25.
- **State funds were used to provide 39.0% of the cost to support Operation UNITE’s Community Coalitions and community “Action Plan” projects in FY 2024-25.**

**K-12 Prevention Programs**

Operation UNITE launched its “Educate. Empower. Prevent.” (EEP) education initiative in FY 2023-24 to complement work being done by the UNITE Community Coalitions. This initiative – primarily funded through a grant from the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission - features UNITE Area Prevention Coordinators who work directly with school systems in those counties to provide free, K-12 substance use awareness and prevention program. In partnership with the state Family Resource and Youth Service Centers, Operation UNITE has been able to offer its EEP programs to school systems across the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

EEP programs provide age-appropriate, science-based, interactive lessons that develop consistent

<p><b>Vaping</b></p> <p>Grades 7-12</p> <p>17,157 students in 37 counties</p> <p>13 percentage point growth in student knowledge</p>
<p><b>W.I.S.E. (internet safety)</b></p> <p>Grades 4-6</p> <p>2,180 students in 14 counties</p> <p>25 percentage point growth in student knowledge</p>
<p><b>S.M.A.R.T (internet safety)</b></p> <p>Grades 7-12</p> <p>1,226 students in 7 counties</p> <p>20 percentage point growth in student knowledge</p>



Club members are provided T-shirts and each Club is eligible to receive funding for prevention and awareness activities. **The amount of funding for Clubs will be reduced 50% for the 2025-26 school year as the number of eligible schools has increased but state funding remains unchanged.**

- 10,827 students at schools in 31 counties were members of an anti-drug UNITE Club during the 2024-25 school year.
- **State funds were used to provide 71.4% of the cost to support UNITE Clubs in FY 2024-25.**

### **“Too Good For Drugs”**

Operation UNITE engaged 56 UNITE Service Corps (AmeriCorps) members at 56 schools in 19 counties during the 2024-25 school year through a grant from the Serve Kentucky Commission. In addition to providing tutoring in math, USC members teach the “Too Good For Drugs” curriculum. This universal K-12 prevention education program is designed to mitigate the risk factors and enhance protective factors related to drugs - including alcohol, nicotine, tobacco, and marijuana. During the 2024-25 school year:

- 4,080 students in grades 3-5 received tutoring in mathematics. **Math test scores for these students showed an average growth of 25 percentage points in math knowledge.**
- 4,119 students in grades 4-5 were taught the science-based “Too Good For Drugs” curricula. **Test scores for these students showed an average growth of 37 percentage points in drug education knowledge.**
- 27,218 students were mentored by USC members in addition to the math and “Too Good for Drugs” components.
- 355 volunteers were recruited by USC members, providing 726 hours of service to the schools.
- All USC members were state certified in FEMA disaster and emergency response by the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management, enabling them to become leaders on local disaster response teams when the need arises.
- All USC members sponsored or co-sponsored a UNITE Club at their school.

Using a federal grant, Operation UNITE was also able to provide “Too Good For Drugs” at schools not served by the UNITE Service Corps.

- Fall 2024 - 1,161 students from four counties were taught with a **17 percentage point average growth in drug education knowledge.**
- Spring 2025 – 2,336 students from five counties were taught with a **19.6 percentage point average growth in drug education knowledge.**

Operation UNITE will be expanding the special “Too Good For Drugs” Learning Team programs to other counties during the 2025-26 school year.

- **Not paid for with state funds.**

### **Regional Youth Rallies**

All 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Operation UNITE’s service region were invited to participate in one of seven regional youth rallies at the start of the 2024-25 school year. (One of these events had to be canceled due to an ongoing police manhunt.) Rallies inspire youth to make good decisions, to join or start a UNITE Club, and encourage participation in other prevention initiatives.

- 4,031 students from 21 counties attended one of the regional youth rallies.
- Not paid for with state funds.

### **Camp UNITE**

A week-long, residential, leadership/development program for students entering grades 7-9 during the upcoming school year. Camp UNITE is comprised of many fun, action-packed activities designed to develop leadership and communication skills, promote teamwork and problem solving, instill confidence and trust, and – perhaps most important – let youth know they do not have to face difficult situations alone.

- 109 youth from 19 counties attended Camp UNITE 2024 at the University of Pikeville.
- Not paid for with state funds.

### **Shoot Hoops Not Drugs**

In June 2025, Operation UNITE celebrated the 20th summer of hosting regional Shoot Hoops Not Drugs (SHND) basketball camps, conducted by former UK player Jarrod Polson. All school-aged youth – regardless of where they live – were invited to participate. In addition, two special camps were held for cadets at the Appalachian ChalleNGe Academy in Harlan County. At the beginning of each camp, Operation UNITE hosted an informational presentation on the “Hidden Dangers of Vaping,” internet safety, and an overview of available prevention programming to the parents and guardians in attendance.

- 938 youth representing 31 Kentucky counties and two other states participated in the 9 SHND camps held in FY 2024-25.
- 197 volunteers from Operation UNITE’s Community Coalitions and the Redemption Road Recovery Center for Men in Knox County helped make each of these camps possible.
- 241 people attended the educational presentations.
- Not paid for with state funds.

### **KHSAA Partnership**

For the second year, Operation UNITE entered into a partnership with the Kentucky High School Athletic Association to support its Archery, Bass Fishing, and Esports state championships. Drug prevention information and resources for those needing assistance with a substance use disorder were distributed to all participants in these championship tournaments and during the mandatory safety class for all coaches and volunteers involved with all KHSAA athletic activities. In addition, Operation



UNITE was able to reach thousands of families attending the Boys' and Girls' Sweet 16 basketball championships at Rupp Arena.

- 596 youth from 56 counties were reached at the KHSAA State Archery State Championship.
- 222 youth from 45 counties were reached at the KHSAA Bass Fishing State Championship.
- 110 youth from 16 counties were reached at the KHSAA Fall Esports State Championship.
- 112 youth from 10 counties were reached at the KHSAA Spring Esports State Championship.

➤ Not paid for with state funds.

### **"I Am UNITE" Scholarships**

Each Fall, Operation UNITE awards \$1,500 "I Am UNITE" scholarships to high school seniors for being champions for anti-drug prevention efforts in their school and community. These funds may be used for post-secondary education expenses. To be eligible, a student must have been involved with a UNITE Club, attended Camp UNITE as either a camper or a Team Mentor, or be personally impacted by substance use issues within their family. Funding for these scholarships comes from private, tax-deductible donations to Operation UNITE.

- 25 members of the high school Class of 2025 were awarded "I Am UNITE" scholarships.

➤ Not paid for with state funds.

### **"Give Me A Reason"**

The "Give Me A Reason" (GMAR) prevention initiative is a voluntary drug testing program designed as a way for our youth to avoid peer pressure by having a reason to say "no" to drug use. Through its Operation UNITE Coalitions, free saliva-based drug testing kits are available to parents and caregivers. The tests check for 14 different substances.

- 247 locations where drug testing kits are available in 28 Kentucky counties.

➤ Not paid for with state funds.

### **Future Prevention Program Expansion**

- During FY 2025-26, Operation UNITE will be expanding its EEP Youth Prevention Programs to 11 additional counties: **Adair, Bourbon, Casey, Clark, Cumberland, Fleming, Jessamine, Mason, Mercer, Nelson, and Nicholas.**
- During FY 2026-27, Operation UNITE hopes to expand its EEP Youth Prevention Programs to 12 additional counties: **Anderson, Bracken, Fayette, Green, Harrison, Marion, Metcalfe, Monroe, Robertson, Taylor, Washington, and Woodford.**

**All members of the Operation UNITE Education and Prevention teams have received "Kentucky Substance Use Prevention Skills" (KSUPS) training by the Kentucky Division of Substance Use Disorder, Prevention and Promotion Branch to meet the same standards as Kentucky's Regional Prevention Centers.**

**Law Enforcement**

Operation UNITE employs four law enforcement detectives. Three officers are assigned as Task Force Officers with the U.S. DEA London Division and work on federal-level investigations – including international drug trafficking rings and Dark Web cases. One officer works with Operation UNITE’s Education & Treatment teams to provide prevention information; collaborates with city, county, and state law enforcement agencies; monitors the Drug Tip Line (**1-866-90-UNITE**); and collects unused, expired or unwanted medications from 53 Drop Box locations across the service region in conjunction with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration’s “National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days”.

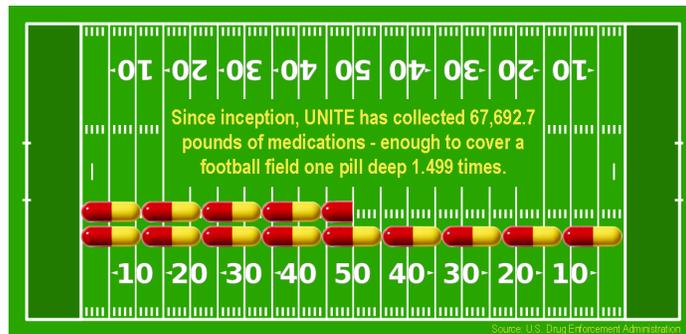
➤ State funds were used to provide 99.1% of the cost for Operation UNITE detectives.

**UNITE Drug Tip Line Calls**

	Inside Service Region	Outside Service Region	Total
FY 2024-25	113	349	462
Since Inception			26,513

**Medication Take-Back Program**

	Box Locations	Amount Collected	Percent of State Total
FY 2024-25	53 35 Counties	6,859 pounds (3.429 tons)	27.45%



**KY HELP Statewide Call Center**

Operation UNITE staffs the KY HELP Statewide Call Center through a contract with the Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet. The call center was created in 2017 because of success with its Treatment Help Line and offers personalized resources to all Kentuckians. Screening & Referral Specialists follow-up with clients for at least one year to ensure their needs are being met. During FY 2024-25, the Center contracted with an interpreter service to respond to non-English speaking clients.

The Center is staffed seven days a week:

Monday-Friday	7 am to 10 pm (Eastern)
Saturday-Sunday	8:30 am to 5:30 pm (Eastern)

\* Staff responds to crisis calls received after hours

	Inbound Calls	Outbound Calls	Referrals to Treatment	Outreach Followups
FY 2024-25	3,956	19,796	694	469
Since inception	30,465	81,433	6,364	5,853

## KY HELP Statewide Call Center - Calls by County, FY 2024-25

Jefferson	752	Logan	66	Johnson	29	Caldwell	16
Fayette	434	Boyd	64	Lawrence	29	McLean	16
Kenton	261	Montgomery	63	Marion	28	Lewis	15
Daviess	243	Lincoln	61	Mason	28	Magoffin	15
Hardin	206	Harlan	60	Carroll	27	Wolfe	15
Madison	190	Perry	60	Henry	27	Fleming	14
Warren	181	Clay	58	Meade	26	Leslie	14
McCracken	166	Graves	57	Jackson	25	Nicholas	14
Pike	162	Simpson	50	Union	25	Pendleton	14
Boone	136	Calloway	49	Greenup	23	Breathitt	13
Laurel	135	Oldham	49	Garrard	22	Crittenden	13
Pulaski	125	Allen	48	Woodford	22	Washington	13
Bullitt	122	Rowan	48	Harrison	21	Owen	12
Scott	108	Knox	47	Larue	21	Russell	12
Campbell	105	Marshall	45	Metcalfe	21	Hancock	11
Franklin	105	Ohio	42	Owsley	21	Fulton	10
Barren	100	Wayne	42	Trigg	21	Trimble	10
Henderson	98	Spencer	41	Breckinridge	20	Green	9
Nelson	98	Casey	40	Hart	20	Lyon	9
Christian	95	Estill	40	Lee	20	Menifee	9
Whitley	88	Grayson	39	Letcher	20	Clinton	8
Bell	86	Powell	38	Bath	19	Todd	8
Floyd	86	Carter	37	Cumberland	19	Elliott	7
Hopkins	86	Anderson	35	Knott	18	Morgan	7
Clark	85	Gallatin	35	McCreary	18	Bracken	6
Muhlenberg	83	Bourbon	34	Webster	18	Livingston	6
Jessamine	82	Adair	32	Ballard	17	Monroe	5
Taylor	78	Grant	32	Edmonson	17	Carlisle	4
Shelby	75	Mercer	32	Martin	17	Hickman	2
Boyle	73	Rockcastle	31	Butler	16	Robertson	0

### Contact

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*Operation UNITE is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.*