



# Help. Hope. Healing.

## A Report to the Kentucky General Assembly

August 2020

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## Purpose

*We create hope and change the culture.*

## Vision

*Operation UNITE is a collaborative model striving to prevent abuse of drugs and facilitate recovery.*

## Mission

*We create strategic partnerships.*

*We provide leadership.*

*We promote education.*

*We coordinate treatment.*

*We support law enforcement.*

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Operation UNITE (Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that strives to combat substance abuse and misuse in Kentucky.

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# Executive Summary

## Reducing Overdose Mortality

Over the past decade, there has been a dramatic decline in opioid-related deaths in the Operation UNITE service region.

*Of all counties in the United States that had a reduction in opioid-related mortality during the past decade, 80% were in, or adjacent to, the Operation UNITE service region.*

In 2020, the NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis and University of Kentucky Center of Excellence in Rural Health conducted interviews and focus groups with stakeholders in Eastern Kentucky to identify policies and strategies that potentially played a role in the drug overdose mortality rate declines.

Findings from this study showed that state funding provided to Operation UNITE established new and expanded resources that increased access to treatment and collaborations in this region.

## Statewide Impact

Providing Help. Giving Hope. Promoting Healing. This is what the funding received from the Kentucky General Assembly during Fiscal Year 2019-2020 enabled Operation UNITE to deliver to thousands of Kentuckians.

This investment not only made possible direct services for law enforcement, treatment, and education/prevention initiatives, but also provided the foundation for Operation UNITE to secure additional resources to prevent, and proactively respond to, the substance abuse crisis. It was a catalyst for healthy families, a strong work force, and successful, thriving communities.

*State funds provide the foundation for leveraging additional resources.*

Operation UNITE primarily implements its initiatives in counties across Southern and Eastern Kentucky. However, because of its collaborative approach, exceptional fiscal stewardship, and ability to leverage state funding, Operation UNITE's programs benefit all Kentucky residents.

To break the downward spiral of addiction, a comprehensive, holistic, and widespread solution is needed. However, the unique structure and scope of Operation UNITE makes it ineligible for many sources of grant funding. Neither is Operation UNITE a treatment provider, and it does not qualify as a "community" for Drug-Free Communities grants.

*Without funding from the Kentucky General Assembly, Operation UNITE would not exist!*

## Creating Generational Change

*While opioid overdoses have decreased, drug abuse is still present and evolving. Operation UNITE's programs are vital to addressing substance abuse in Kentucky.*

Through its unique 17-year public-private partnership, Operation UNITE has made generational change – impacting the health, well-being, and trajectory of entire families. Any pause in this investment will jeopardize the future of multi-generations of families and communities. In addition, new drug threats emerge and re-emerge – such as fentanyl, crystal meth, poly-drug use, and synthetic opioids – so new and targeted strategies are needed.

Operation UNITE also must combat the collateral damage of the coronavirus pandemic, which is greatly impacting Kentuckians in recovery and those who need treatment. A national study released in May 2020 from the Well Being Trust estimates that a very slow recovery from the pandemic and continued high unemployment could result in more than 150,000 deaths of despair, such as fatal overdoses and suicides.

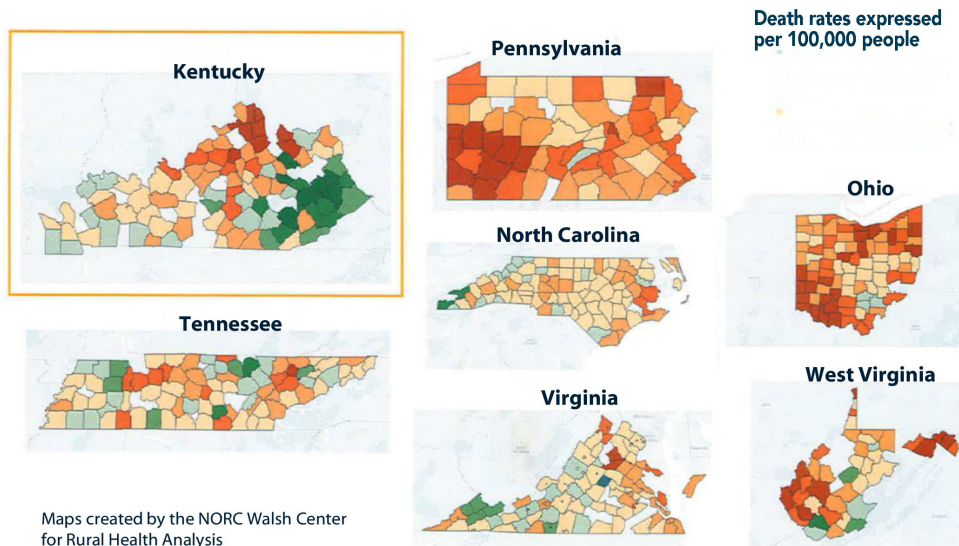


# UNITE's Impact

## Reducing Overdose Mortality

Drug overdose mortality rates decreased substantially during the past decade in several Southern and Eastern Kentucky counties, compared to Kentucky overall and Appalachian regions of surrounding states.

### Change in Drug Overdose Mortality Rate (2008-2012 to 2013-2017)



Perhaps more importantly, while many surrounding areas had *increases* in drug overdose mortality, counties in Southeastern Kentucky experienced *decreases* from 2008-2012 to 2013-2017 (years were combined due to small numbers in some counties). Of the 10 counties in the United States with the largest decreases between these time periods, eight are in, or adjacent to, the Operation UNITE service region.

*Operation UNITE's programs and initiatives are a key contributor to overdose mortality declines in Southern and Eastern Kentucky.*

Findings from study conducted by NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis and the University of Kentucky Center of Excellence in Rural Health



*Change takes  
time.  
Change takes  
effort.  
Change takes  
consistency.*

**Forest Q.**  
Treatment Director,  
in Recovery

## The Study

In spring 2020, the NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis and the University of Kentucky Center of Excellence in Rural Health conducted interviews and focus groups with stakeholders in Eastern Kentucky to identify policies and strategies that potentially played a role in the drug overdose mortality rate declines in the region. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the study found multiple factors that may have contributed to the declines - including increased access to treatment and reduction in stigma related to substance use disorders.

**“UNITE has been that backbone  
to this whole movement.”**

Stakeholder, NORC study

Stakeholders shared their perceptions as to what contributed to a decline in drug overdose mortality in their area, and many comments pointed to Operation UNITE as a strong, unifying organization that has increased awareness, collaboration and access to treatment for residents.

Operation UNITE continues to be a key contributor to overdose mortality declines.

**“The awareness they have brought  
to the table is exponential.”**

Stakeholder, NORC study

Over the past 17 years, Operation UNITE has implemented many holistic programs designed to bring stakeholders together to reduce the availability of drugs, provide treatment, increase access to recovery, and prevent the use of drugs. Key initiatives included UNITE Treatment Vouchers, in-school UNITE Clubs, and



development of UNITE Community Coalitions in all 32 counties in the Operation UNITE service region.

Operation UNITE increased access to treatment years before Medicaid expansion by providing UNITE Treatment Vouchers for long-term, residential treatment to low-income residents with substance use disorders. Even now, the vouchers are an important factor in successful treatment as they are used after the 30-day period of coverage provided by Medicaid ends. Additionally, one stakeholder described the UNITE Treatment Referral & Help Line - a model for the KY HELP Statewide Call Center - as an important resource for finding treatment in the Operation UNITE service area instead of having to travel long distances.

Stakeholders also shared that Operation UNITE has worked to bring a diverse group of partners together to collaborate on drug prevention and treatment initiatives. This includes bringing together law enforcement, schools, healthcare providers, faith-based groups, and community organizations to raise awareness and implement programming. One stakeholder described Operation UNITE as pivotal to "building community coalitions and getting education around the prevalence of the issues and the need for prevention."



*Coming from a background of drug abuse in my family and deaths due to drugs, [UNITE] has affected me in more ways than one ... Without UNITE in my life, I don't believe I could have found the good in my situation. I am a product of the teaching, educating, and opportunity that UNITE has provided for so many kids.*

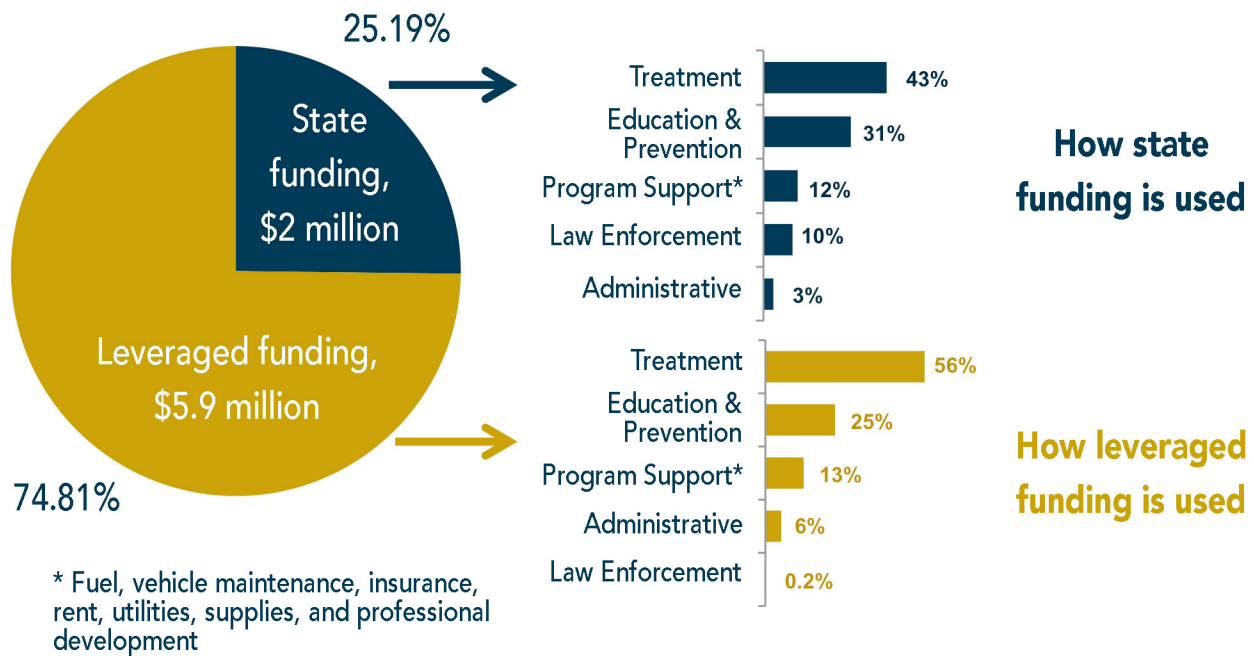
**Avery B.**

2015 Scholarship  
Recipient

# Statewide Impact

Operation UNITE utilized the \$2 million investment from the Kentucky General Assembly to provide help, hope, and healing to families through its Law Enforcement, Treatment and Education/Prevention initiatives during Fiscal Year 2019-20. The impact of this funding, however, had a far-greater reach. All 120 counties in the Commonwealth of Kentucky benefit from access to law enforcement collaborations, treatment and recovery services, and the sharing of education program expertise and support.

**For every \$5 Operation UNITE leveraged in state funding, \$4 was used for treatment and education initiatives.**



Because of the financial foundation provided by the Kentucky General Assembly, Operation UNITE secured an additional \$5.9 million in grants and private contributions during Fiscal Year 2019-20 to: 1) educate youth and community members about substance abuse and misuse; 2) provide anti-drug youth programs from elementary through high school; 3) provide access to long-

term treatment for those affected by a substance use disorder; 4) provide assistance to families impacted by a substance use issue; and, 5) provide support for those in recovery.

Initiatives made possible because of state funding included:

- **Law Enforcement** – Direct investigative assistance to local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.
- **Treatment** – KY HELP Statewide Call Center, KORE Treatment Access Program, Rural Health Opioid Project (treatment vouchers & recovery), WellCare Kentucky Client Assistance Program, and the UNITE Hope Wall.
- **Education** – UNITE Service Corps (Kentucky AmeriCorps), Knox Promise Neighborhoods, Perry Promise Neighborhoods, Rural Health Opioid Project (provider & community education), Camp UNITE, UNITE Clubs, On The Move!, Shoot Hoops Not Drugs, Give Me A Reason, Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit, and “I Am UNITE” Scholarship Program.

**See initiative details on Pages 22-27.**

**Without funding from the Kentucky General Assembly, Operation UNITE would not exist.**

Since inception in 2003, Operation UNITE has been a leader in implementing initiatives that: 1) reduce substance abuse and misuse, 2) increase access to treatment and recovery, and 3) provide education. The three-pronged, holistic approach – which brings together multiple partners from different sectors – is recognized as a national model for tackling the drug epidemic.

These collaborative efforts, continually adjusted to meet current trends and local needs, have resulted in a reduction in drug overdose mortality, given hope to many youth who have grown up impacted by substance abuse, and enabled many individuals to reclaim their lives, rebuild their families, and be contributing members within their communities.



*The ability to offer hope to others that they can recover, be productive, and lead a happy, fulfilled life is one of the most gratifying feelings*

*I have ever experienced.*

**Hannah B.**  
2020 Scholarship Recipient

## Highlights from Fiscal Year 2019-20



*(At Camp UNITE) I was instilled with an even greater determination to be a part of the solution in this unjust issue. I hope for a world in which no one has to live in fear because of substance abuse. Camp UNITE gave me drive to fight this issue for many years to come.*

**Shelby C.**  
2020 Scholarship  
Recipient

Operation UNITE implements more than 30 law enforcement, treatment, and education initiatives to communities in Southern and Eastern Kentucky – as well as operates programs that reach every citizen in the state through its collaborative efforts and leadership. Many of UNITE’s initiatives were impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic during the spring and summer of 2020, but it continued to find innovative ways to build community and maintain support for local efforts.

### Education/Prevention

Operation UNITE provides a variety of in-school and summer youth programs to provide age-appropriate, consistent drug prevention messaging from elementary through post-secondary education. Community education initiatives seek to reduce stigma, keep citizens informed about the latest drug trends, and respond to substance use issues.

In addition, 32 UNITE Community Coalitions empower residents to address local needs and raise awareness about drug addiction in order to change community norms regarding drug abuse and misuse. Coalition programs engaged 60,574 youth and 19,301 adults during Fiscal Year 2019-20.

More than 380,000 youth have been reached by UNITE education and prevention initiatives since January 2004.

School-based UNITE Clubs (grades 4-12) are designed to develop healthy attitudes and behaviors by learning and practicing life skills; enhancing academic performance; and connecting peers, adults, and communities. Clubs feature peer mentoring and community service components. During the 2019-20 school year, 9,462 students were involved in 165 clubs across 26 counties.

Operation UNITE manages an AmeriCorps program (UNITE Service Corps) with funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service through Serve Kentucky. AmeriCorps members provide math tutoring and drug prevention education to elementary school students in 54 schools using the Too Good For Drugs (TGFD) evidence-based curriculum. In addition, UNITE Service Corps members serve as UNITE Club sponsors, work with UNITE Community Coalitions, and are Kentucky-certified

for disaster response. During the 2018-19 school year (the most recent data available) test scores for the 1,572 students taught TGFED showed an average growth of 36.8% in drug education and healthy decision-making knowledge, and test scores for the 2,576 students tutored in math showed an average growth of 30% in math knowledge.

TGFED is also offered in two counties through two Promise Neighborhoods programs funded by U.S. Department of Education Innovation and Research grants. Partial-year test results showed students achieved an average 66.25% and 30.12% increase in drug knowledge during the 2019-20 school year.

Other school-based prevention initiatives provided by Operation UNITE include: On The Move!, Life With A Record, Why Internet Safety is Essential (W.I.S.E), The Truth About Vaping, National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), and The First Tee. These programs were presented to more than 18,000 youth and involved more than 1,500 adults during Fiscal Year 2019-20.

**The UNITE Service Corps was the first in the nation to require its members provide drug prevention education.**

Camp UNITE is Operation UNITE's signature summer youth initiative. This free week-long program for middle school-aged children includes activities designed to develop leadership and communication skills, promote teamwork and problem solving, instill confidence and trust, and to let youth know they do not have to face difficult situations alone. The 195 campers in 2019 were supported by 216 team leaders and adult volunteers. Camp UNITE was held virtually over three days in July 2020, with 98 registered youth and 48 staff and volunteers. Many campers become team leaders in future years and attend college with the help of a privately-funded college scholarship, proving that these prevention initiatives put our region's youth on a successful path.

Two other summer youth programs – Shoot Hoops Not Drugs and Hooked On Fishing-Not On Drugs – have strong anti-drug components incorporated into instruction. Both programs give



*UNITE has given me more opportunity and confidence when talking to people. It inspired me to want to become a counselor as a career and dedicate my time into helping those struggling with addiction and helping children in these situations.*

**Dixie E.**  
2020 Scholarship  
Recipient



*The UNITE  
(Treatment)  
voucher changed  
my life.  
I was lost.  
I was alone.  
Being in treatment  
allowed me to  
work on myself, get  
my head  
right, and get  
my family back.*

**Tucker S.**  
Voucher Recipient

youth an opportunity to interact with positive role models, receive positive life-skill and self-esteem messages that emphasize the importance of being drug-free, all while receiving instruction in basic basketball and fishing skills, respectively. More than 1,900 youth and 500 adults participated during Fiscal Year 2019-20.

### Treatment & Recovery

Operation UNITE assists those needing help for a substance use disorder, provides support for their families, and facilitates the transition into recovery.

One-time financial assistance for low-income residents living in Operation UNITE's service region to obtain long-term residential treatment for a substance use disorder is available through the UNITE Treatment Voucher program. At any one time, approximately 40 individuals are in treatment using a UNITE Treatment Voucher. Staff responds to an average of 2,000 inquiries each month from those seeking assistance with a substance use disorder or to inquire about qualifying for a UNITE Treatment Voucher.

**The KY HELP Statewide Call Center  
has fielded inquiries from 116 of  
the Commonwealth's 120 counties.**

Operation UNITE staffs the KY HELP Statewide Call Center, a toll-free line providing personalized, compassionate assistance and resources for Kentuckians seeking help for a substance use disorder and offering support to their families. The KY HELP staff responds to an average of 331 calls per month. In addition, the KY HELP staff administers a client assistance grant from WellCare Kentucky and has assisted 133 individuals enter transitional housing.

Operation UNITE manages the treatment access component of the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) program for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. This program provides funding for an average of 125 individuals each month to receive immediate inpatient treatment for an opioid use disorder.

Through the Rural Health Opioid Project (RHOP), an on-going program serving the Kentucky River Region through a grant from the federal Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), this past year 67 individuals with opioid use disorders received a voucher to enter treatment, 118 individuals were provided transportation assistance to a treatment or aftercare program, and 167 individuals participated in recovery group sessions.

The UNITE Hope Wall – a display featuring more than 200 photos that celebrate a person’s sobriety from an addiction and to give others struggling through a loved one’s substance use disorder hope to reclaim their lives – is available statewide.

Operation UNITE provides support for individuals in Kentucky Drug Courts who have entered the criminal justice system as a result of drug use or drug-related criminal activity and are choosing to achieve and maintain recovery.

### Law Enforcement

UNITE detectives are assigned to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration as Special Agents and assist local, state, and federal agencies in developing both state-level and federal-level drug cases. In addition, detectives assist in providing the youth prevention and education components, and serve as a liaison to 43 city police departments, 32 county sheriff’s offices, and 7 Kentucky State Police Posts within its service region. Operation UNITE detectives have been involved in cases that have resulted in several high-profile arrests in the past year.

A toll-free Drug Tip Line allows citizens to anonymously report suspicious activity 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Detectives respond to an average of 36 calls each month.

Operation UNITE maintains 48 medication drop box locations where citizens may dispose of their expired or unwanted medications in partnership with the National DEA Rx Drug Take-Back Day. During the latest Take-Back Day in October 2019, Operation UNITE collected 3,129 pounds (1.56 tons) of medications – 23.88% of Kentucky’s total.



*My dad was prescribed painkillers by a doctor who didn't know about his previous addiction.*

*The drugs eventually took his life. Fortunately, I have chosen to take a stand and be 'UNITE Strong' in my decision to break the cycle of addiction.*

**Chase G.**

2018 Scholarship Recipient,  
KSP Trooper Candidate



*From a member of one of the first UNITE Clubs, to many summers as a volunteer at Camp UNITE, and now a teacher in Eastern Kentucky, UNITE has been a part of my life. This organization has molded me into the educator, parent, and citizen that I am today by instilling in me the values of education, second chances, and hope.*

**Hannah L.**  
2013 Scholarship Recipient,  
Middle School Teacher

## Creating Generational Change

Through its unique 17-year public-private partnership, Operation UNITE has made generational change – impacting the health, well-being, and trajectory of entire families. Any pause in this investment jeopardizes the future for multi-generations of families and communities.

In addition, new drug threats emerge and re-emerge, such as fentanyl, crystal meth, poly-drug use, and synthetic opioids, so new and targeted strategies are needed. Operation UNITE also must combat the impacts of the coronavirus, which is causing collateral damage for Kentuckians in recovery and those who need treatment.

**Any pause in the state's investment in UNITE jeopardizes the future for multi-generations of families and communities.**

These aren't just statistics. They are identified threats that must be addressed with proven best practices that Operation UNITE has implemented throughout the years:

- A study released in May 2020 from the Well Being Trust estimates that a very slow recovery and high unemployment could result in more than 150,000 deaths of despair, such as fatal overdoses and suicides. With an estimated 40 percent of Kentuckians filing for unemployment during the coronavirus pandemic shutdown, our families face the greatest risk.
- A White House Office of National Drug Control Policy analysis shows an 11.4 percent year-over-year increase in fatalities for the first four months of 2020, confirming experts' fears that precautions such as quarantines and lockdowns, combined with economic uncertainty, exacerbate the addiction crisis. And that may be the good news. Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on



Drug Abuse, stated: “We know that from reports of overdoses, these may have increased 30% [to] 40%.”

- The Millennium Health report tracked illicit drug use trends by evaluating more than 500,000 urine drug tests. The analysis compared results from January through March 12, 2020, with results from March 13 through May 31, 2020. Drug testing labs report significant increases in Kentucky:
  - Non-prescribed fentanyl: 32%.
  - Methamphetamine: 21%.
  - Cocaine: 27%
- American Addiction Centers, a provider of rehabilitation resources and programs, conducted a survey of 3,200 adults (aged 21+) to find out how much time they have actually spent drunk during lockdown. Overall, it was found that the average Kentucky adult was drunk for 50 hours during the first 11 weeks of the lockdown ordered because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Operation UNITE was the nation’s first three-pronged, grassroots, holistic approach to combating the substance abuse epidemic by bringing together law enforcement, treatment, and prevention/education initiatives. The organization has adjusted its focus as needed over time to respond to the epidemic, and remains at the forefront of assisting people who need help.

**Operation UNITE was the nation’s first three-pronged, grassroots, holistic approach to combating substance abuse.**

Operation UNITE’s initiatives – targeted from youth through adult – seek to create generational change in attitudes and behaviors related to substance use, and to facilitate recovery for those with a substance use disorder. Any disruption to this messaging would quickly erase nearly two decades of progress. The light of Hope would be dimmed; lives will be lost.



*If you really think about it, UNITE has the power to help improve the lives of everyone on the planet through the students it helped succeed.*

**Caitlyn H.**  
2020 Scholarship  
Recipient

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# Impact Report



*“UNITE has done an amazing job. Worked with them ever since their inception. What they’ve done is [so] important – bringing together all the stakeholders. [It] takes an organization to reach out all the tentacles to get faith-based, community, prevention, enforcement, etc. to check your egos at the door and sit down and try to figure out strategies that are going to affect all communities in a positive way.”*

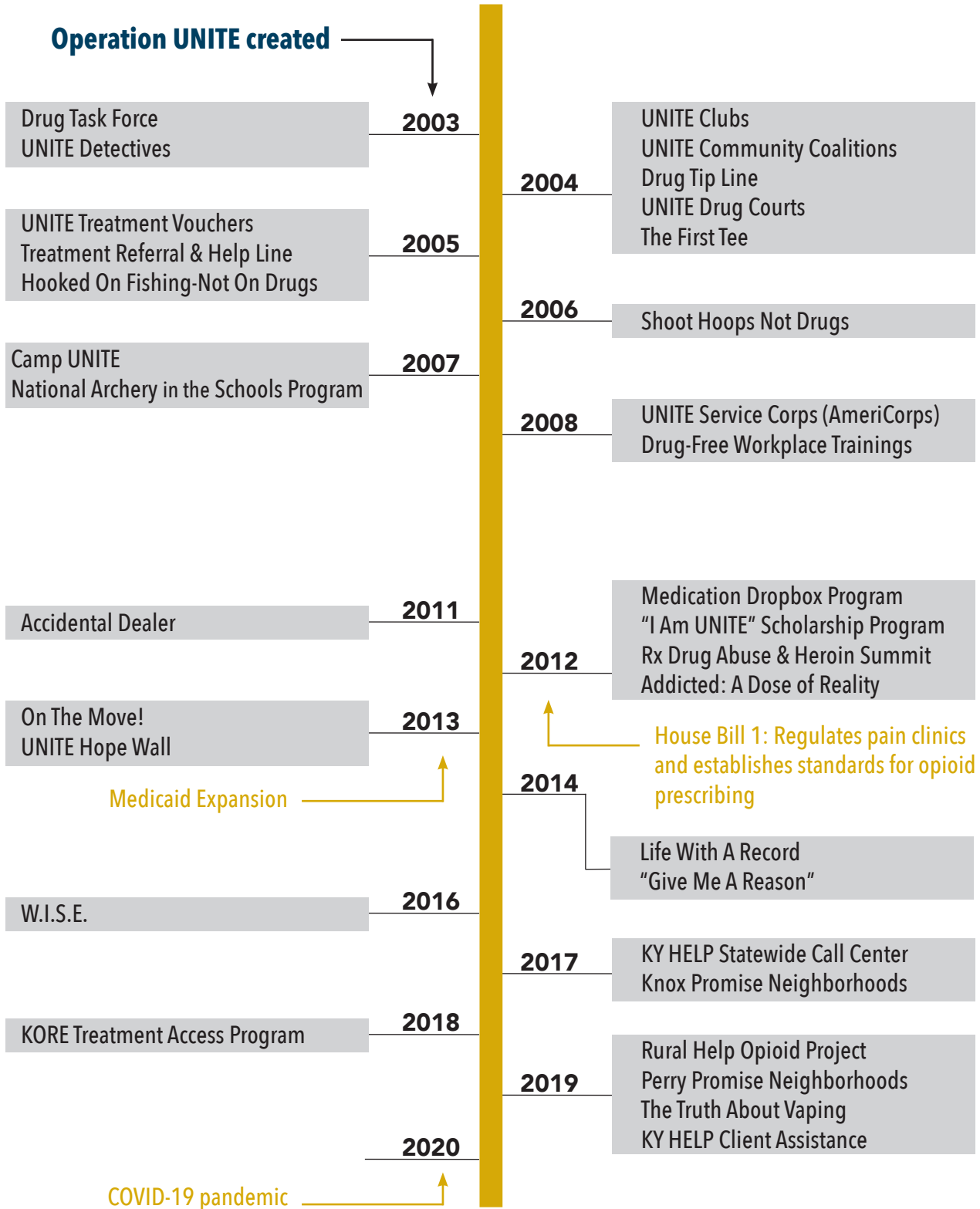
Stakeholder, NORC study

**Operation UNITE  
Initiatives 2003-2020**



# Timeline

Operation UNITE created





# Creating Partnerships

Operation UNITE - Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education - is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that strives to combat substance abuse and misuse in Kentucky.

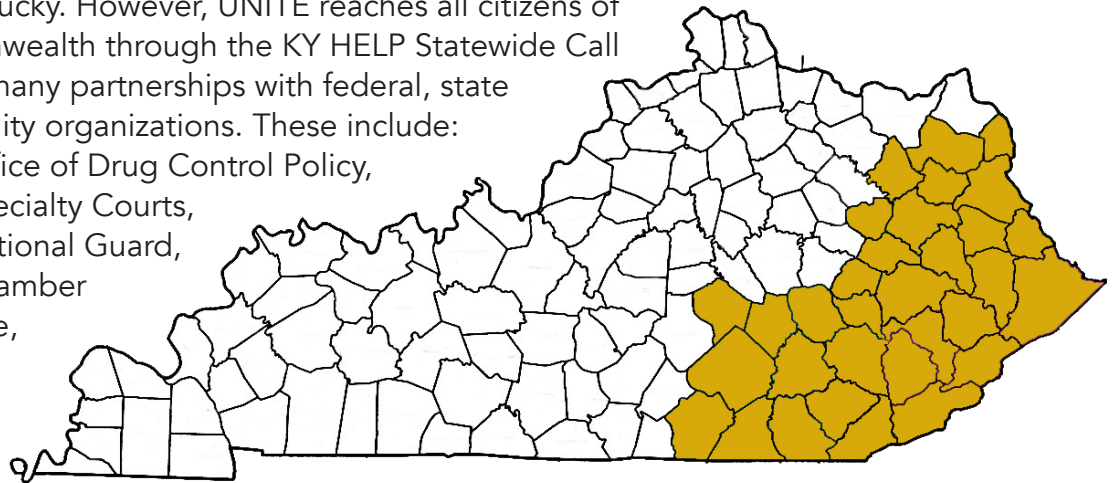
Operation UNITE was created in 2003 to address the crisis of addiction associated with opioid abuse in the Fifth Congressional District.

Today, the organization's primary service region includes 32 current or former 5th Congressional District counties across Southern and Eastern Kentucky. However, UNITE reaches all citizens of the Commonwealth through the KY HELP Statewide Call Center and many partnerships with federal, state and community organizations. These include:

Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy,  
Kentucky Specialty Courts,  
Kentucky National Guard,  
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce,  
Citizens Attacking Addiction Coalition

(Jefferson County), Kentucky State Police, Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, Addiction Recovery Care, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services, Serve Kentucky (AmeriCorps), Federal Bureau of Investigation, Appalachia HIDTA (High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area), U.S. Department of Education, Kentucky Department of Education, Berea College Partners for Education, University of Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, SOAR (Saving our Appalachia Region), Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and numerous business and industry.

State funding provides the foundation upon which Operation UNITE operates. Additional resources obtained through grants, individual contributions, and corporate donations fund many of the law enforcement, treatment, and education/prevention initiatives provided to citizens of Kentucky.



*UNITE's primary service region covers 32 counties in the current and former Fifth Congressional District, but its reach extends across the entire Commonwealth.*



# Programs & Initiatives

## Education & Prevention

**107,608**

### **UNITE Clubs**

students have participated in 356 UNITE Clubs throughout 39 counties since they were established in November 2004. These school-based, anti-drug groups for students in grades 4-12 are designed to develop healthy attitudes and behaviors by learning and practicing life skills; enhancing academic performance; and connecting peers, adults, and communities. UNITE Clubs also feature peer mentoring and community service components.

**32**

### **UNITE Community Coalitions**

coalitions receive support from Operation UNITE. These grassroots groups provide community-focused prevention, awareness, drug education initiatives, as well as support treatment and recovery initiatives based on local needs. Coalition education efforts seek to reduce the stigma of substance use disorders.

**43,989**

### **On The Move!**

students have participated in 432 school presentations in 43 counties across four states since On The Move! program began in August 2013. On The Move! is a free, five-component, school-based prevention initiative designed to educate 7th and 10th grade students about the dangers of making unwise choices of using alcohol or other drugs. Students receive hands-on experiences for visual impairment, the brain's reaction when impaired, and the physical reaction of the body to impairment.

**2,677**

### **Camp UNITE**

student campers from 33 counties have attended Camp UNITE since August 2007. Camp UNITE is a free, week-long summer camp at the University of the Cumberlands targeting youth in the UNITE service region entering grades 7-9. Many campers are at high risk for drug use, have immediate family members who have been impacted because of substance abuse, or are financially unable to afford a summer camp experience. Activities are designed to develop leadership and communication skills, promote teamwork and problem-solving, instill confidence and trust, and provide assurance to youth that they do not have to face difficult situations alone. On average, each year, 180 youth and adult community volunteers work in conjunction with staff to implement Camp UNITE.

**177**

### **"I Am UNITE" Scholarship Program**

scholarships, valued at \$265,500, have been awarded since the 2012-2013 school year. These \$1,500 scholarships for post-secondary education - funded entirely through donations - are awarded to students in the UNITE service region who have been members of their school UNITE Club or attended Camp UNITE as a participant or volunteer.

**29,361****UNITE Service Corps (AmeriCorps)**

students have been taught the “Too Good For Drugs” (TGFD) curriculum since the 2007-2008 school year. Test scores showed an average growth of 36.8% in drug education and healthy decision-making knowledge in 2018-2019 (latest data available).

**19,765**

students have received tutoring in mathematics since the 2008-2009 school year. Test scores showed an average growth of 30.0% in math knowledge in 2018-2019 (latest data available).

The UNITE Service Corps (USC) program - funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) through Serve Kentucky - is a nationally recognized AmeriCorps initiative with 54 fulltime members providing math tutoring and drug prevention education to elementary students. TGFD evidence-based lessons introduce and develop social and emotional skills for making healthy choices, building positive friendships, developing self-efficacy, communicating effectively, and resisting peer pressure and influence. In addition, USC members serve as UNITE Club sponsors, work with UNITE Community Coalitions, and are Kentucky-certified for disaster response.

**1,194****Knox Promise Neighborhood**

students at 8 schools have been taught “Too Good For Drugs” (TGFD) since the program began in July 2017. This elementary school-focused initiative uses a U.S. Department of Education Innovation and Research grant to determine effectiveness of the evidence-based TGFD curriculum. Partial test results revealed students had an average 66.25% increase in drug knowledge during the 2019-20 school year, which was cut short due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Test results from the 2018-19 school year revealed an average 57.62% increase in drug knowledge.

**589****Perry Promise Neighborhood**

students at 8 schools have been taught “Too Good For Drugs” (TGFD) since the program began in January 2019. This elementary school-focused initiative uses a U.S. Department of Education Innovation and Research grant to determine effectiveness of the evidence-based TGFD curriculum. Partial test results reveal students had an average 30.12% increase in drug knowledge during the 2019-20 school year, which was cut short due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Test results from spring 2019 revealed an average 39.62% increase in student drug knowledge. In addition, 53 students at three schools received math tutoring.

**1,590****Rural Health Opioid Project (RHOP)**

youth and adults have received direct drug prevention education since January 2019. Nearly 200 people participated in the first Provider Education Summit for prescribers and other healthcare professionals. This three-year outreach program, funded by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), seeks to reduce the morbidity and mortality related to opioid-use disorders in the Kentucky River District.

**See Treatment component information on Page 21.**

**11,955****Life With A Record**

students participated in 80 presentations at 46 schools throughout 21 counties since the program started during the 2014-2015 school year. Life With A Record teaches students in 7th grade and above about the criminal justice system and how the seemingly harmless acts engaged in by youth, many of which are crimes, can ruin their futures.

5,006

**W.I.S.E. (Why Internet Safety is Essential)**

students participated in 79 presentations at 53 schools throughout 20 counties since the program started during the 2016-2017 school year. W.I.S.E. is a classroom program for students in 4th to 6th grades that uses interactive teaching techniques to educate about dangers posed by the Internet, describes potential consequences, and informs students about the best ways to respond to cyber-bullying.

3,286

**“The Truth About Vaping”**

students participated in 16 presentations at 14 schools throughout 10 counties since its beginning in January 2019. Intended for middle school students and older, this education program provides facts and safety information about an emerging public health issue. Material can also be tailored for community presentations.

11,399

**Shoot Hoops Not Drugs (SHND)**

youth from 63 counties have attended one of the 85 regional SHND camps offered since its inception in 2006. This free summer drug-prevention initiative provides school-age youth an opportunity to interact with positive role models and receive positive life-skill and self-esteem messages that emphasize the importance of being drug-free. In addition, youth receive basic basketball instruction from Jarrod Polson, a four-time All-SEC Academic Team member from the University of Kentucky. (Jeff Sheppard led the program until 2017.)

2,528

parents and caregivers have attended a brief drug awareness education program offered during each SHND camp.

199

**National Archery in the Schools Program® (NASP)**

different school or community programs have received funding to start or maintain youth archery programs in 33 counties since June 2007. More than 6,500 youth and 1,400 adults participated in NASP during the past 18 months. Co-created by the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources and the Kentucky Department of Education, NASP’s inter-disciplinary, theme-based lessons are designed to improve motivation, attention, behavior, attendance, and focus for students in grades 4-12 while teaching basic archery and conservation skills. NASP offers students a participation option to traditional school athletic teams.

9,952

**Hooked On Fishing-Not On Drugs® (HOFNOD)**

youth have participated in HOFNOD programs since its beginning in April 2005. Designed for ages 5 and up, this flagship youth education program created by the Future Fishermen Foundation, places caring adults in a mentoring relationship with youth to provide a fun alternative to using drugs while teaching youth fishing and conservation skills. HOFNOD uses angling skill development as a gateway to teach youth about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and how to deal with the challenges facing them in their young lives.

2,888

**The First Tee®**

youth have participated in the First Tee program since 2004 (participation data unavailable for 2009-2018). A World Golf Foundation initiative to impact the lives of young people of all backgrounds by providing learning facilities and educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf. An instructional component on drugs, “The Science of Addiction,” was developed by a UNITE Community Coalition and adopted nationally in 2009.



20,295

**"Give Me A Reason" (GMAR)**

drug testing kits have been distributed to parents/caregivers since October 2014. GMAR is a non-state-funded, voluntary, drug testing initiative designed as a way for youth to avoid peer pressure by having a reason to say "no" to drug use. Free saliva-based test kits are available at 307 sites in 25 Kentucky counties and at least 44 distribution points in Tennessee and Virginia.

7,845

**Drug-Free Workplace Training**

workers have received Drug-Free Workplace Training since January 2008. UNITE provides Drug-Free Workplace trainings at no cost for managers, employees, and staff of business and industry on topics such as substance use disorders, signs & symptoms of drug use, and effects of drugs in the work place.

**Accidental Dealer**

Accidental Dealer is a community campaign to raise awareness of the need to properly safeguard your over-the-counter and prescription medications. UNITE has been providing this program since April 2011.

**Addicted: A Dose of Reality**

Addicted: A Dose Of Reality is a direct and honest community education program designed to give parents, caregivers, teachers, and others who are around children the truth about the dangers and availability of drugs. UNITE has been providing this program since January 2012.

## Treatment & Recovery

4,801

**UNITE Treatment Vouchers**

individuals have received UNITE treatment vouchers totaling \$18.2 million since July 2005. These vouchers are one-time financial assistance for low-income residents of UNITE's service region that enable individuals with a substance use disorder to enter long-term treatment.

2,000

**Treatment Referral & Help Line**

inquiries each month are handled by UNITE staff and treatment team members. This toll-free phone number, which began in June 2005, is available for anyone seeking assistance with a substance use disorder, to inquire about qualifying for a UNITE Treatment Voucher, navigating the court system, Casey's Law, aftercare or recovery groups, or to learn about the signs and symptoms of substance use.

9,844

**KY HELP Statewide Call Center**

inquiries from 116 of Kentucky's 120 counties have been answered since the beginning of the KY HELP Call Center in December 2017. In addition, staff has made 13,232 follow-up calls to clients and referred 2,477 individuals to treatment. Manned by UNITE staff, this toll-free line offers personalized, compassionate assistance and resources for Kentuckians seeking help for a substance use disorder, as well as offering support to their families.

113

**KY HELP Client Assistance Program**

individuals have received assistance to enter transitional housing through the KY HELP Client Assistance program since its start in January 2019. This program is funded through grants from WellCare Kentucky.

2,934

### **KORE Treatment Access Program**

provider applications have been approved since the start of the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) Treatment Access Program in January 2018. UNITE administers the treatment access component of the KORE program, which provides funding for individuals to receive immediate inpatient treatment for opioid use disorders, for the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

79

### **Rural Health Opioid Project (RHOP)**

individuals were issued vouchers to enter treatment for a substance use disorder since January 2019. In addition, 106 individuals were transported to a treatment or aftercare program and 167 individuals given recovery group assistance. This three-year outreach program, funded by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), seeks to reduce the morbidity and mortality related to opioid-use disorders in the Kentucky River District.

**See Education component information on Page 23.**

200

### **UNITE Hope Wall**

photos celebrating an individual's sobriety from addiction are displayed on this 20-foot long serpentine display. Created in August 2013, the Hope Wall gives others struggling through a loved one's substance use disorder hope to reclaim their lives. The Hope Wall is exhibited at local, state, and national conferences, and was displayed at the United Nations Integrated Strategy on the Opioid Crisis meeting in Vienna, Austria, in 2018.

30

### **Kentucky Drug Courts**

programs were established with funding from Operation UNITE to expand the five existing programs operated by the Administrative Office of the Courts. Today, Kentucky Drug Courts serve 118 counties - including all within UNITE's service region. This Specialty Court program is for individuals who enter the criminal justice system as a result of drug use or drug-related criminal activity and are choosing to achieve and maintain recovery. Currently, Operation UNITE's support for Drug Court clients and their families includes: providing vouchers for treatment, after-care program assistance, and mentoring of children and family members by UNITE Community Coalitions.

## **Law Enforcement**

34,573

### **Medication Drop Boxes**

pounds (17 tons) of medications were collected since October 2012 with 48 drop box locations that are maintained by Operation UNITE. These provide an opportunity for residents in UNITE's service region to dispose of their expired or unwanted medications (prescription and over-the-counter).

23,500

### **Drug Tip Line**

calls were taken and responded to by UNITE since January 2004. The Drug Tip Line is a toll-free phone number for residents to anonymously report suspicious activity within UNITE's service region. The line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**UNITE Detectives**

Beginning in December 2003, confidential investigations of state and federal-level drug cases have taken place in UNITE's service region. This program includes two detectives that are assigned to U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration as Special Agents to assist local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in developing drug cases. A third detective provides youth prevention and education components, as well as serves as a liaison to local departments.

**\$12.6****Drug Task Force**

million worth of drugs were removed from the streets, and 4,500 individuals were arrested in UNITE's service region with a 97.2% conviction rate, from 2003 to 2015. The UNITE Drug Task Force was the state's second drug task force to become accredited by the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police. At its peak, this task force had 32 detectives, whose investigations led to several of the largest drug roundups in Kentucky history.

**"The country is being led from Appalachia. Out of UNITE has come a national movement. This (Summit) is a coming together that is going to make a huge difference."**

**Dr. Robert L. DuPont**

First Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the second White House Drug Chief

**National Impact****19,289****Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit**

participants - representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, two U.S. Territories (Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands), four provinces of Canada (Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec), and nine other countries (Austria, Great Britain, Iceland, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Taiwan and Turkey) - have attended this annual summit. Keynote speakers have included three current or former presidents, federal agency heads, leading subject-matter experts, and members of Congress. The Rx Summit was created by UNITE in 2012 and is the largest collaboration of professionals and advocates who have been impacted by prescription opioid abuse/diversion and heroin use. By attending this collaborative event, participants become more impactful in bringing solutions to the opioid abuse issue, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared a public health crisis in 2012. UNITE has continued in the role of the Rx Summit's Educational Advisor since 2017, and UNITE President/CEO Nancy Hale is a member of the Rx Summit's National Advisory Board.



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