



**Educate. Empower. Prevent.**



**Report to the Kentucky General Assembly**

**FY 2023-24**



## About the Cover



Freedom, Operation UNITE's mascot, celebrates youth attending the "One Person. One Choice." regional youth rally held at The Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg in August 2023.



## Purpose

We create hope and change the culture.

## Vision

Operation UNITE is a collaborative model striving to prevent substance misuse and facilitate recovery.

## Mission

We create strategic partnerships.  
 We provide leadership.  
 We promote education.  
 We coordinate treatment.  
 We support law enforcement.

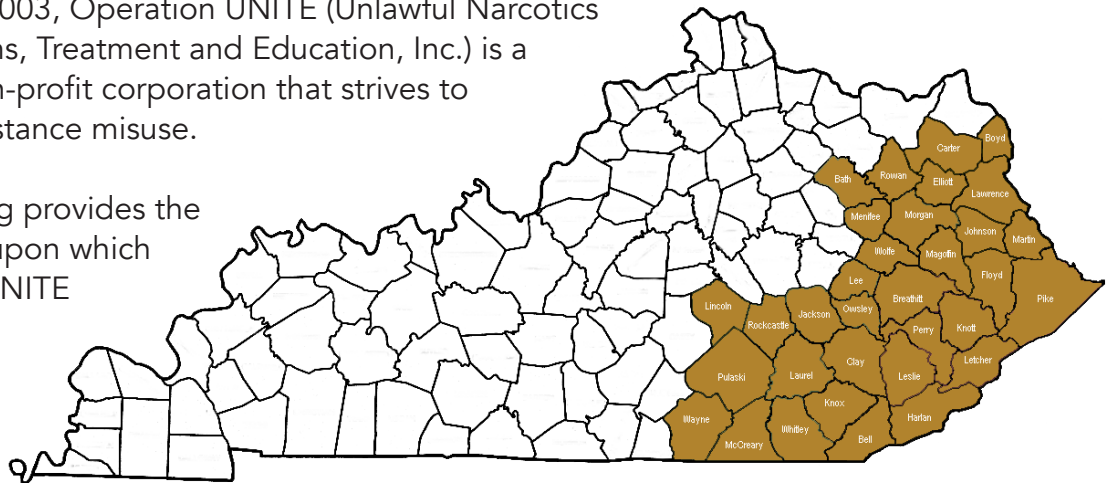
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# About

Created in 2003, Operation UNITE (Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education, Inc.) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that strives to combat substance misuse.

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 all citizens of Kentucky.



*Operation UNITE's primary service region covers 33 counties in the current and former 5th Congressional District, but its reach extends across the entire Commonwealth - and the nation.*

Operation UNITE's primary service region includes 33 current or former counties comprising the Fifth Congressional District of U.S. Congressman Harold "Hal" Rogers across Southern and Eastern Kentucky. During the 2024-25 Fiscal Year, Operation UNITE plans to expand its prevention and education initiatives into 10 additional counties that are contiguous to its service region utilizing prevention grant funding from the KY Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission (see Page 7).

In addition, Operation UNITE reaches all citizens of the Commonwealth through services provided by the **KY HELP Statewide Call Center** (see Pages 8-9) and its many strong partnerships with federal, state, and community organizations. A list of key partners with whom Operation UNITE has worked in the 2023-24 Fiscal Year can be found on Page 19.

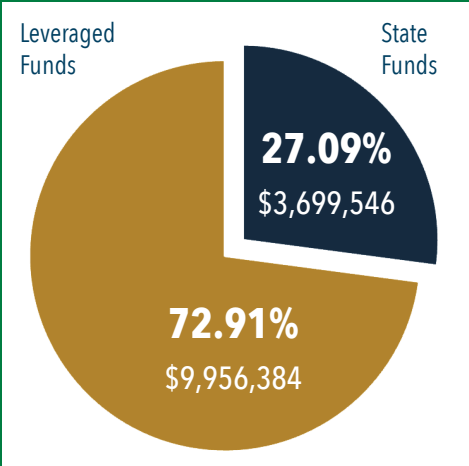


# Funding

**\$8.49 of every \$10 spent by Operation UNITE in FY 2023-24 was used to support treatment or education/prevention initiatives.**


## FY 2023-24 Expenditures

**Overall budget**  
**\$13,655,932**




Source	Percentage	Amount
Leveraged Funds	72.91%	\$9,956,384
State Funds	27.09%	\$3,699,546

### How State Funding Was Used



Category	Relative Usage
Education/Prevention	High
Treatment/Prevention	Medium-High
Administrative	Low
Law Enforcement	Low
Program Support	Low

### How Overall Funding Was Used



Category	Relative Usage
Education/Prevention	High
Treatment/Prevention	Medium-High
Administrative	Low
Law Enforcement	Low
Program Support	Low

*\* Program support includes fuel, vehicle maintenance, insurance, rent, utilities, supplies, and professional development.*

The Kentucky General Assembly invested \$6,599,318 in Operation UNITE during the 2022-24 Biennium.

An additional \$18,236,541 was secured through grants and contributions enabling staff to:

- 1) Educate youth and community members about substance use and misuse;
- 2) Provide access to long-term treatment for a substance use disorder;
- 3) Provide support for those in recovery;
- 4) Provide assistance to families impacted by a substance use disorder; and,
- 5) Provide anti-drug youth prevention programs.

Citizens in all 120 counties have access to treatment and recovery services, access to education/prevention resources and support, and benefit from law enforcement collaborations,

# Prevention

*“State funding enables Operation UNITE to exist and bring additional prevention and treatment resources to all citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.”*

Investing in youth prevention is the best way to ensure we reduce instances of substance misuse or abuse.

Throughout this report are examples of how Operation UNITE continues to address the destructive drug crisis utilizing multiple strategies and partnerships. Over the past 21 years, Operation UNITE initiatives have reached more than **670,000 youth** -- not just within its 33-county service region but across the state.

Thanks to a strong investment from the Kentucky Legislature and continued support from its partners, Operation UNITE:

- Has created a full-time prevention team. Evidence-based prevention programs are interactive, engaging youth to evaluate their personal values and encourage their response. Several staff members are in recovery and share their life experiences to create hope and coping skills, rather than using scare tactics and speeches.
- UNITE Service Corps (AmeriCorps) members impact thousands of students through math tutoring and substance misuse education.
- The KY HELP Statewide Call Center



**Thomas E. Vicini**  
President & CEO

provides treatment resources to citizens in all 120 Kentucky counties seven days a week.

- UNITE Community Coalitions continue to lead on the grassroots level with prevention programs focused on local needs and help Kentuckians move from life-saving treatment into long-term recovery.

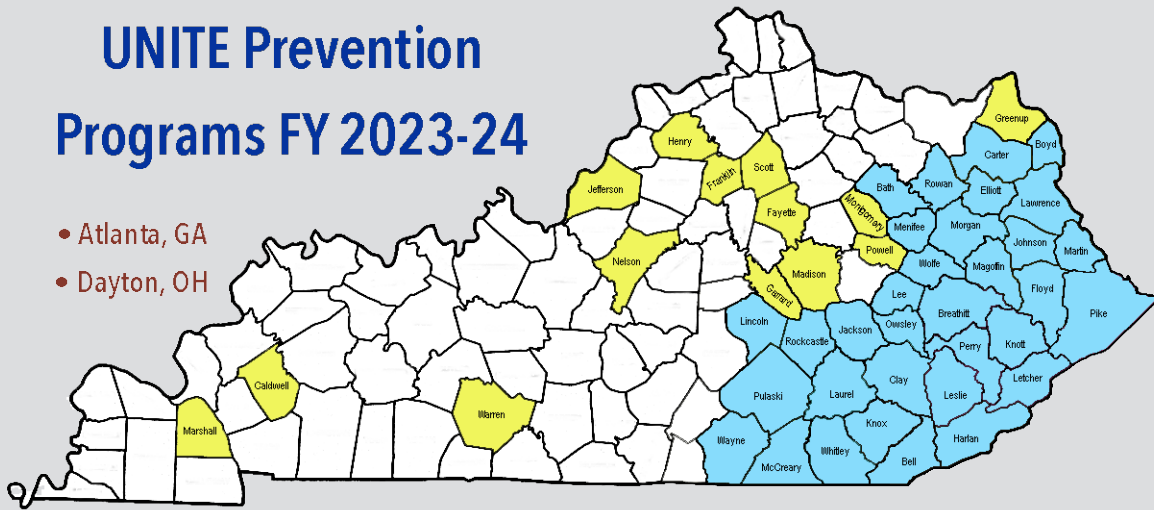
- Operation UNITE has taken its message to numerous state association conferences -- such as the Family Resource and Youth Service Center staff, Sheriff's Offices and Police Chiefs, and Kentucky County Judge-Executive's Association -- to share resources that are available within their jurisdictions.

Operation UNITE desires to be an "Arm of Prevention" for the entire state. To do so requires continued legislative support. We encourage our state Representatives and Senators to come out and view our programming.

Operation UNITE does not charge for any of its services. Our purpose is to create hope and change the culture. We want to significantly reduce the numbers of first-time substance use, thereby lessening the need for legal intervention and Substance Use Disorder treatment.

## UNITE Prevention Programs FY 2023-24

- Atlanta, GA
- Dayton, OH



In addition to serving residents within its primary 33-county service region, Operation UNITE prevention programs were brought to 14 other Kentucky counties and two other states during the 2023-24 Fiscal Year.

### KY Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission grant

# Focus on youth prevention

Utilizing a \$1 million Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission (OAAC) grant, Operation UNITE added a new Prevention Team to expand K-12 youth initiatives that reinforce the reasons to avoid use of all substances and provide resources to help remove barriers to remaining drug-free.

These school-based programs provide accurate information about addictive and abused substances, increase knowledge regarding substance use and misuse, reduce stigma associated with Opioid Use Disorder, and increase knowledge about treatment resources -- all with the ultimate goal of preventing first-time illicit drug use and reducing the overdose death rate.

Area Prevention Coordinators work



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collaboratively with UNITE Coalition Coordinators and community partners both within its service region and in other counties across the Commonwealth.

In June 2024, UNITE received a second KY OAAC grant that will enable Operation UNITE to expand its service region and provide prevention and education initiatives to 10 additional counties adjacent to the current 33-county service region.



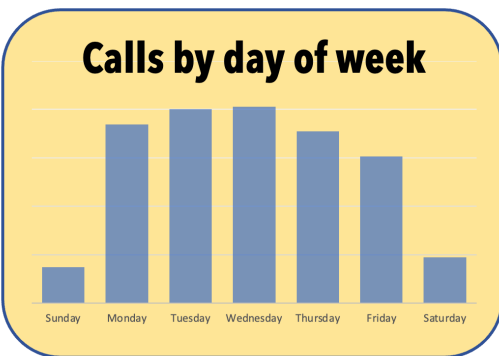


**Providing Substance Use Resources to Kentuckians**  
**1-8338-KY-HELP**  
**(1-833-859-4357)**

Screening and Referral Specialists at the KY HELP Statewide Call Center respond quickly to Kentuckians confronted with a person or loved one’s addiction.

Specialists help callers navigate through treatment options - from medication-assisted treatment to faith-based care - insurance, recovery resources, and other barriers that may occur.

They are trained to manage crisis situations, help family members understand the procedure for utilizing Casey’s Law, and provide outreach services for up to a year to ensure a client’s needs are being met.



- **91.94%** of contacts are received between 7 am and 5 pm
- **2.69%** of calls are received after business hours
- **8.48%** of calls are received on Saturday or Sunday

## By the Numbers

**4,107**

calls or texts received by individuals seeking assistance from

**120**

Kentucky counties

**566**

individuals referred to a treatment program

**425**

outreach calls to clients who have entered a treatment program

**17,185**

follow-up calls made in response to caller needs

**5,791**

individuals provided alcohol/substance use treatment resources

**Methamphetamine**

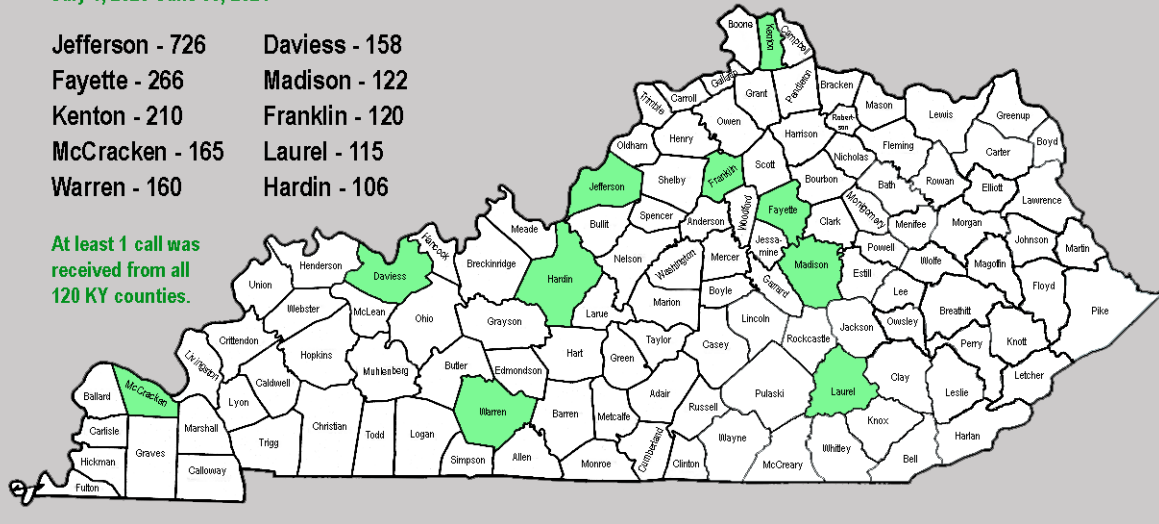
most reported primary drug of use

## Top 10 Counties Calling KY HELP Statewide Call Center

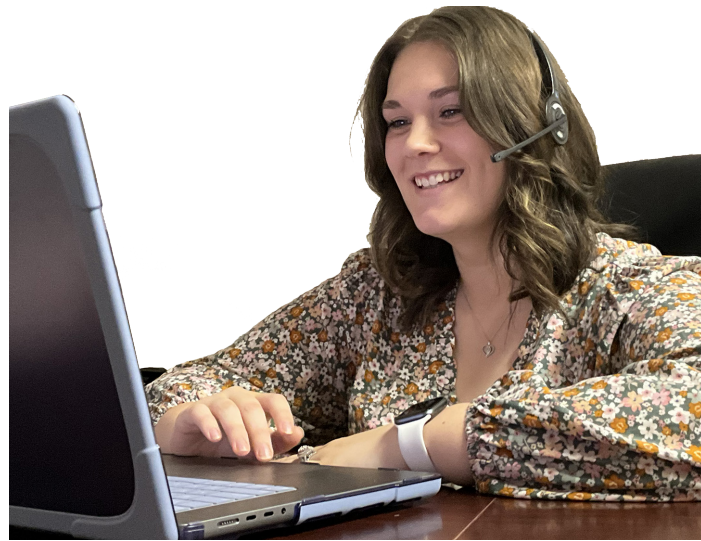
July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024

Jefferson - 726      Daviess - 158  
 Fayette - 266      Madison - 122  
 Kenton - 210      Franklin - 120  
 McCracken - 165      Laurel - 115  
 Warren - 160      Hardin - 106

At least 1 call was received from all 120 KY counties.



Adair	20	Franklin	120
Allen	18	Fulton	5
Anderson	28	Gallatin	8
Ballard	10	Garrard	15
Barren	71	Grant	17
Bath	12	Graves	45
Bell	76	Grayson	20
Boone	66	Green	7
Bourbon	31	Greenup	9
Boyd	48	Hancock	2
Boyle	28	Hardin	106
Breathitt	19	Harlan	37
Bracken	3	Harrison	18
Breckinridge	9	Hart	10
Bullitt	59	Henderson	86
Butler	14	Henry	13
Caldwell	7	Hickman	7
Calloway	22	Hopkins	71
Campbell	51	Jackson	15
Carlisle	4	Jefferson	726
Carroll	8	Jessamine	60
Carter	13	Johnson	36
Casey	23	Kenton	210
Christian	73	Knott	12
Clark	80	Knox	39
Clay	38	Larue	10
Clinton	9	Laurel	115
Crittenden	5	Lawrence	23
Cumberland	9	Lee	11
Daviess	158	Leslie	5
Edmonson	7	Letcher	28
Elliott	7	Lewis	8
Estill	26	Lincoln	22
Fayette	266	Livingston	4
Fleming	12	Logan	43
Floyd	55	Lyon	11



Madison	122	Muhlenberg	48	Scott	71
Magoffin	14	Nelson	45	Shelby	55
Marion	35	Nicholas	9	Simpson	42
Marshall	36	Ohio	23	Spencer	21
Martin	14	Oldham	20	Taylor	34
Mason	18	Owen	5	Todd	22
McCracken	165	Owsley	8	Trigg	17
McCreary	3	Pendleton	4	Trimble	5
McLean	4	Perry	79	Union	13
Meade	16	Pike	103	Warren	160
Menifee	13	Powell	25	Washington	15
Mercer	15	Pulaski	84	Wayne	25
Metcalfe	9	Robertson	1	Webster	10
Monroe	5	Rockcastle	15	Whitley	81
Montgomery	35	Rowan	21	Wolfe	18
Morgan	6	Russell	27	Woodford	26

# Vouchers

**258**

Individuals entered treatment using a **UNITE Voucher**

**105**

Voucher clients completed their treatment program

**1,518**

treatment-related inquiries handled by staff each month

**76**

Applications approved for **Recovery Residence** assistance



The 13th Rx and Illicit Drug Summit was held in Atlanta, GA, April 1-4, 2024. Approximately 2,500 people representing most U.S. states attended. The program featured more than 95 educational sessions and offered more than 110 hours of CME/CE credits. The Rx Summit moves to Nashville, TN, in 2025.



# AmeriCorps

## By the Numbers

**3,525**

students receiving **Math Tutoring** by USC members

**63%**

average growth in math knowledge among students tutored

**2,741**

students taught **"Too Good For Drugs"** curricula by USC members

**108%**

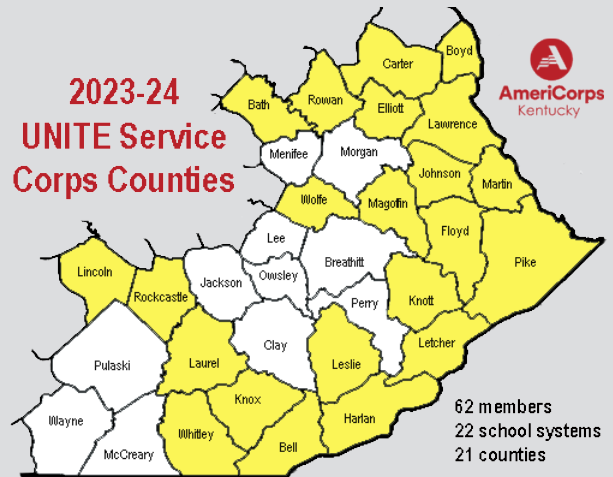
average growth in drug education knowledge among students receiving "Too Good For Drugs"

**6,985**

students Mentored by USC members in addition to math and "Too Good for Drugs" components

**5**

USC summer interns to assist with youth prevention programs



**62**

USC members state certified in FEMA disaster and emergency response by the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management.

# Coalitions

*UNITE Community Coalitions exist in all 33 counties within the service region. Funding is provided to strengthen local substance misuse prevention and education efforts for youth.*

## By the Numbers

**3,123**

Coalition activities conducted

**9,115**

Youth participating in National Archery in the Schools programs

**637**

Youth participating in The First Tee golf programs

**5,106**

Youth participating in Intramural or organized sports programs

**460**

Youth participating in summer camp or activity programs

**24,883**

Youth participating in special assembly or drug prevention programs

**1,113**

Youth participating in Hooked On Fishing-Not On Drugs programs

**371**

Youth participating in Project Prom or Project Graduation programs

**3,117**

Average number of youth served monthly through Backpack programs

**4,174**

Youth participating in a Red Ribbon Week activity or program

**150**

Youth participating in drama or acting programs

**49,126 youth and 23,160 adults were engaged by Coalition youth programs**





To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the transformative **“March Against Drugs”** and creation of UNITE Community Coalitions, citizens in Clay County gathered March 5, 2024, to recreate the original 1.6-mile walk, celebrate successes, and look ahead to work that still needs to be done.



Two regional **“Bringing Community Partners Together”** symposiums were held in August 2023 to show appreciation for the hard work of volunteers from across southern and eastern Kentucky for promoting prevention and treatment initiatives. The events were attended by 265 people representing all 33 UNITE Community Coalitions.



# Initiatives



**963**

youth representing 37 Kentucky counties and 3 other states participated in one of seven **Shoot Hoops Not Drugs** basketball camps

**280**

parents or guardians attended an educational program on the "Hidden Dangers of Vaping"

**192**

volunteers assisted during these camps

FY 2023-24



**6,582**

middle and high school youth participated in an "On The Move!" drug prevention education program at 85 schools in 26 counties

**31%**

average increase in student knowledge about vaping, alcohol, marijuana, meth, tobacco, fentanyl, and synthetic drugs as a result of these programs



**21**

high school seniors awarded privately-funded \$1,500 "I Am UNITE" **Scholarships**

# KHSAA

*Operation UNITE served as title sponsor for the Kentucky High School Athletic Association's State Archery and State Bass Fishing Championships as a complement to the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) and Hooked On Fishing-Not On Drugs (HOFNOD) youth prevention initiatives.*



## By the Numbers

**600+**

student athletes competed

**51**

schools represented in the Boys' and Co-ed divisions

**54**

schools represented in the Girls' division



## By the Numbers

**106**

student boat teams participated during the two-day tournament

**57**

schools represented in the Boys' and Co-ed divisions

**13**

schools represented in the Girls' division

# Youth Rallies



4

regional rallies conducted in September 2023

1,633

sixth-grade students attended

49

schools represented

22

counties



## By the Numbers



11,058

students were members of 139 UNITE Clubs at schools in 30 counties during the 2023-24 school year

10,984

students attended a "Truth About Vaping" presentation given 100 times at schools in 24 counties

1,491

students attended a W.I.S.E. (Why Internet Safety is Essential) program at 19 schools in 10 counties

32

students attended a "Life With A Record" presentation



# Camp UNITE

*Camp activities develop leadership and communication skills, promote teamwork and problem solving, instill confidence and trust, and let youth know they do not have to face difficult situations alone.*



## By the Numbers

**75**

middle school-aged youth attended the 17th annual Camp UNITE

**4 days/3 nights**

on the University of Pikeville campus in July 2023

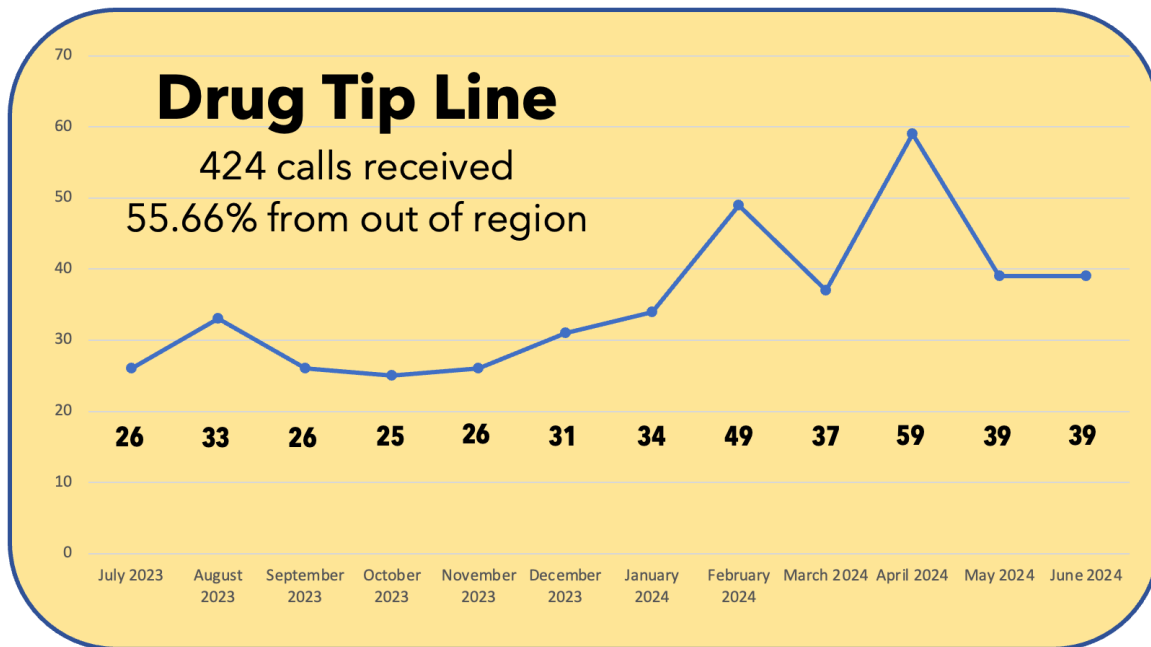
**98**

youth team mentors, volunteers assisting UNITE staff with activities



# Initiatives

*Four detectives engage with youth prevention projects, community education programs, and support treatment and recovery initiatives - in addition to drug investigations.*



## Medication Drop Boxes



**5,791 lbs**

**(2.89 tons)**

of unused, expired or unwanted medications collected by UNITE as part of National DEA Take-Back Days. This represents

**24.86%**

of all medications collected in the Commonwealth

**51**

Drop Box locations



## Drug Test Kits

**247**

locations in 27 Kentucky counties where parents or caregivers can obtain a free **"Give Me A Reason"** saliva-based drug testing kit to give youth a reason to not use any substance.

# Partners

## UNITE's Service Region:

- ▶ 33 UNITE Community Coalitions
- ▶ 44 city police departments
- ▶ 33 county sheriff offices
- ▶ 7 Kentucky State Police Posts
- ▶ 354 public or private K-12 schools
- ▶ 11 public or private colleges, community colleges, and universities

## Key Partners:

- ▶ ACT Now-Martin County
- ▶ Addiction Recovery Care
- ▶ Appalachian Challenge Academy
- ▶ Appalachia HIDTA (High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area)
- ▶ Appalachian Regional Commission
- ▶ Berea College Partners for Education
- ▶ Boys and Girls Clubs of America
- ▶ Citizens Attacking Addiction Coalition (Jefferson County)
- ▶ Healthcare Made Practical (HMP)
- ▶ Institute for Behavior and Health
- ▶ Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts
- ▶ Kentucky Area Development Districts (6 serve UNITE counties)
- ▶ Kentucky Air National Guard
- ▶ Kentucky Army National Guard
- ▶ Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services (includes FRYSCs)
- ▶ Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Kentucky Department of Education
- ▶ Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources
- ▶ Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Development and Intellectual Disabilities
- ▶ Kentucky Department for Public Health (local health departments)
- ▶ Kentucky Division of Emergency Management
- ▶ Kentucky Employers' Mutual Insurance (KEMI)
- ▶ Kentucky General Assembly
- ▶ Kentucky High School Athletic Association
- ▶ Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health
- ▶ Kentucky Legislative Research Commission
- ▶ Kentucky Nonprofit Network
- ▶ Kentucky Office of Attorney General
- ▶ Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy
- ▶ Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission
- ▶ Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) Treatment Access Program
- ▶ Kentucky Specialty Courts
- ▶ Kentucky State Police
- ▶ KYnect Resources
- ▶ Law Enforcement Against Drugs (L.E.A.D.)
- ▶ Leadership Kentucky
- ▶ National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP)
- ▶ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
- ▶ National Council for Mental Wellbeing
- ▶ Operation Parent
- ▶ Partnership to End Addiction
- ▶ RECON Kentucky
- ▶ Recovery Kentucky Centers
- ▶ Serve Kentucky (AmeriCorps)
- ▶ SOAR (Shaping our Appalachian Region)
- ▶ Stand in the Gap Coalition
- ▶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- ▶ The Fletcher Group
- ▶ University of Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center
- ▶ U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- ▶ U.S. Department of Agriculture
- ▶ U.S. Department of Education
- ▶ U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
- ▶ U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation
- ▶ Volunteers of America Mid-States
- ▶ White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
- ▶ Numerous additional individual businesses, civic groups, and community organizations

“Effective  
because we  
care.”

For additional information contact

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