

HURON COUNTY



BOARD OF MENTAL
HEALTH & ADDICTION
SERVICES

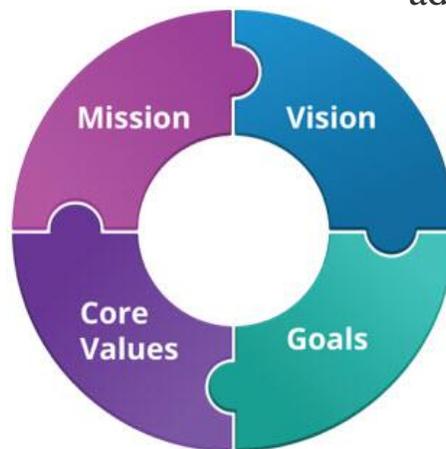
**Fiscal Year 2024
Annual Report**

Mission

Ensure access to mental health and addiction services and resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery supports while educating and advocating for all community members.

Vision

For Huron County to be a community where all individuals are mentally and emotionally healthy and free from dependence on harmful substances and/or addictive behaviors.



Values

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Hope
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsiveness
- Service
- Transparency

Targeted Outcomes

- Increase public awareness and education related to Board funded services and behavioral health
- Increase prevention services capacity and availability
- Increase funding to address identified needs
- Increase recovery supports
- Increase and improve access to services and supports
- Increase Board member engagement
- Improve Board functionality
- Improve behavioral health workforce attraction and retention

Board Members

Ben Chaffee, Jr., Board Chair

Julie Landoll, First Chair

Amber Boldman, Program Committee Chair

Nora Knople, Finance Committee Chair

Carol Anderson

Erin Bohne

Katie Chieda

Sandy Hovest

Lenora Minor

John Soisson

Laura M. Wheeler

Wendie Parsons-Nuhn

Tom Sharpnack (resigned February 28, 2024)

Silvia Hernandez (resigned March 26, 2024)

Year in Review

Community Initiatives

Grant Awards and Grant Participation

In an effort to bring additional funds and services into the county to fill the various gaps that have been identified, MHAS was awarded five grant funding opportunities in fiscal year 2024. The entirety of this funding was utilized to improve and expand behavioral health services and support in Huron County. MHAS was awarded the following funding opportunities in fiscal year 2024, in addition to the Board's annual allocations:

- **State Opioid and Stimulant Response (SOS) 3.2 Innovations, \$416,648.00:** This funding assisted in the expansion of technology utilization to manage co-occurring substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health conditions by addressing several critical needs in the community. Specifically, it helped in the following areas:
 - Reducing relapse and overdose
 - Reducing recidivism
 - Improving behavioral health services and supports for individuals who are incarcerated
 - Increasing access for non-English speakers
 - Enhancing safety for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis
 - Improving services within local hospitals
- **SOS 3.2 and SOS 3.0 Carryover, \$379,380.88:** SOS funding is specifically targeted towards enhancing several critical areas within the behavioral health and recovery services in Huron County. The funding is designed to address various challenges individuals face during their recovery journey, aiming to provide comprehensive support and improve overall outcomes. The key areas targeted by SOS funding include:
 - Increasing access to peer recovery support services
 - Reducing transportation barriers
 - Expanding recovery housing
 - Implementing contingency management
 - Increasing access to medication assisted treatment (MAT)
 - Reducing barriers to treatment
 - Continuing Recovery Navigator services
- **Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP), \$30,713.71:** COSSAP funding is aimed at enhancing the Huron County Quick Response Team (QRT). Funds were utilized to rent a vehicle for the QRT team, reimburse law enforcement agencies for the time spent on the program, pay treatment providers and peer recovery supporters for the time spent going on runs, the purchase of brochures and other resources to distribute, and time spent overseeing the program.
- **Drug Free Communities (DFC), \$99,330.57:** The DFC program is aimed at mobilizing community leaders to identify and respond to the drug problems unique to their community and change local community environmental conditions tied to substance use. The goals of the program are to establish and strengthen collaboration and reduce substance use among youth. The funds are used to support the Huron County Prevention Coalition, led by Huron County Public Health, which has identified marijuana and alcohol as the substances of focus for the grant.
- **ARPA Community Impact, \$64,916.00:** ARPA Community Impact funding was utilized by the Huron County Family and Children First Council to implement the Strengthening Families program. Strengthening Families is an evidence-based family skills training program for high-risk and general

population families in which parents and youth attend weekly classes together, learning parenting skills and youth life and refusal skills.

Workplace Wellness

MHAS continues its workforce development efforts by reaching out to local businesses and organizations to offer resources and presentations on mental health, substance use, and wellness. The goal of this outreach is to educate employers on the importance of addressing mental health and substance use in the workplace, increase awareness of stress management and wellness tools, provide them with local resources, and foster ongoing conversations about how to support both employers and employees.

In 2024, MHAS participated in and provided information, resources, and training at the following locations: Huron County Public Health, Norwalk Wellness Center, Whirlpool, Sheri's Coffeehouse, Catholic Charities, Huron County Safety Council, Huron County Community Libraries, Berry Global, Nissha Medical Technologies, and more.

Through this workforce initiative, we aim to enhance employee wellness in the workplace. Workplace wellness, also known as corporate well-being, encompasses activities, policies, and programs designed to promote the health and safety of employees. Our initiative helps businesses provide resources that support employee health and well-being, ultimately fostering a safer, more vibrant company culture, ensuring sustainable business practices, and contributing to a healthier community.

After Prom

MHAS contacted all school districts in Huron County, offering them the opportunity to apply for funding to support safe and sober after-prom activities. This initiative was designed to ensure that students could celebrate safely and responsibly, without the risks associated with substance use. The following school districts received funding to implement these activities: New London Local Schools, Norwalk Catholic Schools, Norwalk City Schools, South Central Local Schools, and Willard City Schools.

HEALing Communities Study

MHAS staff actively participated in the HEALing Communities Study in Huron County, a statewide initiative aimed at reducing opioid overdose deaths by 40% over three years in participating communities. The funding for this study is allocated to implement evidence-based practices that target the opioid crisis, enhance community health communication efforts, and improve data sharing and coordination. In Huron County, the funding was utilized in the following key areas:

1. **Expansion of Project Dawn Locations:** Project Dawn, a community-based overdose education and naloxone distribution program, was expanded across Huron County. This initiative aimed to increase the availability of naloxone (a medication used to reverse opioid overdoses), saving lives and preventing further harm from opioid use.
2. **Installation of a Harm Reduction Vending Machine at Huron County Public Health:** A harm reduction vending machine was installed at Huron County Public Health, providing easier access to Naloxone and other harm reduction supplies. This machine offered critical resources to individuals at risk of opioid overdose, ensuring they could obtain life-saving medications in a discreet and accessible manner.
3. **Expansion of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT):** Funding was directed toward expanding access to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), an evidence-based approach to treating opioid use disorder. MAT combines medications (such as methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone) with counseling and behavioral therapies to help individuals manage withdrawal symptoms, cravings, and maintain long-term recovery.

4. **Addressing Housing and Transportation Barriers:** Recognizing the significant barriers to treatment retention, the funding was used to address housing and transportation challenges for individuals in recovery. This support helped ensure that individuals could access treatment programs and maintain their recovery without the additional stress of unstable housing or transportation difficulties.
5. **Implementation of Safer Prescribing and Dispensing Practices:** The study also supported the implementation of safer opioid prescribing and dispensing practices in Huron County. This included providing healthcare providers with the necessary tools and training to reduce the over-prescription of opioids and ensure that individuals with pain or opioid use disorders receive appropriate care.

Overall, MHAS's participation in the HEALing Communities Study in Huron County played a pivotal role in reducing opioid overdose deaths by increasing access to treatment, enhancing harm reduction efforts, improving community coordination, and addressing critical social barriers such as transportation and housing. This comprehensive approach is essential to tackling the opioid crisis and improving the health and safety of the community.

Trauma Informed Community

MHAS, in partnership with various local departments and organizations across Huron County, has continued advancing efforts to build a Trauma-Informed Community.

The Trauma-Informed Community (TIC) initiative aims to shift the focus from asking “What is wrong with a person?” to “What happened to this person?” This empathetic approach fosters a supportive environment where barriers and stigma are reduced, paving the way for hope, healing, and recovery.

The TIC Committee, comprised of 29 dedicated organizations, meets monthly to strategize ways to increase education and awareness about the pervasive effects of unaddressed trauma. These efforts address its far-reaching impacts on mental health, substance use, physical health, the workforce, and the local economy.

In FY24, the committee developed and executed an action plan that achieved several key milestones, contributing to the vision of a trauma-informed community. The committee also expanded the reach of its website (www.huroncountyhope.com), which serves as a comprehensive resource for understanding trauma, adopting trauma-informed care practices, accessing workplace wellness tips, and exploring a variety of trauma-related training opportunities.

Additionally, TIC committee members delivered more than 15 community training sessions on trauma-informed care, furthering education and engagement across Huron County.

Looking ahead, the Trauma-Informed Care Committee will transition under the oversight of Huron County Public Health at the end of 2024, becoming part of the broader Prevention Coalition efforts. This move will strengthen the initiative's integration into public health and community well-being strategies.



Stepping Up

On May 6, 2021, the Huron County Commissioners passed a resolution declaring Huron County a Stepping Up county. The Stepping Up Initiative is a national movement aimed at providing counties with the tools and support needed to reduce the number of individuals with mental illnesses and co-occurring disorders in jails. The initiative focuses on developing cross-system, data-driven strategies to address this critical issue. Huron County's involvement in this initiative reflects its commitment to improving the mental health and well-being of those involved in the criminal justice system.

The Huron County Stepping Up Collaborative has outlined a structured action plan and is focused on tracking four key measures of success:

1. **Reducing the Number of People with Mental Illnesses Booked into Jail:** The collaborative aims to prevent individuals with mental health disorders from entering the jail system by focusing on early identification, diversion programs, and community-based interventions.
2. **Increasing Connections to Treatment:** A priority of the initiative is to ensure that individuals with mental illnesses or co-occurring disorders have access to appropriate mental health and substance use treatment, both pre-arrest and during their time in the justice system.
3. **Reducing the Length of Time Spent in Jail:** The collaborative works to reduce jail stays for individuals with mental health issues by connecting them to timely treatment and services, which may lead to earlier releases or alternative sentencing options.
4. **Reducing Recidivism:** The collaborative is also focused on reducing the likelihood of individuals cycling back into the justice system by providing ongoing support, treatment, and resources for long-term recovery and reintegration into the community.

In fiscal year 2024, the Huron County Stepping Up Collaborative concentrated on improving data collection, tracking, and data sharing to measure progress and improve outcomes. A key achievement was the collaboration of participating agencies, which included legal departments, to approve the release of information for individuals receiving services within the Huron County Jail. This data sharing enables a more coordinated approach to treatment and ensures that individuals are connected to the appropriate services across systems.

The members of the Huron County Stepping Up Collaborative include a wide range of community and governmental organizations, such as:

- Huron County Board of Commissioners
- Family Life Counseling & Psychiatric Services
- Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services
- Fisher Titus Medical Center
- Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Huron County Coroner
- Huron County Court of Common Pleas
- Huron County Department of Job and Family Services
- Huron County Probate and Juvenile Court
- Huron County Sheriff's Office
- Let's Get Real, Inc.
- Mercy Health Willard Hospital
- NAMI Northwest
- Norwalk Municipal Court
- Ohio State Highway Patrol – Norwalk Patrol Post 39
- Oriana House, Inc.

Together, these agencies are working to address the needs of individuals with mental health and co-occurring disorders in the criminal justice system, with the goal of improving outcomes for both individuals and the

community. Through the Stepping Up Initiative, Huron County is actively working toward measurable reductions in the number of people with mental illnesses in jail, while increasing access to treatment and improving long-term recovery and success in the community.

Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review Committee

The Huron County Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review Committee, overseen by Huron County Public Health, was created as a multidisciplinary team of subject matter experts, including MHAS staff, to address the critical issue of overdose and suicide-related deaths in Huron County. The committee, which held its first meeting on July 27, 2022, aims to reduce the number of fatalities from these causes in the county. Its work is grounded in collaboration, data review, and the implementation of strategies that target prevention and intervention.

The specific goals of the committee include:

1. **Establishing and Maintaining a Comprehensive Database:** One of the committee's primary objectives is to create and maintain an accurate, comprehensive database of all drug overdose and suicide deaths that occur in Huron County. By tracking this data, the committee can review aggregate trends and patterns to identify contributing factors and areas in need of attention.
2. **Identifying Commonalities Between Suicide and Overdose Deaths:** The committee works to analyze the similarities and shared characteristics between suicide and overdose deaths in Huron County. This information helps to identify risk factors, common circumstances, and systemic issues that may be contributing to these tragic outcomes, leading to more effective prevention strategies.
3. **Identifying Gaps or Opportunities for Improvement in Local Programs and Services:** By reviewing data and case details, the committee is able to pinpoint gaps in current services and programs aimed at preventing overdose and suicide-related deaths. This allows for targeted improvements in the county's behavioral health, social services, and emergency response systems to better address the needs of individuals at risk.
4. **Identifying and Implementing Innovative Interventions:** The committee is committed to developing and implementing innovative interventions that can help prevent future overdose and suicide deaths. By leveraging the collective expertise of multidisciplinary professionals, the committee is exploring new approaches to intervention, outreach, and support, with the ultimate goal of reducing the incidence and prevalence of these preventable deaths in Huron County.

Through its work, the Huron County Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review Committee is taking a proactive, data-driven approach to understanding and reducing overdose and suicide fatalities. By identifying trends, addressing gaps, and implementing targeted interventions, the committee plays a critical role in enhancing public health and improving the overall safety and well-being of the community.

Quick Response Team (QRT)

In fiscal year 2024, the Huron County QRT (Quick Response Team) entered its fifth year of operation. The QRT team plays a critical role in supporting individuals who have survived opioid overdoses by connecting them to treatment and recovery support services. The team is designed to provide timely, confidential help to overdose survivors, ensuring they have access to the resources they need to begin their recovery journey.

The process for providing support begins with overdose reports submitted by local law enforcement organizations and 911 dispatch twice a week. Upon receiving these reports, the QRT team visits the survivor and/or their family and friends at the survivor's residence. The key steps of the team's outreach efforts include:

1. **Providing Treatment and Recovery Resources:** The QRT team offers detailed information about local treatment and recovery resources, encouraging the overdose survivor to consider seeking treatment.

2. **Connecting to Treatment:** If the survivor is open to receiving treatment, the QRT team helps connect them to a treatment provider and, if necessary, facilitates transportation to the treatment facility.
3. **Continued Support for Non-Interested Survivors:** If the survivor is not interested in treatment at the time of the visit, a peer recovery supporter will continue to follow up with them, offering ongoing support and providing additional resources to help guide the survivor toward treatment when they are ready.

In addition to assisting overdose survivors, the QRT team also provides outreach to individuals who have recently experienced a mental health crisis. The team sends personalized letters to these individuals, which include information on local services and supports to help them recover and manage their mental health.

The Huron County QRT Team includes a diverse range of organizations working together to support the community. These organizations are:

- Let's Get Real, Inc.
- Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Family Life Counseling & Psychiatric Services
- Firelands Counseling & Recovery Services
- Oriana House, Inc.
- Norwalk Police Department
- Huron County Sheriff's Office
- New London Police Department
- Wakeman Police Department
- Monroeville Police Department
- Plymouth Police Department

Through this coordinated approach, the QRT team provides essential outreach, support, and resources to individuals affected by opioid overdoses and mental health crises, ultimately working toward improving recovery outcomes and reducing substance use and mental health-related issues in Huron County.

Behavioral Health Week of Appreciation/Dinner

In March 2024, the Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS) hosted its second annual Behavioral Health Appreciation Dinner to recognize and show appreciation to the staff of all the organizations the Board contracts with. The dinner provided an opportunity for MHAS to express gratitude to the dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to serve the community and improve the lives of individuals affected by mental health and substance use disorders.

The primary goal of this event was to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the staff members who contribute to the success of local behavioral health services. The dinner also served to foster stronger relationships and collaboration among the various agencies the Board partners with, reinforcing the importance of these partnerships in advancing the mission of MHAS.

MHAS intends to host this appreciation dinner annually, not only to show gratitude to those working on the front lines but also to continue strengthening the collaborative efforts between the agencies. These partnerships are vital to carrying out the lifesaving work in the community and achieving the goals set by the Board.

For a complete list of the organizations MHAS collaborates with, please refer to the FY2024 Providers and Programs section of this report. Through these ongoing efforts, MHAS continues to ensure the availability of high-quality behavioral health services, working together with its partners to improve the well-being of the community.

Youth Mental Health

In fiscal year 2024, MHAS staff, in collaboration with Huron County Health Commissioner Tim Hollinger and Huron County Family and Children First Director Nicole Cross, engaged in discussions with administrators from all Huron County school districts to address the challenges facing local youth. These conversations provided valuable insights into the mental health needs of young people in the community.

As a result of these discussions, the Huron County Youth Mental Health Report was developed. This report identifies the primary mental health needs of youth across various age groups, including preschool, elementary, middle, and high school students. The report breaks down the needs by age group and also highlights the challenges families face in supporting the mental health and well-being of their children. In addition to identifying the needs, the report provides recommendations for addressing these challenges.

The information from the Huron County Youth Mental Health Report is now being used by the Huron County Youth Mental Health Committee, a collaborative group focused on identifying solutions to the challenges outlined in the report. The committee is working to implement strategies and interventions aimed at addressing the identified needs, with a goal of improving the mental health and overall well-being of youth in Huron County.

This collaborative approach reflects a commitment to understanding the unique mental health challenges facing young people in the community and taking actionable steps to ensure they receive the support they need to thrive.

Huron County One Ohio

At the request of the Huron County Commissioners, MHAS staff facilitated a series of meetings to discuss the One Ohio funds, gather feedback from community partners, and identify the primary needs in the county related to addiction, particularly opioid use and co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions. These funds, derived from settlement dollars, are allocated to support efforts in the prevention, treatment, and recovery of addiction, which are chronic diseases that contribute to significant health, social, and economic challenges at the individual, family, and community levels.

The One Ohio MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) outlines the approved strategies for utilizing these funds, ensuring that projects align with evidence-based approaches to addressing addiction and mental health needs. The following top identified needs for Huron County were discussed during the meetings:

1. **Increased Prevention in Schools:** There is a need for more comprehensive prevention programs within schools to address substance use and mental health issues early. These programs would aim to educate students about the risks associated with substance use and provide them with tools to make healthier choices.
2. **Increased Prevention Services and Programming in the Community:** Expanding prevention efforts in the broader community is crucial to reaching individuals who may not be engaged in school programs. This could involve outreach initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and community-based educational events.
3. **Increased Staffing for Prevention Services:** To effectively implement prevention strategies, more staff are needed to deliver services in schools and the community. Additional professionals would help to expand the reach of prevention programs and provide more targeted support to individuals at risk.
4. **Increased Awareness and Education Related to Prevention:** Enhancing community-wide awareness and education about prevention strategies is critical. This includes educating residents about the importance of prevention in addressing substance use, mental health, and the broader impacts these issues have on the community.

5. **Intensive Home-Based Family Therapy:** There is a demand for more intensive, home-based therapy services to support families affected by substance use and mental health disorders. This type of therapy can help address the underlying issues within the family dynamic and provide more personalized support to individuals in need.
6. **Home-Based Treatment Services:** In addition to therapy, home-based treatment services are needed to provide individuals with substance use and mental health treatment in the comfort of their homes, making treatment more accessible and convenient, particularly for those facing transportation or other barriers to attending traditional treatment settings.

These needs are central to the ongoing efforts to reduce the impact of addiction and mental health disorders in Huron County. By addressing these challenges, the One Ohio funds will be used to create a comprehensive, community-driven approach to prevention, treatment, and recovery, ultimately improving the health and well-being of individuals and families in the county.

Outreach & Engagement

Community Engagement, Outreach & Resource Distribution

In an effort to increase awareness and reduce stigma around mental health and substance use, MHAS staff hosted and participated in a variety of community outreach efforts throughout fiscal year 2024, including:

- **Attended 102 community outreach events:** Engaged with the community through informational tables and collaborative events with other organizations to raise awareness about mental health, substance use, and wellness resources.
- **Hosted 49 community presentations:** Conducted presentations to increase education and awareness of mental health/substance use, answer resident's questions on a variety of related questions, and share information regarding available services and supports.
- **Distributed resources to 282 organizations:** Provided printed and digital resources to schools, businesses, healthcare facilities, non-profits, and more, offering valuable information about local behavioral health services and supports.
- **Social media:** Reached over 134,400 individuals across various platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), achieving an estimated 7,557 total engagements (likes, shares, comments, etc.) to foster conversation and provide updates on various topics related to mental health, substance use, and wellness.
- **Newsletters:** Published and sent 32 newsletters over the course of the year, sharing relevant wellness information, mental health tips, available resources, and upcoming community events.
- **Targeted outreach to the following high-risk populations:**
 - **Youth and adolescents:** Focused on early prevention, education, and access to mental health and substance use resources tailored to younger individuals.
 - **Veterans and active-duty military personnel:** Targeted outreach to support the unique needs of military personnel related to mental health and substance use.
 - **Individuals in rural and underserved areas:** Ensured that people in remote areas have access to critical behavioral health resources and services.
 - **Low-income individuals and families:** Provided accessible resources and services for those facing financial challenges in obtaining mental health and substance use support.
 - **Individuals struggling with grief and loss:** Focused on providing integrated care for individuals managing both mental health and substance use issues.
 - **LGBTQ+:** Targeted outreach to ensure mental health and substance use services were inclusive and sensitive to the unique challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community, including issues related to stigma, discrimination, and family support.

- **Seniors:** Focused on addressing mental health and substance use concerns that commonly affect older adults, such as isolation, depression, and substance misuse.
- **Men:** Addressed the unique barriers men face when seeking mental health and substance use support, including social stigma and the underreporting of mental health issues.
- **Farmers:** Focused on the mental health challenges faced by farmers, particularly stress, financial pressures, and substance use, offering resources for mental health support in agricultural communities and promoting farm-specific wellness initiatives.
- **Veterinarians:** Aimed at addressing the mental health and substance use issues that veterinarians often face, including burnout, compassion fatigue, and substance misuse, sharing specialized support and resources to help this essential but often underserved professional group.

MHAS staff continues to increase community engagement and education through the implementation of bi-monthly newsletters and press releases. MHAS distributes this information to the community through an electronic newsletter, Norwalk Ohio News, Norwalk Reflector, and the Willard Times-Junction. The purpose of this outreach is to increase transparency and provide information and resources regarding local behavioral health services while continuing to educate the community and reduce stigma. This comprehensive approach ensures that the community stays informed, engaged, and aware of available mental health and substance use resources.

In addition to these communications efforts, MHAS staff distributed a variety of resources throughout the county to increase awareness of available resources and supports, utilizing local Levy funds. These resources include:

- **MHAS brochures:** Informational materials outlining the services available through the Mental Health and Addiction Services Board.
- **Contracted provider information:** Lists of local providers offering behavioral health services, including mental health and substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery support options.
- **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) information:** Materials detailing MAT services available in the community to assist individuals in recovery from opioid use disorder and other substance use challenges.
- **Naloxone information:** Resources providing information on how Naloxone can reverse opioid overdoses and where to obtain it.
- **Educational handouts:** Materials designed to educate individuals and families on mental health, substance use, and wellness related topics, including signs, symptoms, and where to find support.
- **Crisis Cards:** Cards that provide links to the Board website and local and state crisis services, ensuring individuals have immediate access to help in a crisis situation.
- **Window Clings:** Removable double-sided window clings that provide links to the Board website and local and state crisis services.

MHAS will continue to distribute the above resources throughout the county. Local organizations are encouraged to request these resources for distribution within their own networks, helping to ensure that critical information reaches those who need it most. This proactive approach helps keep the community informed and engaged while fostering access to essential behavioral health services.

Huron County Recovery Walk

MHAS hosted its 4th Annual Recovery Walk on September 14th at the Norwalk Reservoir. This year's Recovery Walk included a Color Run, and MHAS is looking forward to including this option in the years to come! The event had 85 participants this year, 2 speakers sharing their stories of recovery, and multiple providers distributing local resources for support. Participants either walked a 1-mile path or ran a 2 mile loop around the Norwalk Reservoir that was lined with signs highlighting some of our local "Recovery Supporters" (agencies and organizations who support recovery efforts throughout the county) and encouraging messages such as "Recovery Is Beautiful", and "You Are Not Alone".

Participants had the opportunity before and after the walk to browse the resource tables from organizations throughout the community that partner with MHAS. These include organizations such as Oriana House, Firelands Counseling & Recovery Services, Family Life Counseling, and Let's Get Real. In addition to the organizations who had tables at the event, MHAS had other community sponsors which included: the Huron County Commissioners, Huron County Sheriff's Office, Huron County Public Health, Fisher Titus, and Huron County Juvenile and Probate Court.

MHAS would like to express their gratitude for the participation and support received for this event to:

- Steve Beal: donating the use of speaker and microphones
- North Central EMS: volunteered to be on site for the duration of the event in case of any issues
- Art Mead with EMA: arranged for North Central EMS to be on site for the event
- Norwalk Park and Rec: letting us use the Norwalk Reservoir for the event
- Fair Publishing: Financial support of the event
- Volunteers: Lindsey Kitcher, Katie Salmons, Mikayla Mullins, Matthew Bohne, Gracyn Shupp, Ella Williamson
- Board members: Sandy Mesenburg, Laura Wheeler, Erin Bohne, John Soisson, Wendie Parsons Nuhn, Amber Striker
- Speakers: Angel and Paul
- Agencies: Family Life Counseling, Firelands Counseling & Recovery, Let's Get Real, Oriana House
- Participants: all who attended the event to show unified support for those still struggling and to celebrate those in recovery.

MHAS is looking forward to continuing the annual Recovery Walk & Color Run in 2025.

Mental Health Awareness Walk & Breakfast

The Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS) hosted the 1st Annual Mental Health Awareness Walk & Breakfast in May 2024. The goal of the walk was to continue the work of reducing stigma and spreading awareness of the supports available so that every Huron County resident knows 'WHERE TO START' if they are in need of help.

We had an incredible turnout this year with about 78 people in attendance. MHAS extended a special thank you to the following who supported and participated in the event:

- The Huron County Commissioners for presenting the Mental Health Month Proclamation and for their consistent support of behavioral health efforts in the community.
- The City of Norwalk and the Norwalk Police Department for assisting in monitoring traffic to help make the walk possible.
- Steve Beal with Senior Enrichment Services for providing the sound system for the event.
- Boho Nutrition, Schilds IGA, Luis Quezada with Virtu Coaching, Sheri's Coffeehouse, and Sirna & Sons for making a delicious breakfast possible.
- Gracyn Shupp and Luis Quezada for sharing their stories, spreading hope and inspiration.
- Every one of our 'Supporters of Behavioral Health' in the county.
- Local residents who continue to support the work of the MHAS Board.

The Huron County Commissioners presented the proclamation below:

Mental Health Month Proclamation

Whereas, mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and wellbeing, impacting individuals, families, and communities across Huron County;

Whereas, one in five American adults experience a mental health condition each year and everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health;

Whereas, despite its prevalence, mental health remains shrouded in stigma, preventing many people from accessing care and seeking needed help;

Whereas, prevention, early intervention, and access to quality care are crucial for managing mental health conditions and improving quality of life;

Whereas, each business, school, government agency, healthcare provider, organization and citizen share the responsibility of working with mental health challenges and benefit from promoting mental wellness and supporting prevention efforts; and

Whereas, Huron County is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of its constituents by ending stigma and focusing on the integrated role of mental health in all of our lives.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, the Huron County Commissioners do hereby proclaim May 2024 as Mental Health Month in Huron County.

We encourage all residents of Huron County to:

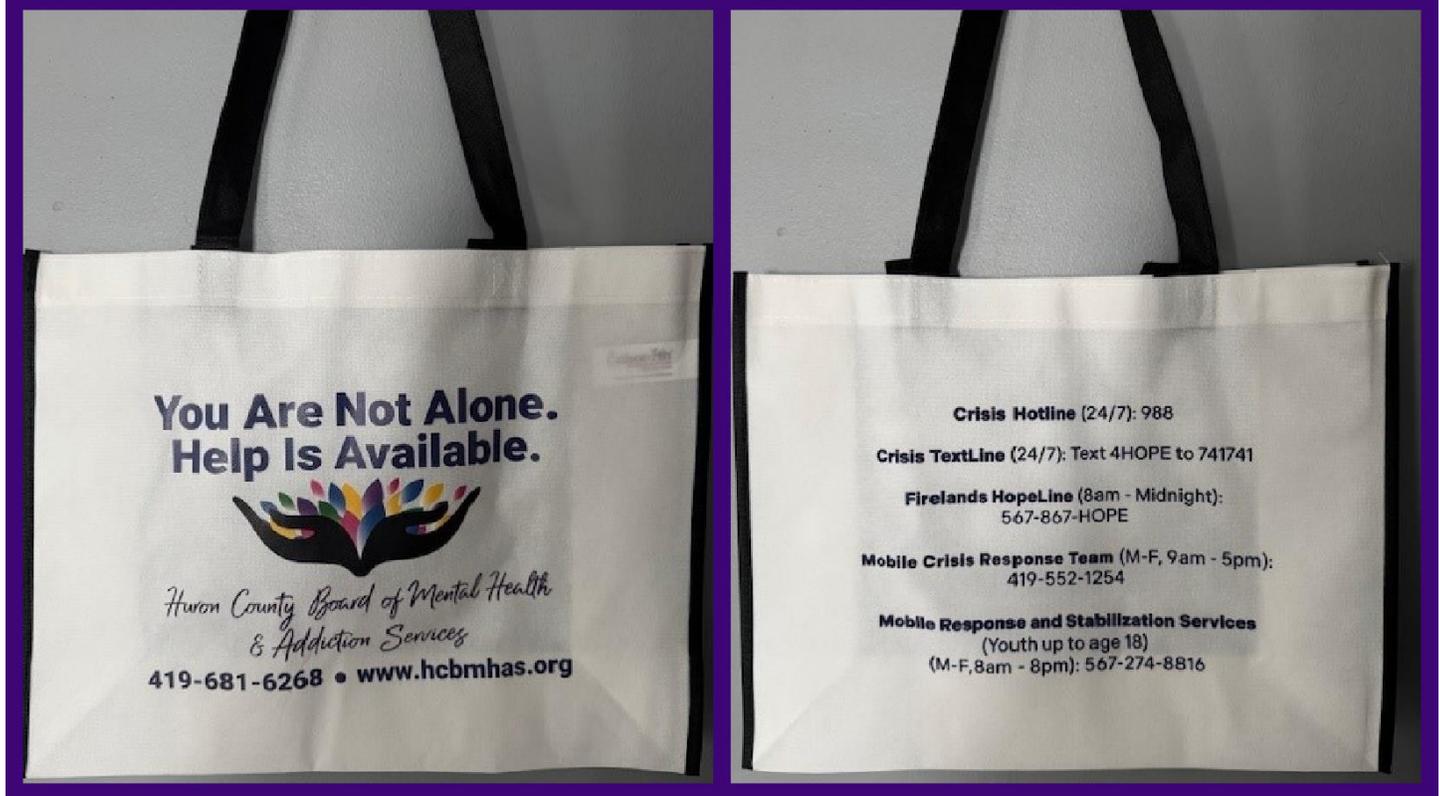
- *Educate themselves and others about mental health conditions, treatment options, and available resources.*
- *Challenge stigma by speaking respectfully and inclusively about mental health.*
- *Seek help if they are struggling with their mental health and encourage others to do the same.*
- *Support organizations that provide mental health services and advocacy.*
- *Create safe and supportive environments for open conversations about mental health.*
- *Together, we can create a community where everyone feels empowered to prioritize their mental well-being and seek help when needed.*

Services are increasing, people are receiving the help they need, and lives are being saved because of the amazing support of our community and our partners.

Reusable Grocery Bags

MHAS continued distributing free reusable grocery bags throughout the community in FY24. The MHAS message on the bags “You are not alone. We grow stronger together” is an encouragement to residents, reminding them that no matter what they may be going through, that they are not alone. In addition, the bags have the MHAS website, www.hcbmhas.org, and a list of crisis information. The grocery bags have been distributed at the following locations:

- Millers Grocery-Norwalk
- Schilds IGA-Norwalk
- Common Good Collective
- Dollar General-Willard
- Willard Area Food Bank
- Dollar General – Plymouth
- Love Bus
- Monroeville United Church of Christ



Billboards

MHAS partnered with Hart Advertising and Lind Advertising to continue the promotion of the Board's slogan, "You Are Not Alone. We Grow Stronger Together". By utilizing SOS (State Opioid and Stimulant Response) funds, MHAS was able to purchase a total of 17 billboards throughout Huron County in an effort to share hope and link residents to resources through the promotion of the Board's website.



Trainings

In fiscal year 2024, MHAS continued to expand its efforts to improve behavioral health awareness and support within the community. This expansion included both internal staff development and the creation of additional training opportunities for the public.

MHAS staff were trained and certified to teach Mental Health First Aid and Trauma-Informed Care trainings, two essential programs designed to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively to mental health crises and trauma. In addition to these, MHAS staff developed specialized training aimed at increasing understanding of mental health and substance use challenges, importance of wellness and stress management, along with raising awareness of local resources and contracted agencies that provide vital support. Finally, MHAS contracts with Firelands Counseling and Recovery to deliver Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) trainings to local schools and the community.

To ensure accessibility and reach, all training offered by MHAS was provided free of charge. During fiscal year 2024, MHAS delivered and/or funded an estimated 146 training courses to community members, businesses, local students, and local organizations, continuing its commitment to educating the community and empowering individuals to support those affected by behavioral health issues.

The trainings MHAS offers include, but may not be limited to:

1. **Mental Health First Aid:** This training is an interactive class where participants will learn how to identify early, and worsening signs and symptoms of a mental health or substance use challenge and how to de-escalate and intervene safely in a crisis situation such as suicidal thoughts and overdose.
2. **Trauma-Informed Care:** This training discusses the prevalence and impact of trauma, the foundations and benefits of being trauma informed, guidance on implementing trauma informed practices into an organizational structure, tools to increase resilience, and information on local resources and services.
3. **Mental Health & Substance Use 101:** This training provides a high level overview of signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges, how to de-escalate and intervene safely in a crisis situation, and local services available for help.
4. **Wellness & Resiliency:** Aimed at educating the community about the effects of stress and how to increase health and wellness, as well as the behavioral health resources available in Huron County. Information included in this training helps individuals and organizations connect those in need to the services that can assist them.
5. **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR):** Question, Persuade, and Refer training teaches attendees the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help.

By offering these educational opportunities, MHAS plays a key role in enhancing the community's ability to recognize, respond to, and support individuals facing mental health and addiction challenges. The goal is to create a more informed and compassionate community where people are equipped with the skills and resources to help others in times of need.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Initiative

The idea to increase awareness of the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988) by adding decals to law enforcement vehicles was proposed by Gracyn Shupp, a local resident and intern of MHAS. After reaching out to local law enforcement agencies, we received a positive response. Six law enforcement agencies, including the Huron County Sheriff's Office, Norwalk Police Department, Willard Police Department, Wakeman Police Department, New London Police Department, and Greenwich Police Department, agreed to participate. Additionally, the Huron County Department of Job and Family Services and the Huron County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) joined the initiative.

To maintain uniformity with each agency's branding, the design of the decals varied in font and color, aligning with the vehicles' aesthetics. As a result, 79 decals were purchased and added to vehicles across Huron County.

This collaborative effort enhances community awareness of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, making it more visible and accessible to those in need.



Board Updates

SFY 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan

In April 2022, the Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS) created and adopted a new Strategic Plan, which outlined the Board's key priorities and clearly defined specific goals and objectives for each priority. The plan is designed to guide the Board's efforts in addressing behavioral health needs in the community and ensuring that services are effectively delivered. The targeted outcomes outlined in the strategic plan include:

1. **Increase Public Awareness and Education Related to Board-Funded Services and Behavioral Health:** This goal focuses on expanding community knowledge of the services the Board funds and increasing understanding of behavioral health issues. By raising awareness, the Board aims to reduce stigma and encourage more individuals to seek help.
2. **Increase Prevention Services Capacity and Availability:** The Board seeks to expand prevention efforts to reduce the incidence of mental health and substance use issues. This includes increasing the availability of prevention programs in schools, workplaces, and communities, as well as enhancing the capacity to deliver these services effectively.
3. **Increase Funding to Address Identified Needs:** The Board aims to secure additional funding to meet the evolving needs of the community. This includes pursuing grants and other funding opportunities to ensure that the necessary services are available for individuals affected by behavioral health challenges.
4. **Increase Recovery Supports:** The plan highlights the need to enhance recovery services for individuals working toward long-term sobriety and mental health stability. This includes expanding access to peer support, recovery housing, and other resources that assist individuals in their recovery journeys.
5. **Increase and Improve Access to Services and Supports:** Ensuring that services are accessible to all individuals who need them is a key goal. The Board is focused on removing barriers to access, such as transportation, affordability, and awareness, to ensure that individuals can receive timely and appropriate care.
6. **Increase Board Member Engagement:** The Board aims to enhance the involvement and engagement of its members in the decision-making process. This includes improving communication, encouraging

active participation, and fostering a collaborative approach to addressing behavioral health issues in the county.

7. **Improve Board Functionality:** This goal focuses on enhancing the operational effectiveness of the Board. By streamlining processes, improving internal communication, and refining governance, the Board can function more efficiently and effectively serve the community.
8. **Improve Behavioral Health Workforce Attraction and Retention:** Attracting and retaining a skilled behavioral health workforce is essential for meeting the needs of the community. The Board aims to address workforce challenges by implementing strategies to attract talent, improve job satisfaction, and reduce turnover among behavioral health professionals.

By focusing on these targeted outcomes, the Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services aims to strengthen its impact on the community, improve the availability and quality of services, and build a more effective and sustainable behavioral health system. A copy of the Board's strategic plan may be found by clicking [HERE](#).

OhioMHAS Community Plan

Every three years, MHAS is required to submit a comprehensive community plan to OhioMHAS, detailing the Board's priorities for the upcoming years. The 2023-2025 Community Plan was approved and submitted in January 2023, and it outlines several key priorities to address the behavioral health needs of the county. The identified priorities for the 2023-2025 period are as follows:

- **Prevention:** MHAS aims to implement evidence-based, school-based resiliency programs in at least 4 school districts. These programs will focus on building resilience among students to better equip them to handle challenges such as stress, trauma, and mental health issues.
- **Mental Health:** MHAS plans targeted outreach to individuals presenting with mental health-related concerns, suicidal ideation, or individuals who have made suicide attempts through 911 calls. This initiative will ensure timely interventions and connections to necessary mental health services.
- **Substance Use Disorder:** MHAS intends to focus on outreach and education regarding alcohol use and binge drinking for key populations, including individuals with OVI (Operating a Vehicle Impaired) charges, individuals facing disorderly conduct charges, probation officers who can share information with those on their caseload, treatment professionals, and physical healthcare providers who serve clients with Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). Additionally, responsible server training will be offered at least twice a year to encourage safe alcohol consumption practices.
- **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT):** A priority of the community plan is to increase access to MAT by expanding the number of MAT providers in Huron County. This will improve treatment options for individuals seeking help for substance use disorders, especially those requiring medication to manage their recovery.
- **Crisis Services:** The plan calls for expanding Mobile Response and Stabilization Services to offer 24/7/365 availability. This will ensure that individuals in crisis can access immediate support at any time, improving community safety and providing timely interventions.
- **Harm Reduction:** MHAS aims to increase access to naloxone, a life-saving medication that reverses opioid overdoses, by installing naloxoboxes in key locations, expanding naloxone leave-behind programs, and increasing the number of Project Dawn sites in the county. These efforts will help reduce overdose deaths and promote harm reduction strategies.
- **Recovery Supports:** To address the barrier of transportation, MHAS plans to distribute Huron County Transit vouchers to contracted treatment and recovery support providers. This initiative will make it easier for individuals to access recovery-oriented services and supports, ensuring they can attend treatment appointments and engage in recovery activities.

The 2023-2025 Community Plan reflects a comprehensive and targeted approach to addressing the diverse behavioral health needs of Huron County. By focusing on prevention, mental health, substance use, crisis services, harm reduction, and recovery supports, the Board is working to improve access to services, reduce barriers, and support individuals in their journey to recovery.

FY 2025 Providers and Programs

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT SERVICES

Family Life Counseling & Psychiatric Services (FLC) offers comprehensive outpatient behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services for adults and youth, including assessments, group and individual counseling, and case management services. School-based counseling and prevention services are also offered. Clients may be referred or self-admit. FLC accepts all payer sources and has financial assistance available. For more details, please call 567-743-7199 Norwalk, 567-743-7199 Willard

Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services offers comprehensive mental health and substance use services for all ages including assessments, groups, individual counseling, and case management. Additionally, they offer psychiatric services, vocational rehabilitation, prevention services, educational programs and crisis intervention including operating the Huron County Hope Line 597-867-HOPE (4673) 365 days of the year from 8am - midnight. Medication Assisted Treatment and mental health medications are available. Clients may be referred or self-admit. Firelands accepts all payer sources and offers financial assistance. For more details, please call 419-663-3737 Norwalk, 419-483-6516 Bellevue

Rigel Recovery Services (Oriana House) offers comprehensive outpatient behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services for adults of all genders, including assessments, group and individual counseling, and case management. They offer Medication Assisted Treatment and mental health medications. Rigel Recovery Services accepts all payer sources and has financial assistance available; they are open to the public for self-referrals. For more details, please call 567-424-6412

RECOVERY AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

House of Hope (Men's Recovery Housing) offers sober and safe housing to men. Located in Willard. For more details, please call 567-560-3584

House of Hope (Women's Recovery Housing) offers sober and safe housing to women. Located in Norwalk. For more details, please call 567-560-3584

Miriam House offers safe and stable housing to women and their children. Staff help residents identify issues that have contributed to their homelessness and promote recovery. Located in Norwalk. For more details, please call 419-668-3073

PEER SUPPORT AND RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES

Let's Get Real is a peer recovery organization which provides peer support services and recovery support groups in Huron County. Let's Get Real operates the Recovery Ride, providing free transportation to individuals to and from recovery-oriented services, detox, and treatment. They also serve as a Project Dawn location, distributing Naloxone at no cost to the community. For more information, please call 567-743-7130.

Animal House Sober Club is a place for the recovery community to have in-person meetings each day of the week, 365 days of the year. Meetings are held every day at 7pm at 206 ½ West Main Street in Bellevue. To learn more, visit <https://animalhousesoberclub.com/>

PREVENTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Catholic Charities of Norwalk offers guardianship services for severely mentally ill adults. For more information, please call 419-668-3073.

Huron County Family and Children First Council evaluates and prioritizes services, fills service gaps where possible, and invents new approaches to achieve better results. They provide service coordination and High-Fidelity Wraparound services for

multisystem youth and families in Huron County. They also fund mentoring services for Huron County youth through Reach Our Youth and Services for Aging. For more information, please call 419-668-8126.

- **Reach Our Youth** is a one-to-one mentoring program that matches volunteer mentors with at-risk youth. The program serves youth ages 6 through 18 in Huron County. For more details, please call 419-668-2525 ext. 1
- **Services for Aging** offers the Age Exchange Program which connects elementary-aged youth with volunteer seniors. This program is a once-a-week group mentoring program where children gain social, team-building and educational assets. For more details, please call 419-668-6245

Huron County Juvenile Court operates the Family Dependency Treatment Court program which provides collaborative evaluation and integrated treatment intervention services for substance abusing parents who have lost, or are at risk of losing custody, of their children to abuse, neglect, or dependency. For more information, please call 419-668-4383

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Northwest offers support groups, education and advocacy for individuals, families, and caregivers of those living with mental health issues. All NAMI support groups are free to the public. For more details please call 419-334-8021 or visit namissw.org.

NAMI Lorain County offers support groups, education, and advocacy for individuals, families, and caregivers of those living with mental health conditions. All NAMI support groups and education services are free to the public. For more information, please call 440-240-8477 or visit www.nami-lc.org.

OhioGuidestone offers Early Childhood Mental Health Services including family-centered and classroom consultation for children under the age of 6 in Huron County. For more information, please call 440-234-2006.

CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) services are provided by Connections Recovery Services. This is a supportive service developed to help people recover from a critical incident stress situation. Services are available 24/7 and are free to the public. Call 833-779-2476.

MOBILE CRISIS SERVICES

Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS), operated by Family Life Counseling, provides mobile crisis and stabilization services for Huron County youth and their families. MRSS will respond to any distressful situation the family identifies and provides services at no cost to the family. MRSS services are available Monday – Friday from 8am – 8pm. For more information, please call 567-274-8816

Connections Recovery Services operates the Huron County mobile crisis response team. The mobile crisis response team will respond to mental health and substance use related crisis calls in the community and will be available Monday through Friday from 9am – 5pm. Crisis referrals may be submitted through their crisis line at 419-552-1254.

CRISIS SERVICES

**Huron County Hope
Line
567-867-HOPE**

Available from 8am –
Midnight, 7 days per week,
through Firelands
Counseling and Recovery
Services



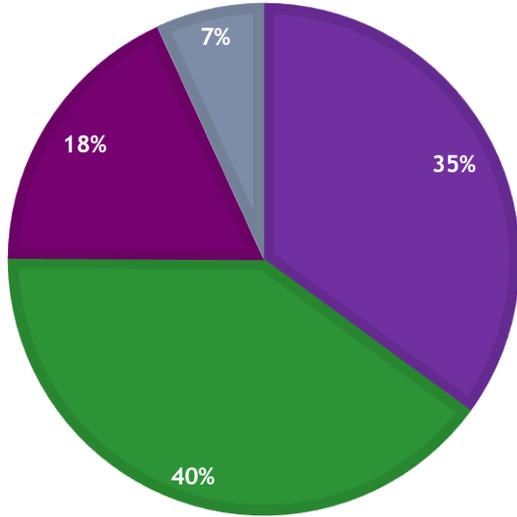
You are not alone



SFY2024 Revenue and Expense Report

Revenues

■ State Funds ■ Federal Funds ■ Local Levy ■ Other

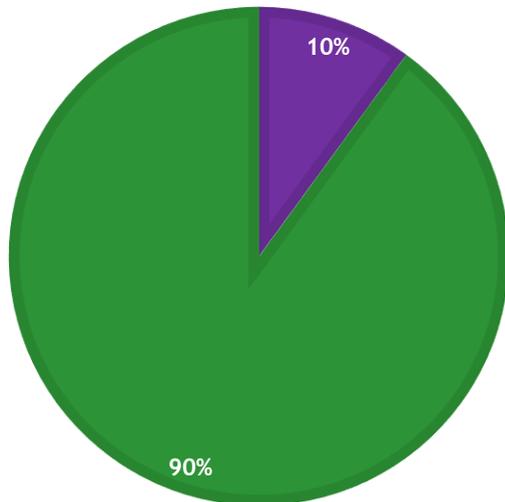


State Funds	\$1,138,781.41	35.05%
Federal Funds	\$1,300,775.56	40.04%
Local Levy	\$586,868.01	18.06%
Other	\$222,564.31	6.85%
TOTAL Revenue	\$3,248,989.29	

*Revenue increased by \$53,489.75 in FY24.

Expenses

■ Board Operations ■ Client Services related



Board Operations	\$291,423.35	10%
Client Services related	\$2,614,499.00	90%
TOTAL Expenses	\$2,905,922.35	

* Board Operations expenses decreased by \$8,088.92 in FY24.

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