



## EVALUATION OVERVIEW

# AmeriCorps Bundled Evaluation of Recovery Coaching

February 2024

 RECOVERY COACHING BUNDLED EVALUATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

## Background

The United States is facing an unprecedented addiction and overdose epidemic. In 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency in response to the increasing number of opioid-related overdoses and deaths. Between fiscal year (FY) 2017 and FY 2022, AmeriCorps invested over \$129 million to fund projects addressing opioid addiction and other substance use disorders (SUDs). One promising strategy to address the rising rates of SUDs and drug overdose is recovery coaching, which is the process in which a nonclinical professional (i.e., coaches) with or without lived experience with a SUD provides guidance to individuals with an SUD by helping them to access care and by supporting them in the removal of barriers to recovery (Zandniapour et al., 2020).

AmeriCorps' Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) has funded a bundled evaluation that comprises 11 AmeriCorps-supported organizations using diverse recovery coaching models. This bundled evaluation focused on three overarching research objectives: 1) to determine what recovery coaching models look like; 2) to describe promising practices and challenges in implementing recovery coaching models; and 3) to measure

the effectiveness of the recovery coaching model in improving outcomes for the organizations, recovery coaches, and program participants. The evaluation also included program-specific evaluation capacity building through the provision of technical assistance to participating organizations. This bundled evaluation and capacity building project benefited from the engagement, insights, and inputs of a technical workgroup of esteemed experts that advised the project at all stages of planning through implementation.

## What Did the Recovery Coaching Bundled Evaluation Do?

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach to examine the implementation of recovery coaching models across different organizations as well as outcomes for organizations, recovery coaches, and program participants. In addition to a review of organization program documents, qualitative and quantitative data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups were gathered in 2021–2024 to address the three research objectives. Preliminary analyses of data were completed in September 2023; the four participating organizations comprising the preliminary analyses, their mission and population of focus, and the role of AmeriCorps State and National Members/VISTAs are summarized in exhibit 1. Final analyses including data from all 11 organizations that participated in data collection activities through January 2024 will be detailed in a forthcoming report.

**EXHIBIT 1.— Participating organizations in preliminary findings**

Organization	Project Mission and Target Population	Role of AmeriCorps Members
<b>Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center (AnB)</b> – Chicago, Ill. & neighboring suburbs (with a focus on Chicago’s West Side)	<b>Mission:</b> Addiction recovery services and supportive services <b>Focus population:</b> Low-income individuals and families experiencing homelessness, unemployed individuals, individuals with disabilities, formerly incarcerated adults, veterans, and military families	<b>7 VISTAs:</b> Provide project management and capacity-building services related to housing and employment, community outreach, and education
<b>Foundation for Recovery (FFR)</b> – Nevada	<b>Mission:</b> Peer recovery support services for mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) recovery to vulnerable teenaged and adult populations <b>Focus population:</b> Individuals in detention centers, jails, and emergency room departments, and those in underserved areas with nonexistent or extremely limited services	<b>10+ AmeriCorps State and National members:</b> Serve as “recovery navigators,” delivering peer recovery support services
<b>Healing Action Network (Healing Action)</b> – St. Louis, Mo. & surrounding areas	<b>Mission:</b> Preventative mental health services <b>Focus population:</b> Adult survivors of commercial sexual exploitation; most clients have experienced complex, multilayered trauma and have mental health-related diagnoses	<b>11 AmeriCorps State and National members:</b> Provide case management, opioid education, naloxone distribution, therapeutic counseling, and community education
<b>Recovery Corps</b> – Minnesota & Illinois	<b>Mission:</b> Peer support to assist those in recovery with achieving their goals and increasing recovery capital <b>Focus population:</b> Teens and adults in recovery for various types of SUDs being served across multiple organization types	<b>58 AmeriCorps State and National members:</b> Serve as either recovery navigators, delivering peer support and recovery coaching services, or as opioid response project coordinators; members additionally help engage volunteers in service projects

## Potential Impact of the Bundled Evaluation

The evaluation fills critical knowledge gaps on recovery coaching as a promising treatment strategy across AmeriCorps-supported organizations; how the recovery coaching model varied across organizations; and the experiences of and/or benefits from recovery coaching as self-reported by coaches, program participants, program directors, and partner organizations. The findings also explore the role of lived experience in recovery coaching outcomes, add to the nascent but growing evidence base on the effects of recovery coaching models on substance use and well-being, and support evidence-based treatment implementation across AmeriCorps-supported and other organizations.

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## References

Zandniapour, L., Menon, R., Renier, T., & Dermanjian, S. (2020). *A promising response to the opioid crisis: CNCS-supported recovery coach programs*. Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Evaluation.

[https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/23419\\_CNCS\\_ORE\\_Opioid\\_Report\\_v03\\_RELEASE\\_508\\_1.pdf](https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/23419_CNCS_ORE_Opioid_Report_v03_RELEASE_508_1.pdf)

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### About AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation’s most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency places more than 200,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at [AmeriCorps.gov](https://www.americorps.gov).

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