



MERCER COUNCIL: IMPACT REPORT

*Envisioning healthy, safe and responsible
communities across Mercer County.*

2023

 www.mercercouncil.org



DEAR FRIENDS,

We proudly celebrated our **45th anniversary** as a non-profit in Mercer County, and kicked off the celebration of our anniversary year with our fall **Open House & Fundraiser event** on October 5, 2023. Family members of our founder, **Kay McGrath**, and her most influential successor, **Geetha Arulmohan**, graced us with their presence and shared insights into the passion and drive of these two leaders. Their contributions formed the core mission and solid foundation that have propelled our continued success as an agency. It's challenging to adequately express our awe and gratitude for their pioneering work in the field of addiction and substance use, tackling taboo subjects at a time when supportive resources and compassionate care were scarce. Both of these strong women, with foresight, recognized the importance of prevention through education, awareness, resources and support for the well-being of our community.

This year, we invite you to witness the impact of our history of work through the lens of the **Continuum of Care**, created by the Institute of Medicine. This framework highlights how our divisions and initiatives integrate seamlessly, emphasizing the relationship between prevention, treatment, and maintenance, in mental and behavioral health and substance use disorder care. We remain guided by our mission of creating pathways to reduce substance-related challenges and support behavioral health wellness; this model serves as a guiding beacon, keeping us connected to our purpose.

In the spirit of our 45th anniversary, we believe teamwork is paramount. We invite you to join us in celebrating our legacy in any way that you can, whether by volunteering your time, bringing your ideas to our coalition, donating to our mission, or sponsoring one of our initiatives. **Together, we will uphold the tradition of helping our community members stay safe, make informed decisions, and thrive.**

With Gratitude,

*Margarita Leahy, MA, Ed.S, NCC, LPC, LCADC, ACS
Executive Director*



WHO WE ARE

Mercer Council is a private, non-profit agency dedicated to the prevention of substance misuse and its harmful consequences. Mercer Council actively provides quality alcohol, tobacco and other drug misuse prevention and early intervention programs and services, in partnership with individuals, families, schools, communities, businesses and professionals throughout Mercer County.

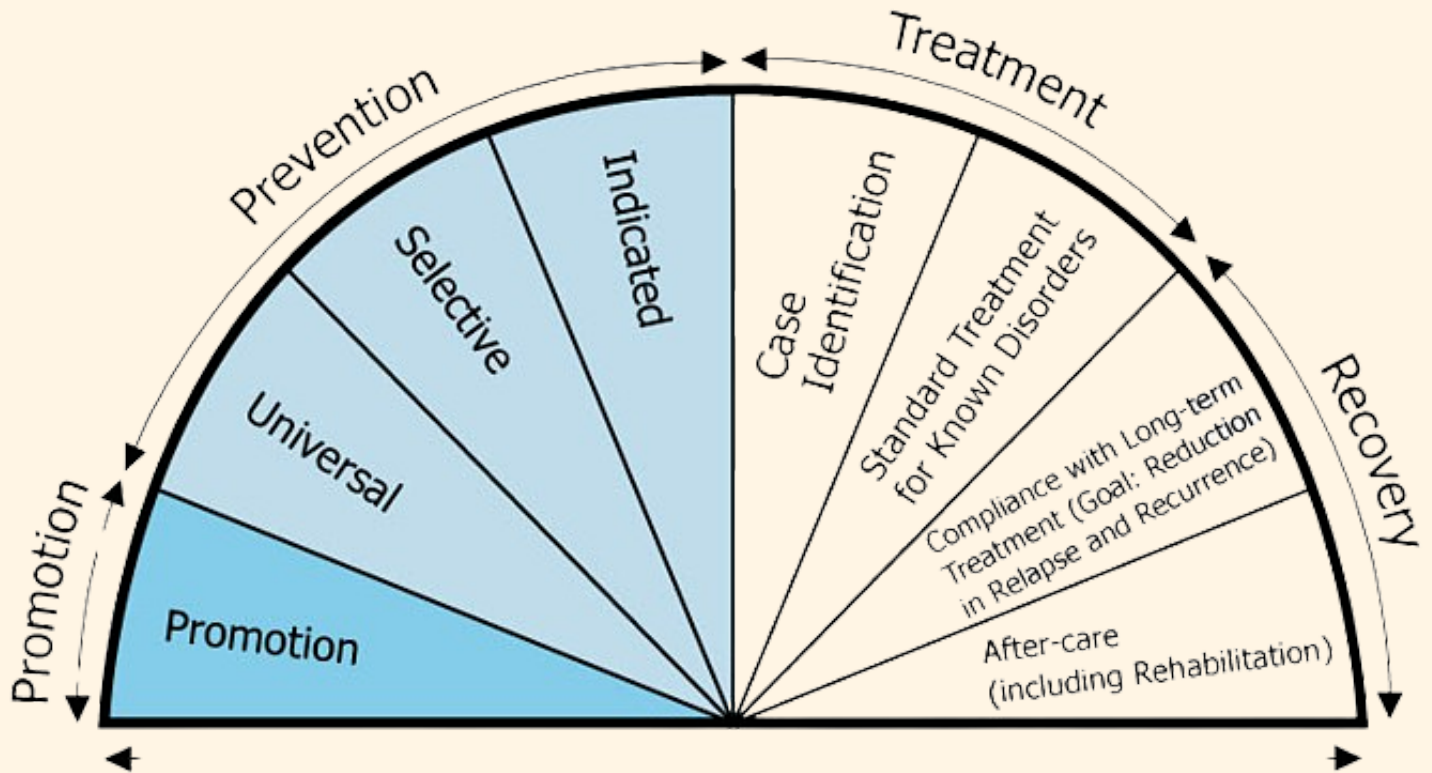
At Mercer Council, we are committed to creating and supporting healthier, safer, and more responsible communities.



OUR MISSION

We strive to create pathways to reduce substance misuse, substance use disorders, and other behavioral health related challenges for Mercer County residents across the lifespan, through education, support, advocacy and partnerships throughout our community.

CONTINUUM OF CARE MODEL



Created by the Institute of Medicine in 1994, the **Continuum of Care** model offers an important framework for intervening in the areas of substance misuse and substance use disorders, and for offering education, information and support to the public.

Mercer Council is proud to share that all of the work we do is guided by the Continuum of Care model. We are committed to maintaining evidence-based practices in all that we do, and we continuously seek to improve on our methods and strengthen our services in order to best meet the needs of our Mercer County community.

2023 AT A GLANCE: FAST FACTS



5,330+ students in grades K-12

reached through various school-based programs, services, presentations and youth development activities held throughout the year.

- **2,885** total reach from youth development activities sponsored by ASYSST
- **102** student wellness assessments, with **16** receiving short-term supportive services
- **950+** 7th grade students reached with *Botvin's Life Skills Training* evidence-based curriculum in Hamilton's 3 middle schools
- **1,976+** students received direct evidence-based, multi-session curriculum lessons
- **4,485** students reached in **40+** school assemblies and presentations from our expert team of Prevention staff

- **332** attendees across **50** All-Recovery Meetings, average of **7-8** weekly participants in recovery
- **101** individuals connected to recovery support through our Opioid Overdose Recovery Program
- **156** older adults reached in our *Healthy Outlooks for Older Adults* workshop for adults over 60
- **152** substance use evaluations and referrals conducted with the Juvenile Justice Commission
- **225** total attendance across monthly meetings with our Prevention Coalition of Mercer County

5,485+ community members

reached through in-person and virtual community-based programs, trainings, workshops, events and activities throughout the year.

PROMOTION

Promotion within the Continuum of Care involves creating awareness and advocating for preventive measures against substance abuse and misuse. It encompasses activities such as legislative discussions, community education, and community engagement events and initiatives aimed at raising awareness for substance use trends. Promotion engages several sectors of the community in order to foster a collective understanding of the overall importance of prevention efforts.

As an agency, we strive to reach every corner of every community across the county with education, awareness and support. We are proud to attend and host local community events like National Night Out and International Overdose Awareness Day to remain consistent with our vision of creating healthy, safe and responsible communities.



PROMOTION HIGHLIGHTS

- **5485+** individuals reached at various community tabling events, including **National Night Out** and various local **Community Days**.
- Our ASYSST program hosted the **Afro Arts Fest** and **Juneteenth Jubilee** events, bringing the Ewing community together to celebrate diversity and culture. Later in the year, the team unveiled a beautiful new mural at Ewing High School that promotes and celebrates prevention and wellness for students.
- Partnering with Rider University's *107.7 The Bronc*, our newly formed **Youth Coalition of Mercer County** recorded radio PSAs in Summer 2023 for a new "Spotlight on Prevention" campaign.
- Our **International Overdose Awareness Day** event saw over **200** members of the community join us to commemorate and support individuals and families affected by overdose and addiction.



PREVENTION

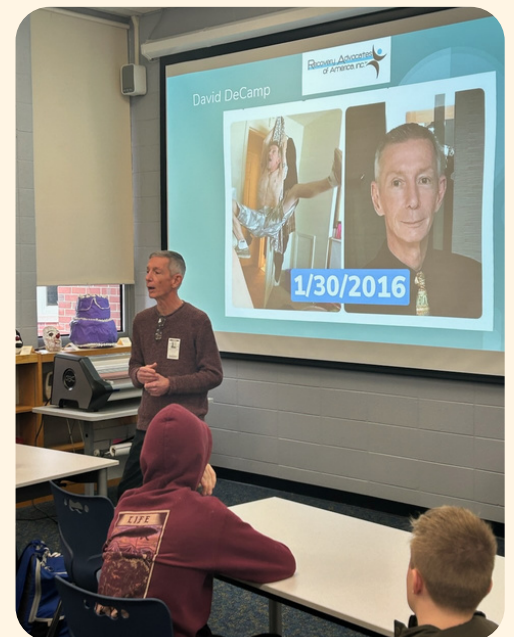
Prevention encompasses the strategies adopted and measures taken to address substance use issues before they occur. At Mercer Council we seek to employ **upstream prevention** initiatives as often as we can, focusing on addressing root causes and underlying determinants of substance use and behavioral health issues, rather than on treating and managing existing cases. Prevention is divided into three key levels:

- **Universal Prevention** targets the entire population with broad educational presentations and awareness campaigns
- **Selective Prevention** focuses on subsets of the population deemed as higher risk
- **Targeted or Indicated Prevention** addresses very specific populations or demographics to deliver preventive services most tailored and relevant to their needs



PREVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

- **4,485+** students reached through **40+** prevention presentations on the topics of Vaping, Marijuana/Cannabis, Alcohol, Tobacco and Opioids, across **14** Mercer County schools
- **950+** 7th grade students in Hamilton's 3 middle schools received *Botvin's Life Skills Training* evidence-based curriculum
- **131** individuals trained to administer Narcan across **9** trainings
- **156** older adults (60+) engaged in *Healthy Outlooks* workshops
- Engaging in a new partnership with HomeFront, our staff facilitated a full 7-week, 14-session cycle of the *Strengthening Families Program* for parents and their children ages 6-11. **6 unique families**, consisting of 6 mothers and 11 children, participated in the program cycle in the fall.



TREATMENT

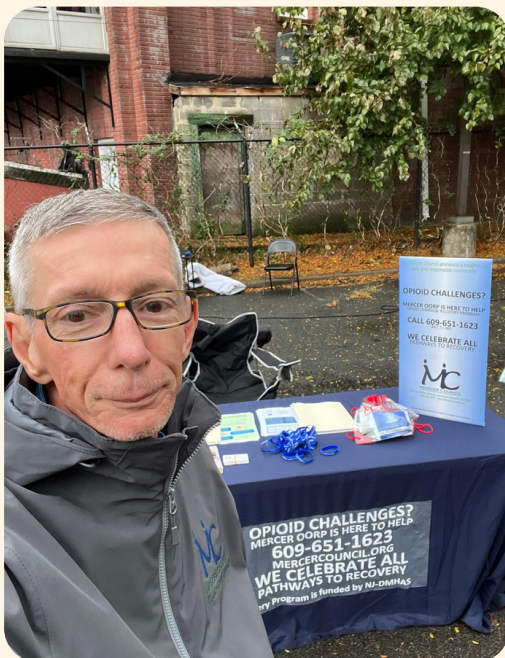
As a prevention agency that is focused primarily on *upstream prevention*, Mercer Council offers only select treatment services to the community. Within the Continuum of Care, **Treatment** involves interventions and services for individuals with identified risk.

- **Case Identification** is the process of identifying individuals at risk, determining the appropriate level of care needed, and referring them to appropriate longer-term services.
- **Short-Term Treatment** offers brief counseling and other supportive services to individuals to address their immediate needs, and provides a bridge to longer-term care for those facing substance or behavioral health-related challenges.



TREATMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **152** substance use evaluations and referrals to appropriate levels of longer-term care in collaboration with the Juvenile Justice Commission.
- **102** one-time student wellness assessments conducted by the ASYSST team at Ewing High School; **16 students** received short-term clinical counseling services.
- **12 new clients** scheduled for first-time, short-term clinical services within our **Metro Employee Assistance Services**
- **101** individuals connected to ongoing support through the **Opioid Overdose Recovery Program**, with nearly 50% of dispatches occurring outside of the hospital; **27** individuals were administered Narcan.



RECOVERY HIGHLIGHTS

Recovery is the final sector in the Continuum of Care and focuses on supporting individuals in their efforts to sustain a substance-free life. While we are not a long-term treatment facility, we do provide a weekly meeting for individuals in recovery. This falls into the section of the Continuum referred to as **After-Care**.

In 2023, we saw a total of **332** attendees across **50 weekly All-Recovery Meetings**, or a weekly average of **7-8** individuals consistently pursuing their journeys in recovery.

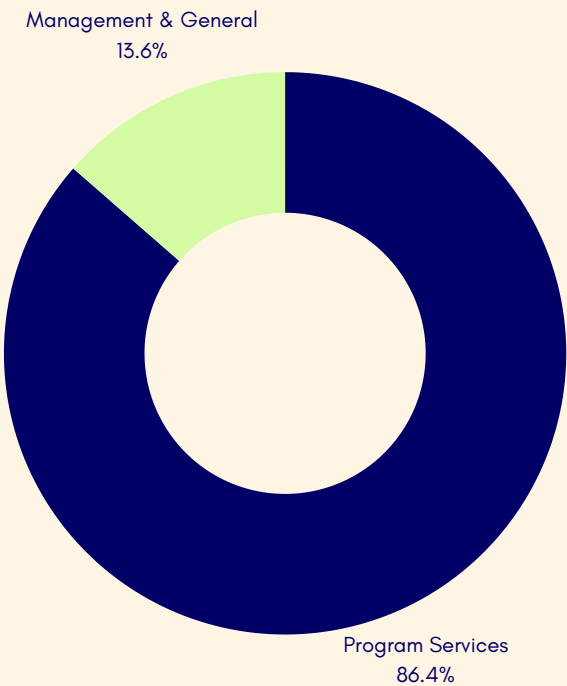
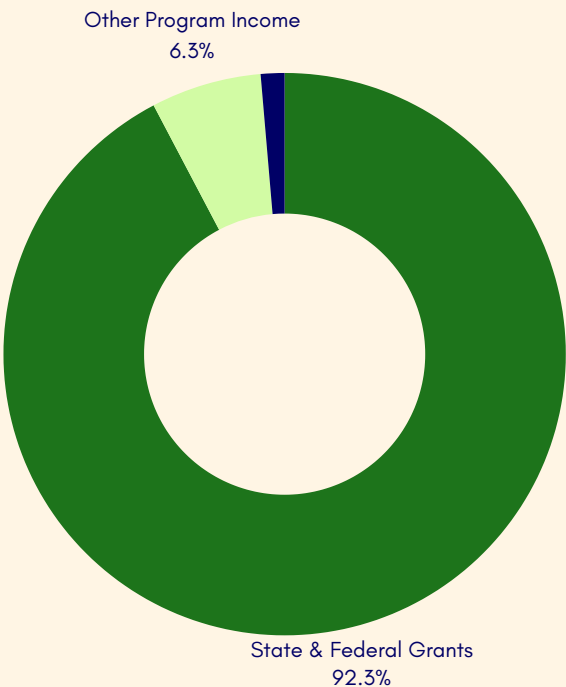


FINANCIAL REPORT

FY23: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

Revenue: \$1,862,205

State & Federal Grants: 92.3%
Other Program Income: 6.3%
Contributions: 1.4%



Expenses: \$1,759,685

Program Services: 86.42%
Management & General: 13.58%

THE MERCER COUNCIL TEAM

Board of Trustees

<i>Chair</i> – Deborah Dunn, Esq.	Julie DeSimone
<i>Vice Chair</i> – Gwendolyn S. Jennings	Joseph Hadge
<i>Secretary</i> – Jarrett Fisher	Lenora Keel
<i>Treasurer</i> – Lance Liverman	Christopher Jakim
Chief Timothy Grant	Maureen McGrath

Administrative Team

Margarita Leahy, *Executive Director*
Catherine Arulmohan, *Director of Operations*
Caitlin Allen, *Community Engagement Coordinator*
Lisa Kauffman, *Office Manager*
Lorenzo McCollum, *Administrative Assistant*

Mercer Council Team

Amy Argiriou	James Bronzen
Malissa Arnold	Rodrigo Molineros
Dave DeCamp	Trina Nixon
Ruth DelPino	Marc North
Miquia Devalle	Dayron Proctor
Shakita Johnson	Stacey Ross
Wil Kauffman	Smriti Singh
Jon Macciocca	Ian Smith
Aliyah McRae	Mike Ziccardi

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



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