

# Navigating Meaningful Employment in Recovery Housing: Results from a Community Collaborative

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# Objectives

- Fletcher Group and the University of Kentucky
- Impact of employment on recovery
- Pilot Purpose and Objectives
- Program Components
- Program Evaluation
- Results
- Key Considerations
- Tools to support employers
  - Examples of state-level initiatives (KY Chamber of Commerce)

# Acknowledgements

- Thank you to our funding agency, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for their support with this pilot initiative.
- Special thanks to all the recovery housing programs, their leadership, staff, and residents for participating.

# Fletcher Group

- National 501c3 nonprofit founded in 2017 by former Kentucky Governor, Dr. Ernie Fletcher and his wife, Glenna
- Intent to support those in society move from the disease of addiction and the devastation of homelessness to lives of hope, dignity, and fulfillment through extending the “recovery ecosystem” model across the country.
- Received a national grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in 2019 to operate a Rural Center of Excellence in Recovery Housing
  - Provision of technical assistance and conduct of research and evaluation to expand and improve recovery housing in rural areas



- Recently received a 5-year HRSA grant to continue expanding and improving recovery supports as a Rural Center of Excellence in Recovery

# Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center

- Established in 1994 as a unique partnership between the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) and the University of Kentucky College of Public Health
- Serves as both an academic injury prevention research center and as KDPH's bona fide agent for statewide injury prevention and control.
- Focus areas include 1) Community injury prevention, 2) Drug Overdose Prevention, 3) Intentional Injuries, 4) Motor Vehicle Injuries, 5) Occupational Safety and Health, and 6) Trauma



- Collaborated with FGI as a sub awardee on the 2019 HRSA RCOE grant and will continue to work with FGI on the next 5-year grant

# Employment Matters to Recovery

- Over 100,000 lives were lost in 2021, alone, to fatal drug overdose<sup>1</sup>
- Substance use disorder (SUD) presents multifaceted challenges<sup>2-3</sup>
  - Combination of risk factors contributing to development
- Recovery from SUD challenging – average of 5 attempts before resolution<sup>4</sup>
- 80% of health outcomes are impacted by non-clinical social drivers of health<sup>5</sup>
- Social model recovery supports such as recovery housing, peer support, and employment are **CRITICAL**

# Benefits of Employment in Early Recovery

- Development of recovery capital
- Early recovery (purpose/meaning in life)
- Integration into the real world
- Budgeting/paying bills
- Positive social connections
- Sense of fulfillment, empowerment

# Employment and SUD Outcomes

- Employment has been found to be associated with...
  - Less healthcare need and utilization<sup>6</sup>
  - Improvements in health<sup>7</sup>
  - Reduced substance use<sup>8-12</sup>
  - Reduced criminal activity and fewer parole violations<sup>8</sup>
  - Reduced homelessness<sup>13-16</sup>
- Investing in recovery supports = major returns
- Employment has been identified as a top priority for individuals in recovery from SUD<sup>17</sup>



# Employment Coach Pilot Overview

- **Purpose:** Develop a low-barrier employment coach pilot program and better understand its effectiveness as an adjunctive recovery support service for residents in rural recovery housing
  - **Program objectives** include determination of:
    - Pilot program feasibility, measured by engagement of houses, coaches, residents, and community employers
    - Pilot program effectiveness
      - Recovery – related output and outcomes
- **Program designed to be recovery program initiated**
  - **Recovery programs know their residents and communities best**
  - **Key Output = Individualized Employment Toolkits developed by the Recovery Programs**

# A Simple 3 – Pronged Approach

- Simple yet effective
- Growth/strength-focused care
  - Individualized
- Strong community emphasis
- Education for employee and employer



## 1. Address Barriers

Addressing barriers, identifying career goals, and developing a plan



## 2. Resource Identification

Identifying training and education resources



## 3. Employer Connection

Connecting with employers based on interests and skills obtained

# Employment Coach Pilot – Components

- **Program Components:**
  - Provision of 6 months of funding to support a recovery coach
  - Duties/job description for hiring a recovery coach (standardization)
  - Training, and support from RCOE employment team
  - Employment support offerings tailored to meet the recovery program's needs
  - Ongoing one on one weekly meetings and collective group meeting with RCOE Employment team
    - Community stakeholder meetings initiated by the homes/employment coaches
  - Individualized recovery employment toolkit development
  - Evaluation collection guidance
    - Adjustments based on feedback

# Employment Coach Pilot – Evaluation

- Pilot Program Evaluation:
  - House level surveys: Post-implementation
  - Resident level surveys: Baseline, 1, 3, 6, 9 months follow-up
  - Coach Evaluation: Post-implementation (In progress)
    - Residents
    - Community partners
- Resident surveys administered by coaches
  - Summary of responses to surveys entered in Qualtrics sent back to coach
    - Address barriers
    - Determine career plan and associated training opportunities
- All survey data captured in Qualtrics, use of unique study I.D. to link data

# Resident Level Evaluation

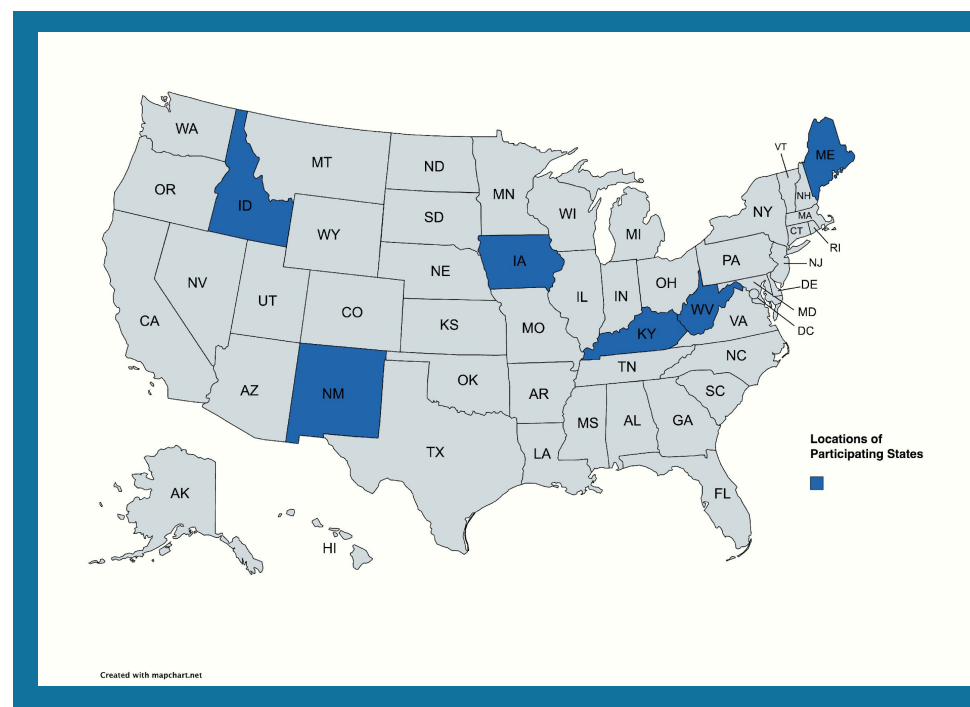
- Collected at baseline, 1, 3, 6, 9 months follow-up
- Background/demographic characteristics
- Current employment status
  - If yes, meaningful employment scales
- Resource Inventory
  - Identification of barriers
- Recovery Capital (BARC-10)<sup>18</sup>
- Social connections
- Work and Meaning Inventory<sup>19</sup>
- Brief Index of Affective Job Satisfaction<sup>20</sup>

# Employment Coach Pilot – Results

- A total of **seven recovery homes** located in rural counties\* initiated the pilot program and six (88%) were retained/completed the program

- Kentucky – Women
- West Virginia – Men and Women
- Iowa – Women
- Idaho – Women
- Maine - Women
- New Mexico – Men

- 66% - serve women only
- 17% - serve women and men (separately)
- 17% - serve men only



\*Rurality based on HRSA rural designation.

# Employment Coach Pilot – Results

- Total **141 intake surveys**, **33 follow-up (during stay) surveys**
- Most reported being **unemployed** (31%) or employed full-time (25%) and part-time (18%), being **female** (72%), **Caucasian** (92%), **Non-Hispanic** (91%), an average age of 37, with a **high school diploma** (27%) or less than high school (23%), with prior **criminal justice involvement** (77%).
- Recovery capital = average score of **54** [range, 32 – 60]
- Family/friends supportive of recovery = average of 10 individuals [range, 0 – 100]
- Over three-fourths (77%) indicated in an interest in pursuing further **educational** (61%) and **employment opportunities** (70%)

# Barriers at Intake

**Top barriers** identified by participants included:

- Reliable transportation: **58%**
- Resume: **58%**
- Qualifications for job participant is seeking: 40%
- Interview clothing: 40%
- Access to a cell phone: 31%
- Social security card: 19%
- Literacy: 18%
- Identification card: 17%
- Email: 17%





# Biggest Strengths at Intake

- At intake when participants were asked biggest strengths, 78% provided a response
- Strengths frequently mentioned:
  - Strong-willed
  - Hard worker
  - Perseverance
  - Determined
  - Compassionate
  - Goal oriented
  - People person



# Results – Intake to Follow-up

- **Data collection is ongoing**
- **33 individuals** have been matched across intake and during stay

Variable	Intake	During Stay*
Employed	33%	64%
Monthly Income	\$1,430	\$1,848
BARC-10	55	57

## Highlights:

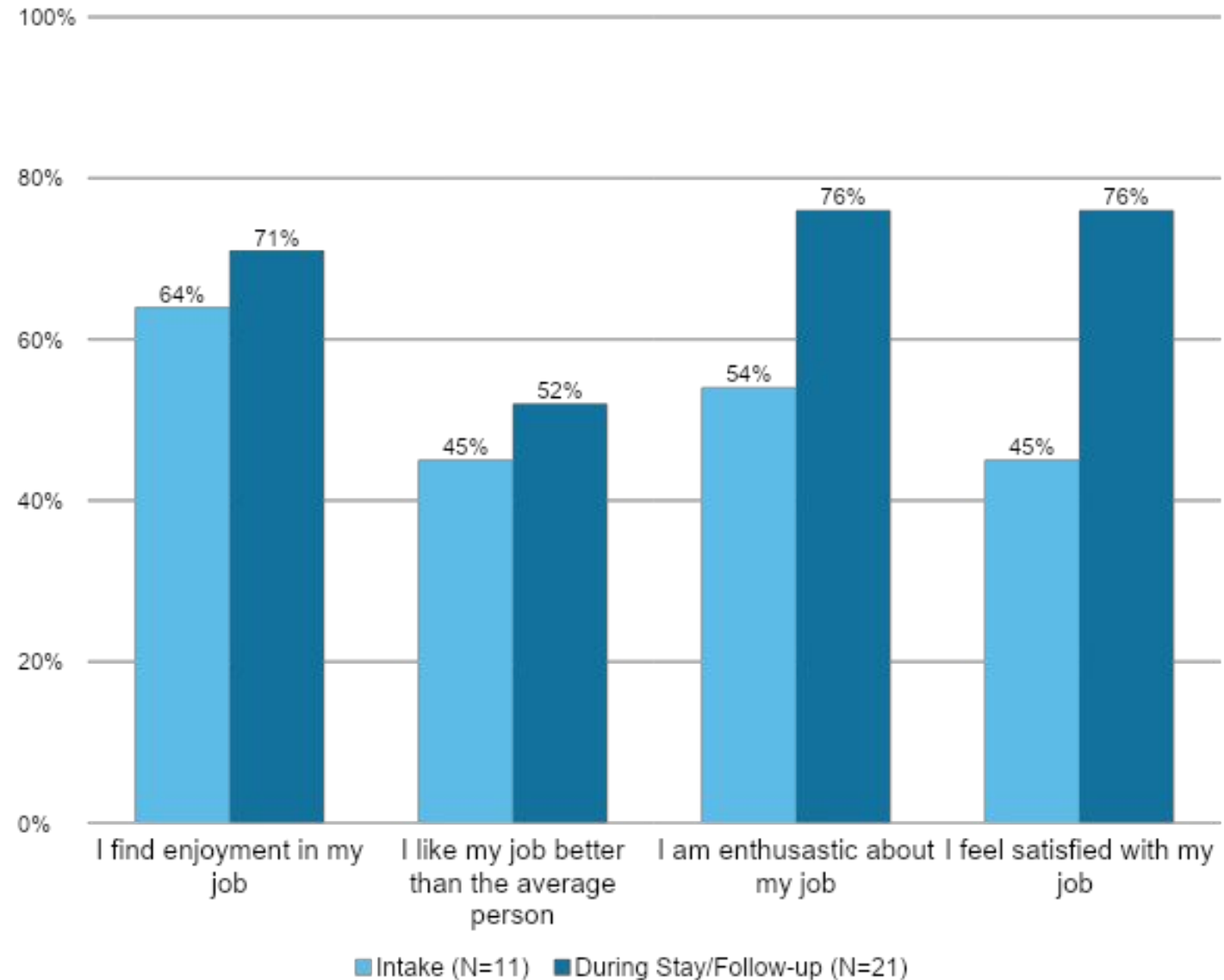
- 30 percentage point increase in employment
- Average increase of \$400 per month
- Average increase in 2 points in recovery capital

\* Reflects surveys obtained 1, 2, and 3-months follow-up from baseline

# Job Satisfaction

- From intake to during stay, a greater percentage of residents employed indicated job satisfaction

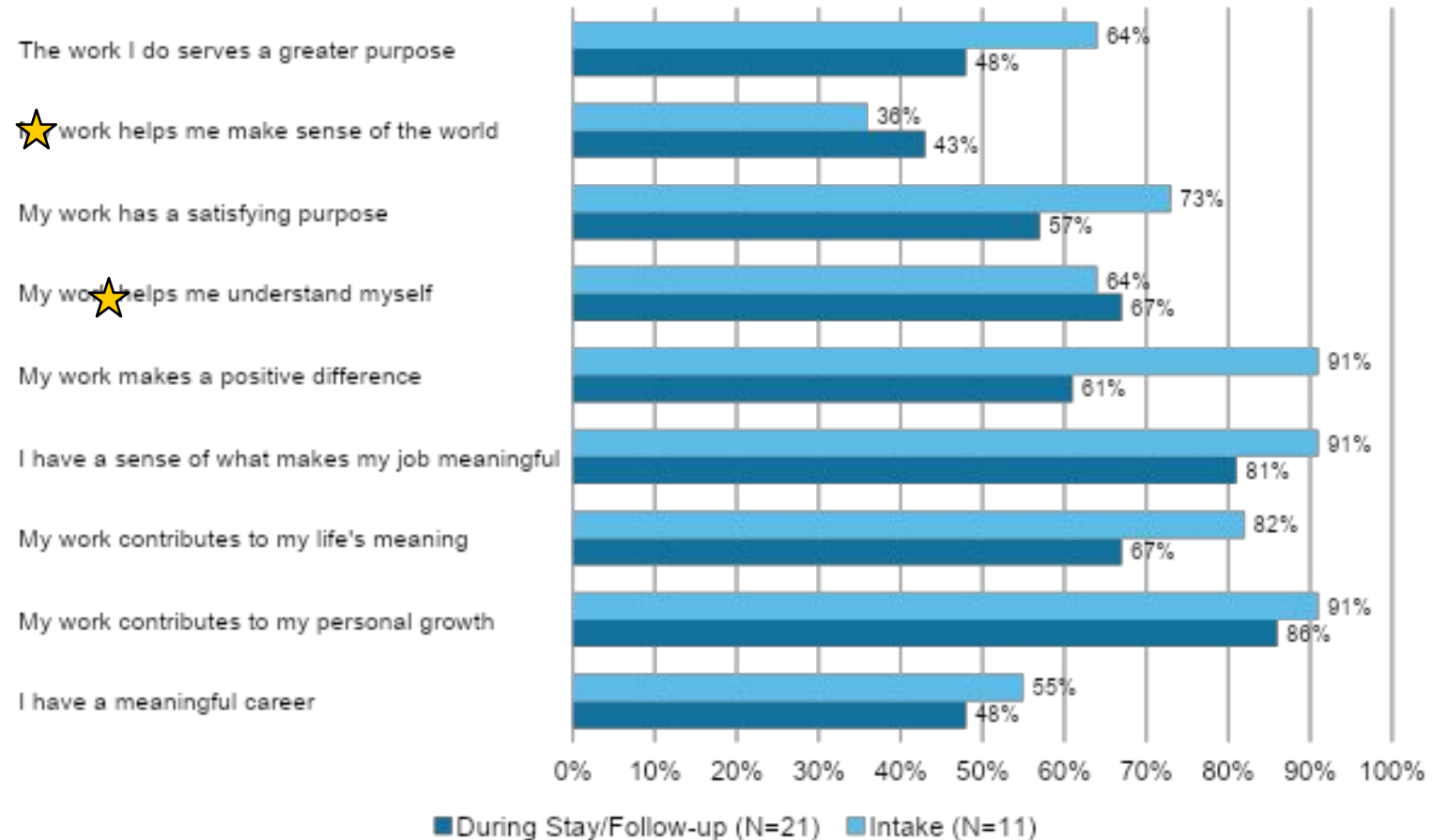
Percent of Residents that Agree with Statements



# Job Meaningfulness

- From intake to during stay, a smaller proportion of residents employed indicated they agreed that their job had meaning

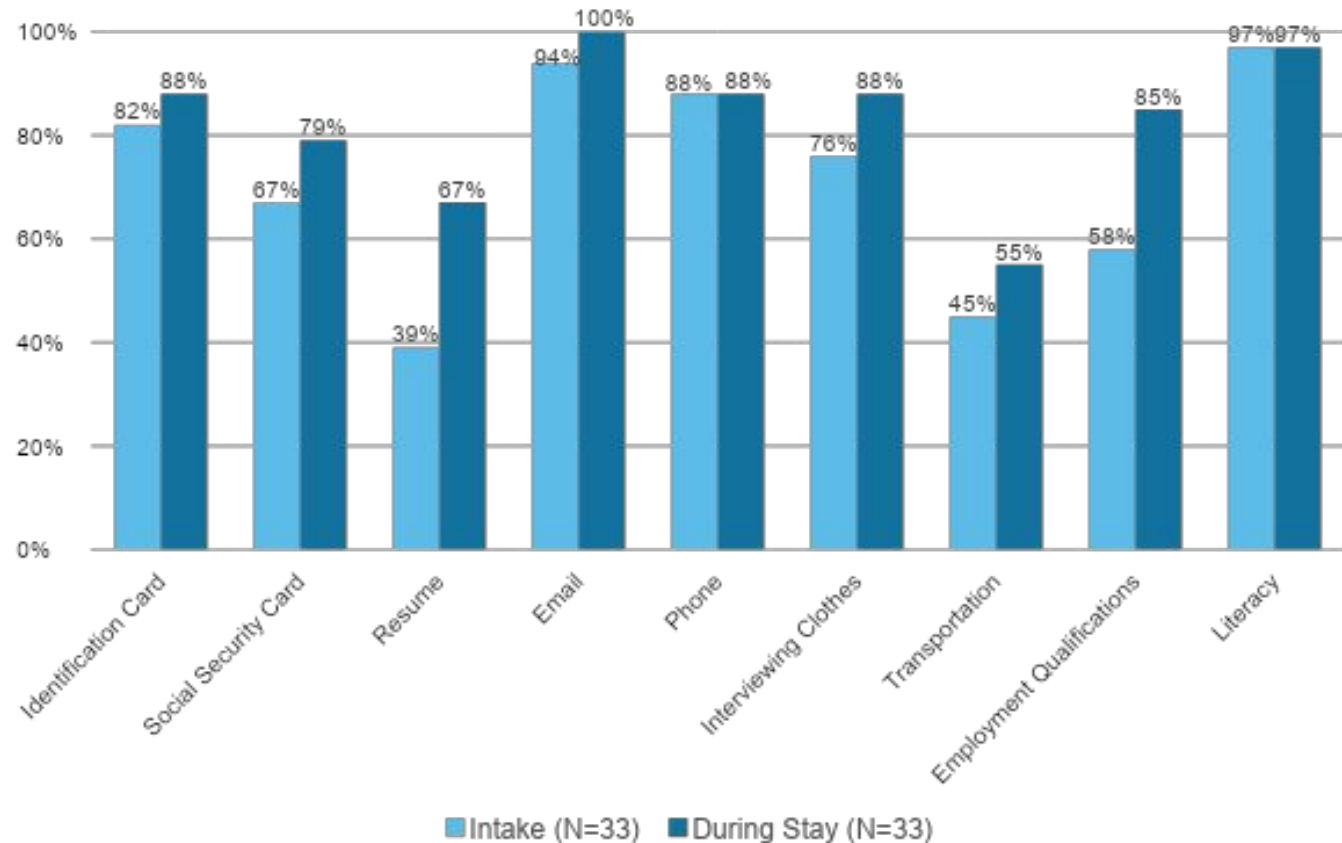
Percent of Residents that Agree with Statements



# Barriers to Employment

- From intake to during stay, a greater proportion of residents indicated having more of the job-related resources; average resources increased from 6 to 7 (out of the 9 listed)

Percent of Residents Who Have the Resources



# Post - Intervention

- Outcomes reported by employment coaches:
  - Across the 7 facilities, 27 new employer connections have been made.
  - 169 participants are enrolled in or have completed upskilling/training.
  - 125 participants have gained employment.
  - 26 YouScience Discovery Assessments completed.
  - Employment coaches have each identified a dedicated point of contact for American Job Centers, Goodwill, Adult Education, and other local agencies to assist with wrap around services.
  - Each facility continues to evaluate the need for transportation solutions.

***“I wish there was another program happening. This was great, loved getting new information, meeting new people, and connecting with others from around the United States.” -Recovery Coach, Maine***

# Tools to Support Employers

- Newly published toolkit to assist **small businesses** owners with successful hiring of people who are in recovery from SUD developed by KIPRC's Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance program
- Took includes information on:
  - Hiring and legal considerations
  - Sample workplace policies
  - Programs and resources for employers and employees





# Kentucky Spotlight

- **Workforce Recovery Program**

- The Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center and Kentucky Comeback
- Kentucky Transformational Employment Program (KTEP): Empowering businesses to give Kentuckians a fair chance
  - Framework for employers to facilitate access to substance use disorder treatment for current employees
  - Encourage businesses to hire people impacted by SUD
- Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (SITE) through EKCEP
  - Employment coaches to support individuals in recovery address barriers
- Fair Chance Academy
  - Provides businesses with training and experiences to adopt a Fair Chance workplace

✓ State Chambers of Commerce are key partners

# An Emerging Promising Practice

- Interested in implementing an employment coach program in your community?
- Despite data being preliminary, model has potential to be generalizable to variety of recovery settings and locations
- Example toolkits available
- Funding available:
  - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
  - State Opioid Abatement Dollars
  - Medicaid billing (for profit)
    - Ex) Washington State "Foundations for Community Supports"

# Key Considerations

- Financial sustainability
- Buy-in from the recovery organization and community
- Hiring the right employment coach (lived experience, understands community)
- Engagement of community stakeholders/wraparound services
- Connections with educational/training providers
- Evaluation as key component

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# Thank You!

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# Questions?

**If interested in learning more about implementing  
the employment coach model?**

**Contact use visiting our website [www.fletchergroup.org](http://www.fletchergroup.org) to complete an  
implementation support form or  
emailing Michelle Day at [mday@fletchergroup.org](mailto:mday@fletchergroup.org)**