



PROJECT connectionworks



According to the Vermont Department of Health, approximately 95 percent of opioid overdose deaths are accidental. This fact suggests that the expansion of education regarding, and access to harm reduction measures could have a significant impact on morbidity and mortality from Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). Since 2022, Project Connectionworks has taken a harm reduction approach to addressing

The goal of Project Connectionworks is to build on the trend of decreased overdose deaths in Windham County through linked prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

Project Partners



Health Care & Rehabilitative Services, Inc. (HCRS)

HCRS is the community mental health and developmental services agency for Windsor and Windham Counties of Vermont. Founded in 1967, our non-profit agency serves over 4,000 individuals annually through its key programs for mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities.



Groundworks Collaborative

Groundworks Collaborative was established in 2015 following the merger of two well-established organizations: the Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center and Morningside Shelter (having previously been in existence for 27 and 36 years respectively). We work with people and systems creating solutions to end hunger and homelessness for all people in our region.

Project Partners



Interaction (formerly Youth Services, Inc.)

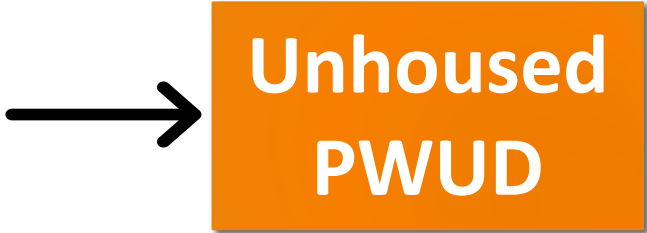
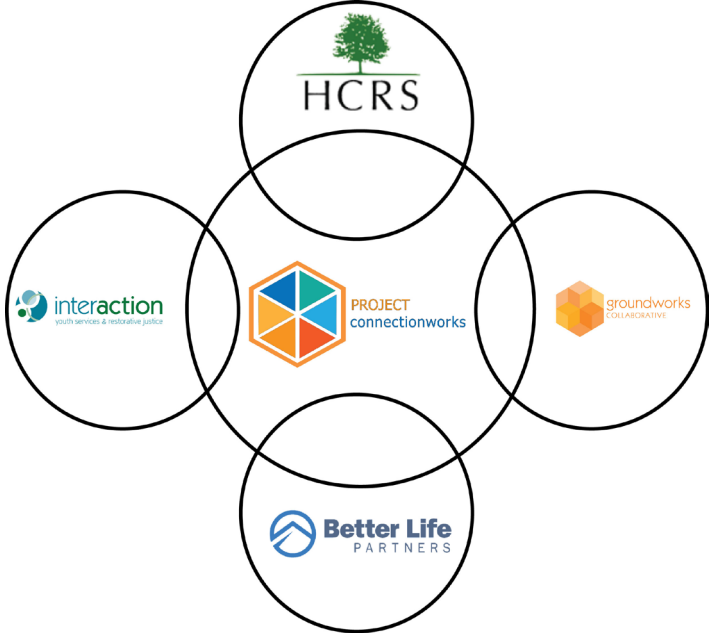
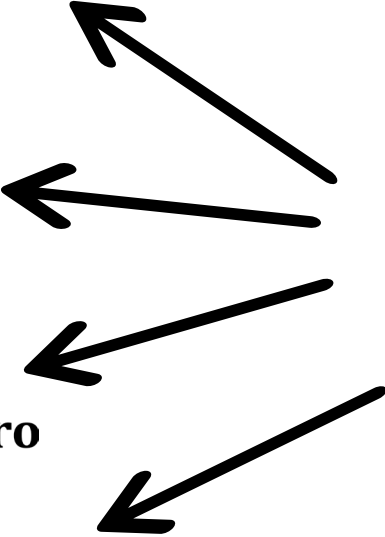
Interaction develops and implements restorative practices as a central tenet of the recovery housing programs and a strategy for relapse prevention. These programs provide effective interventions to disrupt the costly cycle of poverty, incarceration, substance use, and trauma.



Better Life Partners

Better Life Partners offers Medically Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder. Better Life Partners' mission is to help underserved individuals achieve a healthier life.

Project Connectionworks: Living up to its Name



Program Activities

- Peer Support – People with lived experience with Opioid Use Disorder identify and screen individuals at risk for SUD/ODU and co-occurring disorders/infectious complications (including HIV, viral hepatitis, mental illness, etc.), and provide, or make referrals to, prevention, harm reduction, early intervention, treatment, and other support services
- Wrap-around services in the emergency shelter and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) sites
- Relapse prevention within the Groundworks Drop-in shelter and PSH sites through skill development, recovery groups, and process facilitation in restorative practices with participation from individuals experiencing housing insecurity and SUD

Program Activities: Connecting Resources

	Total Distributed
Sleeping Bags	37
Tarps	57
Tents	70

- Creation of Outreach League – outreach specialists from HCRS, Groundworks, Turning Point, the AIDS Project, and the Brattleboro Police Department share joint calendar of activities, meet twice monthly to harmonize outreach efforts, highlight new capabilities
- Rapid formation of Tents For Hope fundraiser to provide emergency shelter until December 1 to the unhoused losing vouchers in the GA Emergency Shelter program
 - Solicited approximately \$2000 in donations from individuals, faith-based organizations
 - Funds matched by HCRS

Work to Date – Six month look-back

	Sept. 2022	March 2023*	Sept. 2023	March 2024	Sept. 2024*
Number of Individuals Screened for SUD	352	486	490	486	490
Number of patients diagnosed with opioid use disorder (OUD)	59	18	33	18	40
Number of patients who have received medication assisted treatment (MAT) only or MAT with psychosocial therapy within the past 6 months.	66	47	79	71	79
Number of Patients Who Have Received MAT for 3 Months or More without Interruption	24	32	43	47	43

*Project Director, Peer Support Advisor positions vacant for much of the reporting period.

Work in Progress

- Staff trained on Harm Reduction best practices
- Intentional Peer Support through project peer support advisor (supervised by Peer Support team at HCRS) for outreach, engagement
- Harm Reduction Coloring Book and Resource Guide
- Peer-led recovery groups
- Training of individuals with lived experience in Intensive Peer Support (January)
- Tenant circles at Permanent Supportive Housing sites (ongoing)
- Ongoing communication with other community stakeholders: Downtown (Brattleboro) Business Association, Brattleboro Police, Town Select Board through membership on the Downtown Safety Committee

Proposed Budget*

Budgeted Line Item	Proposed Budget
Personnel Costs	
Project Director (1 FTE) Peter Baldwin	\$56,767
Peer Support Advocate (1 FTE) Heather Sluter	\$38,052
Chief Clinical Officer Kate Lamphere 4 hours/week in-kind	\$0
TOTAL Salaries & Wages	\$94,819
Fringe Benefits @35%	\$33,187
TOTAL Personnel Costs	\$128,006
Supplies	
Supplies for Life Enrichment Activities	\$5,000
Office supplies, copies, etc.	\$400
Cell Phones	\$1,200
Total Supplies	\$6,600
Travel	
Staff local auto travel	\$1,400
Total Travel	\$1,400
Other	
Harm reduction supplies	\$5,000
Total Other	\$5,000
Consultants & Contractual Costs	
Groundworks	\$37,008
Interaction	\$66,274
Trainings for program staff and community partners	\$8,450
Program and Advisory Board Consulting	\$7,520
Total Consortium & Contractual Costs	\$135,222
Total Direct Costs	\$276,228
Indirect Costs (10% HCRS admin fee)	\$33,147
GRAND TOTAL	\$309,376

**NOTE: Project Connectionworks is funded through HRSA grant through August 31, 2025, so this budget is based on 10 months (September 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026).*

GRANTS AT HCRS

\$8 million or 12% of the HCRS operating budget is funded by grants and contracts.

Current grants range from \$2,000 to 2 million

Funding sources include SAMHSA, HRSA, Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Department of Mental Health, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Holt Foundation and more.