

Outcome Evaluation of Expanding Capacity to Address the Drug Epidemic

OD2A Staff Support Program

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Executive Summary

This executive summary presents the findings and conclusions from the outcome evaluation conducted for Expanding Capacity to Address the Drug Overdose Epidemic, often known as CDC Foundation's OD2A Staffing Support. The evaluation aimed to assess the program's effectiveness and impact on OD2A-funded jurisdictions.

Overview

CDCF OD2A Staffing Support, implemented in 2021, aims to increase the capacity within the public health workforce to address the multifaceted nature of the overdose crisis.

Program components include placing and supporting additional field staff in jurisdictions, training new and existing staff, conducting monthly check-in calls with hired staff, and capturing impact through repeated survey tools.

Goals and Objectives



The evaluation was guided by the primary research question, "To what extent do CDCF employees increase the capacity of ons to carry out OD2A overdose surveillance

Jurisdictions to carry out OD2A overdose surveillance and prevention activities."

The report summarizes reflections from Field Employees (FE) and Jurisdiction Leads, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

Key Findings

Achievement of Objectives

- CDCF FEs increased jurisdictional capacity by improving the quantity and quality of data analysis and prevention efforts.
- CDCF-facilitated training enhanced the skills and abilities of staff.
- Regular check-ins with the CDCF helped FEs and jurisdictions feel supported.

Positive Impact on Target Population

- Enhanced data collection and analysis
- Improved surveillance capabilities
- Increased capacity for planning projects
- Meeting OD2A program requirements
- Improved timeliness of case abstraction
- Initiation of Linkage to Care interventions

Sustainable Partnerships

- Jurisdictions have reported a total of 519 partnerships that have contributed to training and capacity building with community stakeholders.
- Continuation of the roles occupied by CDCF Field Employees is essential for maintaining the jurisdictional capacity for overdose surveillance and prevention activities.







Introduction to the Evaluation Report

Program Description

Developed to address the multifaceted nature of the overdose crisis, CDCF Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) Staffing Support has been implemented since 2021. Its primary goal is to increase capacity within the public health workforce.

The CDC created OD2A in States and OD2A Local to:

- Adapt to changes in the drug overdose crisis as it develops
- Fill in the gaps in prevention efforts identified
- Use the knowledge gained from past funding opportunities in OD2A
- Consider the roles and impacts of state and local health departments and their partners

This project seeks to recruit, vet, select, train, and onboard field staff to support surveillance, prevention, and response activities within OD2A-funded recipients and select unfunded states. The CDC Foundation (CDCF) supports the OD2A staff's employment needs, resources, and relationships with partners. OD2A Field Employees (FEs) are surge staff the CDCF hires to support the jurisdictions. Jurisdiction Leads direct the day-to-day activities of FEs and communicate with the CDCF to coordinate operations. CDCF Project Managers meet monthly with each field employee and quarterly with Jurisdiction Leads.

Program Components

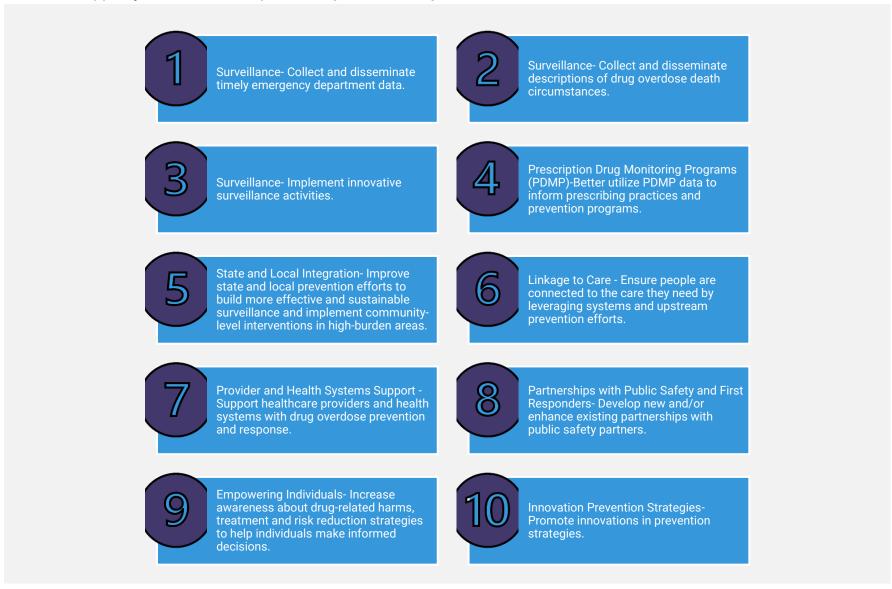
OD2A Expanding Capacity to Address the Drug Epidemic consists of the following key components:

- **Objective:** strengthen OD2A recipients' capacity to implement overdose surveillance and prevention activities through staffing support.
- Activities/Goals:
 - Place and support additional field staff in jurisdictions to improve capacity for OD2A prevention and surveillance activities
 - o Train new hires and existing staff
 - Conduct monthly check-in calls with hired staff during the project to provide employment support, gather impact, and address challenges
 - Capture impact through regular assessments
- Target Population: OD2A-supported jurisdictions requesting staffing support
- Implementation Timeline: Multi-year awards from 2021-2024 have supported over 200 surge staff across 45 jurisdictions, including state, county, city, territorial health departments, and select subrecipients, to aid in implementing overdose surveillance and prevention activities.

Ten prevention and surveillance strategies were developed to enhance the ability of the public health workforce to respond effectively to the overdose crisis. OD2A prevention strategies rely on solid and multisectoral partnerships, such as those between public health, public safety, harm reduction, health systems, and people who use drugs. These partnerships leverage resources and expertise to prevent and respond to overdoses. Surveillance strategies are integral to the effort, helping all OD2A-funded jurisdictions to better capture, analyze, and disseminate overdose surveillance data. By improving data collection and analysis, these strategies support more informed decision-making and targeted interventions to mitigate the overdose crisis effectively.

Field employees perform OD2A activities to expand capacity in OD2A-funded jurisdictions. The CDC Foundation project managers measure progress through a summary report distributed to jurisdictions, capturing the field staff's impact alongside jurisdictional partners. Anticipated outcomes include strengthened capacity in OD2A-funded jurisdictions for conducting overdose prevention and surveillance activities, enhanced technical skills and knowledge of the overdose epidemic, and practical support for new staff. The program's effective management by CDCF Core Staff and strong collaboration with the CDC team, stakeholders, and community partners contribute to its success.

The following strategies guide the jurisdictions' overdose prevention and surveillance efforts. Qualified staff are hired and trained to support jurisdictions in implementing these strategies.



Evaluation Purpose & Design

Logic Model

Activities		Outputs	Outcomes
Vet, select, train, and onboard up to		# of staff hired across	Increased capacity for OD2A
155 field staff.		jurisdictions	prevention and surveillance activities within their assigned jurisdictions.
Conduct monthly check-in calls with		# of check-in calls	
hired staff during the project period		Frequency of check-in calls (1x per	Field staff and jurisdiction feel
to provide updates on projects that address challenges.		month during the project period)	supported by CDCF check-in calls.
Provide technical assistance (TA)		% complete of field employee	Field staff report that they increased
and training to hired field staff,		staffing survey	their knowledge in implementing
aligning with the CDC OD2A TA		% complete of jurisdiction-directed	surveillance and prevention
provided to jurisdictions.		staffing survey	strategies.

The following research questions guided the inquiry and analysis of the evaluation:

- 1) To what extent does hiring additional field employees increase the capacity of recipients and stakeholders to address the overdose burden in their jurisdiction?
- 2) To what extent does CDCF-facilitated training increase or improve recipients' and stakeholders' knowledge, skills, and abilities to address the overdose burden in their jurisdiction?
- 3) To what extent do regular check-ins with the CDCF impact jurisdictions' ability to maintain relationships and build partnerships, facilitating local overdose prevention efforts?

Evaluation Methods

The outcome evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to understand the program's impact comprehensively. Methods used include:

- Quantitative Data: Descriptive analysis of survey results and project employee data
- **Qualitative Data:** Content analysis of free response questions to gather insights into jurisdiction experiences, perceptions, and program effectiveness

Field Employee Survey

The Field Employee (FE) Monthly Survey is a tool used to evaluate the OD2A Staffing Support Program's effectiveness and efficiency. The form collects feedback monthly, and FEs are prompted to answer the questions after considering their last 30 days of employment and their last 1:1 meeting with their CDC Foundation Project Manager. The FE Monthly Survey consists of 23 questions that are divided into the following sections: 1) Demographics, 2) Roles and Responsibilities, 3) Work Culture, 4) Resource Accessibility, and 5) Training. This report encompasses 940 surveys completed by field employees across 42 different jurisdictions from October 2022 to May 2024. The key findings analyze participant responses in the demographics, roles and responsibilities, work culture, and training sections of the survey.

PM/Jurisdiction Lead Survey

The Project Manager/Jurisdiction Lead Survey or Staffing Support Survey is completed by Jurisdiction Leads, FEs, and CDCF project managers to gauge the outcome measures for staffing support and the overall impact and evaluation of the OD2A program in each jurisdiction. The survey consists of both open-ended free-response questions and scaled responses. The questions prompt the participant to describe how the FE has contributed to the jurisdiction's efforts to meet OD2A requirements, impact local partnerships, and increase jurisdictional capacity. It can be completed monthly by the FE or the CDCF Project Manager or quarterly by the Jurisdiction Lead.

This report includes 994 surveys completed by employees, CDCF Project Managers, and Jurisdiction Leads across 40 different jurisdiction locations from April 2022 to May 2024. For this evaluation, a filtered subset of free-response qualitative questions submitted by Jurisdiction Leads was analyzed using the ATLAS.ti platform.

Findings and Recommendations

Field Employee Survey Results

Types of Positions

OD2A Staffing Support equips jurisdictions with specialized positions to execute prevention activities, gather comprehensive data on overdoses, and utilize that data to strengthen programmatic and surveillance initiatives.

1 3			
The position titles focused on data management and surveillance most frequently filled out the survey. (This table includes data from FEs who completed the survey only and does not represent all hired positions)	# of FE Position (n=940)		
State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting Systems (SUDORS): Data Abstractor	183		
Collects and abstracts data on drug overdose deaths from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, and postmortem toxicology reports for entry into a webbased CDC platform shared with the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).			
Epidemiologist	178		
Assists in data submission, analysis, and other epidemiological needs.			
Data Analyst	71		
Plans, develops, and analyzes overdose surveillance data and data related to overdose prevention efforts.			

Roles and Responsibilities

Intended Outcome: Improved capacity for OD2A-funded jurisdictions to carry out overdose prevention and surveillance activities.

When asked to assess the employment of OD2A strategies within their local jurisdictions, most FEs indicate that they focus on overdose data collection and dissemination (n=1999).

Collect and disseminate descriptions of drug overdose	319
State and Local Integration	255
Empowering Individuals	255

When asked to indicate the activities they accomplished at their jurisdiction within the month, most FEs list **data cleaning** as a top duty (n=940).

Cleared backlog of data	226
Facilitated an internal/external meeting	212
Developed or published reports	165

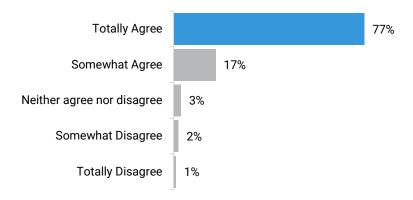
The top positions participating in the survey reflect which strategies and types of tasks Jurisdictions report working on. Our Jurisdiction Leads describe SUDORS abstractors as crucial in increasing the capacity to abstract more cases, meet data deadlines, and improve data quality.

Job Performance

FEs are asked to rate their performance and the utilization of their skills and abilities.

Most FEs reported that their skills and abilities were well utilized in their position(s) at the local level.

Percent responses to "I feel my skills and abilities are well utilized in my position at the local level."



When asked to rate their ability to complete assigned tasks from their jurisdictions within the month, 100% of FE feedback was positive.

Percent responses to "How would you rate your ability to organize, prioritize and complete assigned tasks from your jurisdiction this month?"

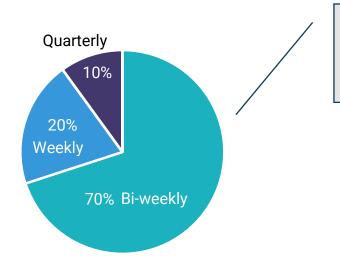


Work Culture

*Intended Outcome: New staff are supported within their assigned roles at jurisdictions.*Questions asked in this section assess the environment and support provided by the CDC Foundation.

Most Field employees check in with their CDCF supervisor bi-weekly.

Percent responses to "frequency of monthly check-ins"



90% of CDCF supervisors exceed the targeted 1x a month check-in interval.

99%

of Field Employees are satisfied with their frequency of communication with their CDC Foundation Supervisor.



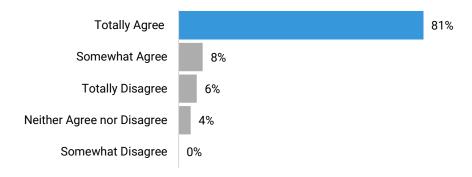
99%

of Field Employees are comfortable communicating any issue or challenge related to performance deliverables/goals to their CDC Foundation Supervisor.



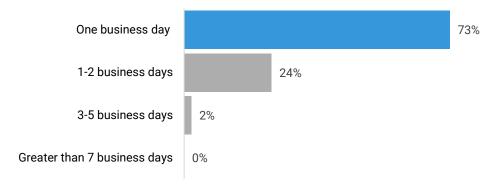
Field employees provide positive feedback on their check-in experiences with their supervisors, highlighting effective communication, **support**, and the helpful guidance they receive during these interactions.

81% of FEs totally agree that their CDCF supervisor identifies a solution or resource in a timely manner. Percent responses to "Once an issue is raised, my CDC Foundation Supervisor identifies a solution or resource in a timely manner..."



On average, most supervisors respond to FE communications within 1 business day.

Percent responses to "On average, my CDC Foundation Supervisor responds to my communications between..."

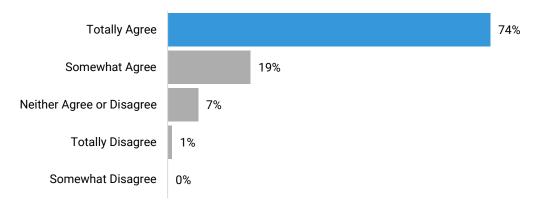


Field Employee Reflections on Training

Intended Outcome: Increased technical skills and knowledge of the overdose epidemic

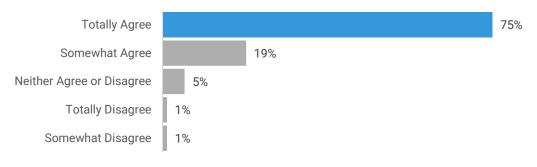
The questions asked in this section reflect the training(s) provided by CDCF and its contractors during the month covered by the survey. The training(s) are designed to keep CDCF staff and FEs informed about frequent updates and help them address any knowledge or learning gaps.

Most FEs feel that their skills and abilities were enhanced by the CDCF trainings that they participated in. Percent responses to "I feel my skills and abilities were enhanced by the CDCF trainings this month"



75% of FEs totally agree that the information presented at the training they participated in will be useful in their current position.

Percent responses to "The information presented at the CDCF trainings this month will be useful in my current position"



PM/Jurisdiction Lead Survey Results

Increasing Capacity to meet OD2A requirements

Intended Outcome: Improved capacity for OD2A-funded jurisdictions to carry out overdose prevention and surveillance activities.

Jurisdiction Leads and Project Managers were asked,

To what extent did the CDC Foundation employee(s) help the jurisdiction to increase capacity to meet OD2A requirements?

Jurisdictions reported that field employees help to increase their capacity by completing essential projects, providing training on data collection and prevention activities, coordinating local efforts, creating informational materials, and improving surveillance capabilities.

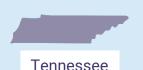


"Our CDCF employee has helped increase capacity in every way possible. She is what I refer to as "my second brain" and helps to meet reporting deadlines, keep programming and spending moving forward, etc. "

Additional takeaways from the responses are that FEs contribute to:

- data collection and analysis
- program evaluation
- prevention strategies
- media campaigns
- stigma reduction

- data dissemination
- training events for healthcare providers
- harm reduction strategies
- community-level interventions
- addressing the Social Determinants of Health



"Our CDCF employee is helping increase capacity quite a bit in a region that was struggling. Her skills set compliment the rest of the team very well."



"The CDC Foundation employees have been helping our jurisdiction to increase capacity greatly to meet OD2A requirements when we had little to no staffing due to staff turnover."

Hiring FEs with Lived Experiences

A unique aspect of the OD2A Staffing Support program is the dedication to hiring staff with lived experiences relative to the community. Jurisdiction Leads remark that hiring staff with lived experiences can provide valuable insights and perspectives to inform program staff and better serve the patients. Hiring staff with lived experiences required special considerations. There was continued research on CDCF human resources and legal needs, identification of jurisdiction requirements, and preparation for gathering additional jurisdiction information (i.e., supervision) and candidate selection.

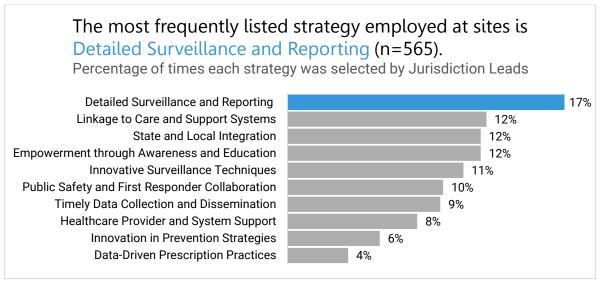
"I appreciate both our staff providing their lived experiences with SUD services to inform both program staff and the patients we serve."

Field staff expertise is essential to quickly building capacity in high-burden areas.

"We worked hard to ensure that we selected people who were familiar with NC's work and understood the key concepts and skills needed to do effective overdose prevention and harm reduction work."

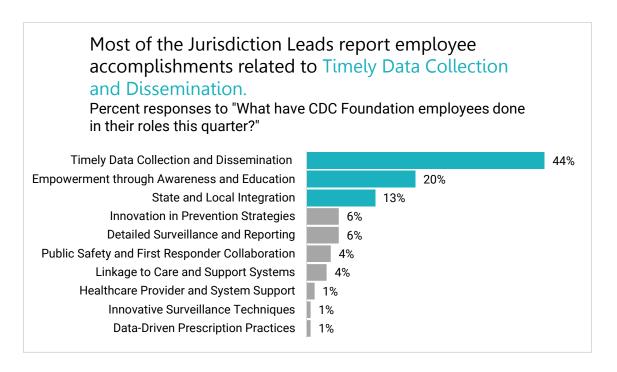
Field Employee Accomplishments

Every quarter, jurisdiction leads were asked to indicate which of the 10 OD2A overdose surveillance and prevention strategies are being employed at their site.



The data points in the graph are relatively close together because most of the strategies are considered necessary by Jurisdiction Leads, although their prioritization varies slightly. The slight differences in percentages suggest that jurisdictions recognize the need for a multifaceted approach to addressing overdose prevention, with many interconnected strategies.

In addition to the checklist, Jurisdiction Leads submitted free-response descriptions of employee accomplishments for the quarter. The responses were categorized and organized according to the 10 OD2A strategies for overdose surveillance and prevention, along with any additional emerging themes. The wording for each qualitative theme differs slightly from the list of strategies to allow for more descriptive coding.



Both Detailed Surveillance and Reporting and Timely Data Collection and Dissemination represent OD2A's commitment to comprehensively understand and monitor the evolving drug overdose crisis. Implementation of each strategy prioritizes the use of data to identify disproportionately affected populations and high-burden geographic areas. The significant presence of data-focused positions contributes to more surveillance and reporting activities. Field staff play a crucial role in building capacity by working directly with jurisdictions to effectively combine data analysis with prevention efforts.

Field Employee Accomplishments: Timely Data Collection and Dissemination

Jurisdiction Leads mentioned the speed and efficiency of data collection in 48% of responses.



"With our CDCF employee's inclusion in our OD2A team for P11, Louisiana completed abstraction of 1,000+ cases by the required deadline."



"Our CDCF employee has completed extensive networking and brought to completion a much anticipated (and appreciated) infographic displaying the depth of data collected by SUDORS"

Field Employee Accomplishments: Empowerment through Education and Awareness

Jurisdiction Leads mentioned increasing public awareness about drug-related risks, treatment options, and strategies for harm reduction in 20% of responses.



Arizona

"... Our CDCF employee was also going door to door in our community and giving out Narcan and educating people on the importance of it and how to properly use it. In addition, our CDCF employee was learning two data base systems to get local overdose data, doing every available training and local meeting she could, and networking and collaborating with community members and stakeholders on various topics related to substance use."



"Our CDCF employee has helped support the creation of the updated OFR-PHAST MDH webpage. She has also supported the development of an OFR-PHAST training series that will be hosted this summer. So far there are 41 registered attendees for the training series."

Field Employee Accomplishments: State and Local Integration

Jurisdiction Leads mentioned enhancing collaboration between state and local entities in 13% of responses.



North Carolina

"Our CDCF employee has provided technical assistance, both in person and virtually, to programs in a number of high-burden areas on topics related to harm reduction, syringe services programs, peer support, overdose prevention, PORT, and local coordination."



"Participates in all the meetings with the state, local partners, and health department internal meetings"

Additional Accomplishments

Over half of Jurisdictions (57%) report that they achieved additional accomplishments due to having CDCF project staff.



"Missouri is expected to remain on the CDC SUDORS dashboard because of our CDCF employee's help in record abstraction."



"Our center now has the capacity to manage RAD - an innovative drug checking program to increase surveillance of the illicit drug supply."



"All services provided by both staff are accomplishments that our state would not be able to cover without the CDCF staff member's support."

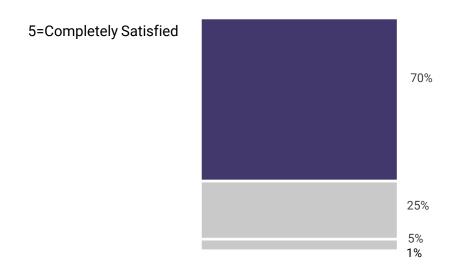


"This staff has local connections in the county to organizations for outreach and education, because of his connections, we were able to meet with several new organizations to increase the awareness of the opioid epidemic and the role our CDCF staff can have to assist the county and its residents."

Most Jurisdictions report that they are completely satisfied with the CDCF Field Employee's performance (70%) and that the FE is a good fit for the project (98%). Nearly all of the respondents (97%) said they would choose to work with the mentioned CDC Foundation employee(s) again.

70% of Jurisdictions are completely satisfied with the CDCF employee's work performance.

Percent Responses to "On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Completely Dissatisfied and 5 = Completely Satisfied, how would you rate the CDC Foundation employee(s) performance in their role?"



Top 5 benefits of having CDC Foundation Employee(s)

Jurisdictions were asked to reflect on the contribution to activities and operations by listing the top 2-5 benefits of FEs.

Across all responses from Jurisdiction Leads, the top 5 benefits can be summarized as:

- 1. Increased capacity for work on specific projects.
- 2. Access to staff with specialized knowledge and expertise.
- 3. Ability to focus solely on specific projects without distractions.
- 4. More responsiveness to community needs.
- 5. Ability to compile efforts and data for reports and outcome measures.

Increased team capacity emerged as a significant theme among responses, with 101 responses from this question mentioning capacity (n=373).

Additional takeaways from the responses are that field employees contribute new perspectives and ideas, improve work quality and quantity, assist with meeting deadlines, collaborate and partner, and focus on health equity and program improvement.



"Our CDCF employee's harmonious work style has been a catalyst for positive change on the project. He is an excellent communicator and has been helping the team reach its goals in a timely manner."



"Her initiative and positive mindset in approaching the work has contributed to a productive and thriving work environment."

Success Stories with Local Partnerships on OD2A

Jurisdiction Leads were asked to report on the success stories of local partnerships including how the OD2A program has affected overdose rates and referrals to care.

519 total Partnerships reported



Including Community-Based Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations, Government Entities, Non-profits, Workgroups, Universities/Schools

While the responses reveal that the OD2A program's major impact has been on OD2A strategies that cover data, reporting, and policy development, inter-agency collaborations have led to training and capacity building with community stakeholders.



"We have been able to develop public-facing and internal dashboards that can be accessed by our stakeholders. This is a big lift off our shoulders for the data requests we have been receiving."

Responses show that partnerships have resulted in harm reduction training for law enforcement officers, post-overdose outreach through peer recovery specialists, and multiagency collaborations to address overdose trends and interventions. These efforts have

strengthened collaborative responses to the overdose crisis and successfully engaged justice-involved individuals in care and treatment.

The partnerships contributed to reducing overdose rates by expanding naloxone access, enhancing outreach efforts, improving patient retention in treatment, and raising awareness about the advantages of ongoing care and peer support recovery services.



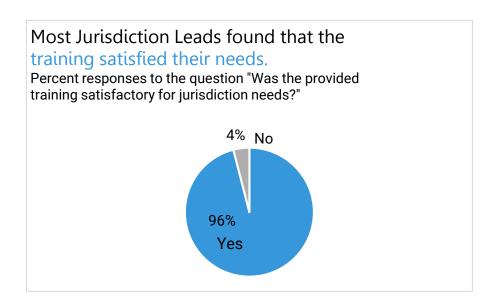
"Because of OD2A we have increased our community partnerships with other agencies in being able to provide them with OEND in addition to other harm reduction resources/materials. We have had the resources and funding to move forward with the ideas of a mailed naloxone program and working to implement a harm reduction vending machine (kiosk) to better serve our community and expand our reach and reduce barriers to those who need naloxone. We feel this has had an impact in the availability of naloxone which will reduce overdose rates."

Additional Training Needs

The questions in this section assess how the CDCF met the training needs of local public health entities and their stakeholders. This could refer to specific technical or operational training requested by jurisdictions from new CDC Foundation employees.

Less than 30% of Jurisdiction staff or leads requested that the employee(s) have specific training in addition to the standard onboarding and regularly scheduled monthly offerings (n=224). Many Jurisdiction leads did not utilize the option to ask for additional role-specific training. The utilization of specialized training could be improved to better support FEs and increase the implementation of a wider range of OD2A strategies.





Sustainability

Increased capacity allows organizations to take on more projects, complete important tasks, and engage with stakeholders more effectively. This leads to improved outcomes, increased efficiency, and overall sustainability of the organization's efforts in addressing the overdose epidemic.

"Without them both, I would not be able to focus my time on the new OD2A application. Our CDCF employee has really kept our abstraction team on top of deadlines and without her, our team would not have a consistent flow of information vital to their roles. Our CDCF employee is really my right-hand woman and takes on a lot of the day-to-day responsibilities of our current award."

Since the program's start, approximately 16 staff have been retained by different jurisdictions, and multiple staff have been rehired across funding timelines. The ongoing presence of additional field staff is crucial for preserving the jurisdictional capacity to conduct overdose surveillance and implement prevention efforts. Numerous projects have been initiated but require continued efforts to have a more significant impact.

"Our CDCF employee has helped us increase our capacity in working towards meeting OD2A requirements, however we are still not where we need to be and there is a LOT of work to complete. Many projects have been started, however they need more work to get them to fruition."

Final Summary

Key Findings: The evaluation revealed several significant findings about the impact and effectiveness of OD2A Staffing Support:

- Increased Capacity for Overdose Surveillance and Prevention: The program significantly
 improved overdose surveillance capabilities, expanded data exploration, enhanced data
 abstraction and input, filled staffing gaps, increased the number of analyses performed,
 and developed valuable informational materials to share with the community.
- Achievement of Objectives: The program successfully strengthened jurisdictions'
 capacity to implement overdose surveillance and prevention by providing qualified staff
 to perform surveillance activities, analyze and present overdose data, bridge
 programmatic gaps, and develop partnerships for prevention efforts. Staff also
 contributed to reducing overdose rates by conducting training on Harm Reduction and
 Naloxone use, raising awareness of overdose risks, and tracking suspected overdose
 deaths.
- Impact on Target Population: Positive outcomes included increased community
 outreach and education, the creation of public and internal data dashboards, reduced
 overdose rates, the development of interventions by Peer Navigators, expanded capacity
 for OD2A activities, and strengthened partnerships. The program also fostered new
 ideas, challenged existing practices, and emphasized health equity.
- **Factors Contributing to Success:** Success was driven by increased team capacity, fresh perspectives, expanded partnerships, and maintaining relationships.
- Lessons Learned: Key lessons included the importance of specialized training, the need for staff support in PDMP, and the need to monitor progress closely to ensure successful outcomes.

Conclusion: The OD2A Staffing Support program has effectively collaborated with state agencies, local health departments, and community partners to increase capacity for implementing OD2A strategies. The evaluation findings offer valuable insights for stakeholders and decision-makers to guide future planning and ensure the program's sustainability.