



“Preparing, Advancing, and Expanding the Workforce of Eastern Kentucky”

Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery and Training (eKART) Initiative

Final Progress Report

PW-19483-IM-19

Reporting Period 9 -- October 1, 2021 through January 31, 2022

to



**APPALACHIAN
REGIONAL
COMMISSION**

BACKGROUND:

Provide a short statement regarding the need for this project. What problems did you hope to solve when you applied for ARC funding?

EKART (EASTERN KENTUCKY ADDICTION RECOVERY AND TRAINING)

The Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), Inc. is reporting the final results of its Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery and Training (eKART) initiative funded in part by a \$1,461,078.20 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Partnership Opportunities and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative. This report describes the results for the entire grant period (February 1, 2019—January 31, 2022), including the results specifically attained during the ninth reporting period (October 1, 2021—January 31, 2022).

In addition to its devastating impact on health and family relationships, the opioid abuse epidemic of the late 2010s had a crippling effect on the workforce in those regions hardest hit by the epidemic. Individuals recovering from opioid use disorder (OUD) and substance use disorder (SUD) had a difficult time re-establishing themselves as viable job candidates and productive members of the economy. At the same time, employers had difficulty keeping their businesses fully staffed, due to the large numbers of potential workers in active addiction and due to their concerns about hiring individuals in recovery from addiction.

The “Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery and Training” (eKART) program was implemented to bridge the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) and opioid use disorder (OUD) within the 23 counties in the EKCEP service area. The initiative accomplished this by providing valuable career, training, and supportive services, and by cultivating second-chance job opportunities. eKART helped regional businesses commit to providing a supportive environment for employees in recovery and thus increased recovering individuals’ opportunities for work-based training and/or jobs. eKART partnered with treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals appropriate for those opportunities. eKART’s Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches also helped ensure recovering employees had the best opportunities to succeed in their new jobs by providing support and guidance to these new workers and assisting their employers in responding productively to any problems that might arise. The eKART initiative also built upon the successful partnership between the Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. Local Workforce Area (www.ekcep.org) and Addiction Recovery Care (ARC), Inc. (www.arccenters.com), which successfully trained individuals in recovery to become Peer Support Specialists, enabling them to return to the workforce in jobs where they can help other individuals enter and complete recovery.

The strategies in the eKART design are aligned with the findings of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Study on Benefit and Costs of Substance Abuse Treatment (2006), which stated that gainful, meaningful employment is the second-most important factor in successful rehabilitation of individuals with SUD/OUD, exceeded only by a stay in an extended residential care program. eKART involved both of these elements. The program design also recognized that re-entry and vocational programs for

recovering individuals often fail if they lack enveloping services such as targeted case management, peer support and counseling, and personal accountability measures such as drug testing, prescription monitoring, and structured transitional living – all of which were provided by eKART or its partners.

The individuals served, trained, and/or placed in employment under eKART had completed, or were in the latter stages of, a reputable treatment program which provides aftercare that includes ongoing counseling, accountability, and support. Most eKART participants were recruited in collaboration with these treatment providers. eKART also served some incumbent workers who had completed a reputable recovery treatment program, then had been trained, certified, and hired as Peer Support Specialists, and later wanted to advance their careers further in addiction recovery services. The eKART program elements used to assist these recovering workers included:

- Transitional employment/work-based trainings.
- Trainings for recovery-friendly jobs.
- Identifying and subsequently training Eastern Kentucky businesses as recovery-friendly workplaces in order to welcome and support these recovering individuals as employees.
- Providing Peer Support Specialist training to recovering individuals to help them become certified Peer Support Specialists employed by Addiction Recovery Care (ARC) or other rehabilitation organizations.
- Providing career advancement training and credentialing for certified Peer Support Specialists who want to advance their careers in recovery services.

The eKART program goals as stated in the POWER grant application were to return 150 or more recovering individuals to the Eastern Kentucky workforce and add 70 or more trained professionals to the workers currently combating the opioid crisis, as well as recruiting and training multiple employers to provide recovery-friendly workplaces and hire recovering individuals. These performane targets were surpassed by a wide margin.

In addition to the \$1,461,078.20 POWER grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), funds supporting the launch of eKART included matching funds of \$803,218.00 from the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) and \$457,880 from EKCEP’s formula funding from the U.S. Department of Labor under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), bringing the total initial project budget to \$2,722,176.20. Further support for second and third years of eKART was provided by a portion of the \$1,968,187 provided to EKCEP for its statewide workforce opioid recovery efforts by KORE through the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Serivces and the Kentucky Justice Cabinet, Office of Drug Control Policy.

— SITE (STRATEGIC INITIATIVE FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL EMPLOYMENT)

In connection with the matching funds that EKCEP received for eKART from the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE), EKCEP has received contracts and further funding to oversee a program similar

to eKART statewide. This statewide program is the Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (SITE), a part of the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE). Initial funding for SITE consisted of \$955,782 from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services (CHFS) and \$1,300,000 from the Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet. Both cabinets have committed further funding to support the SITE effort for additional years, including \$767,998 committed by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services (CHFS) and \$1,200,189 committed by the Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet for the second year.

SITE was based on the eKART program design and its services are similar, including providing Job Entry and Retention Specialists and workplace-based Success Coaches to engage in a full array of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)/Substance Use Disorder (SUD) training, technical assistance, case management and support services to bridge the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for individuals in recovery. SITE will provide recovering individuals with career placement and supportive services and cultivate and support transformational employment opportunities for individuals in recovery, and will guide Kentucky businesses in providing a supportive environment for newly employed individuals in recovery while partnering with addiction treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals who are appropriate for those opportunities. As recovering individuals are placed with trained employers, SITE's Employer Resource Network (ERN) Success Coaches help ensure their success, providing support, guidance, and resources to the new workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise. The primary difference between eKART and SITE is that the SITE initiative currently does not include funds to support work-based learning placements, classroom training, or other training to help prepare recovering individuals for new job opportunities.

EKCEP has worked to leverage all possible aspects of its related eKART and SITE efforts to maximize the total benefit realized from the funds. Some parts of some of the activities and tasks described in this report have parallel activities in SITE, or even may have served both initiatives. Where this has occurred, this report may note that fact.

PROGRESS TOWARD PROJECT OUTCOMES:

Provide any statistical information that helps document the outputs and outcomes of your project to date. Data will vary according to the type of activities you completed. Although it may be difficult to document outcomes (results) at this time, grantees should report progress made to-date and predict the likelihood of meeting original targets. Your ARC project coordinator can help you determine which outputs and outcomes to track based on the ARC Grant Agreement.

Long before the end of the grant, the eKART initiative had already exceeded most of its performance goals. By the end of the grant, eKART had greatly exceeded all but one of its target numbers. The dedication and concern of eKART staff, the evolution and strengthening of the program's partnerships, and the fluid and effective collaboration among the partners were major factors that made eKART effective in having a significant impact toward reversing the effects of the opioid crisis on hundreds of Eastern Kentucky workers.

The project’s targeted outcomes for the total grant period and eKART’s performance against these outcomes are shown in the table below.

<i>Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery and Training (eKART) Final Grant Outcomes As of January 31, 2022</i>		
<i>Initial Grant Goals</i>	<i>Final Outcomes and Explanations</i>	<i>% of Grant Goal</i>
<i>150 recovering individuals will be hired by recovery-friendly employers after completing training, including: 100 individuals hired after completing work-based training; and 50 individuals hired after completing classroom-style training</i>	479 recovering individuals have been hired into unsubsidized employment by the region’s employers. Note: 26 of these placed participants have received promotions since being hired.	319 %
<i>92 individuals in recovery (workers/trainees) will be placed in work-based training.</i>	154 individuals in recovery have been placed in work-based training. Of these 154: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 138 were placed in Work Experience. • 16 were placed in On-The-Job Training. 	167 %
<i>Of the 92 individuals in recovery who will be placed in work-based training, 85 will be hired by recovery-friendly employers after completing training.</i>	129 of the 154 individuals in recovery who were placed in work-based trainings have obtained unsubsidized employment.	151 %
<i>50 individuals in recovery will be placed in classroom-style training</i>	249 individuals in recovery have been placed in classroom-style training. Of these 249: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 175 enrolled in Trade/Certification Trainings; • 30 enrolled in Licensing Programs; • 44 enrolled in Degree Programs (Associate Degree or higher). 	498 %
<i>Of the 50 individuals who are placed in classroom-style training, 43 will be hired by recovery-friendly employers after completing training.</i>	218 of the recovering individuals who were placed in classroom-style training have obtained employment.	506 %

<p><i>65 new Peer Support Specialists will be trained</i></p>	<p><i>193</i> recovering individuals have been trained and certified as Peer Support Specialists. Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 were trained through EKCEP’s partnership with Addiction Recovery Care; • 138 were trained in collaboration with other recovery organizations. <p>Additionally, a cohort of 21 recovering individuals who entered eKART-supported Peer Support Specialist training with Addiction Recovery Care in May are progressing on schedule.</p>	<p><u>297</u> %</p>
<p><i>Of the 65 new peer support specialists who will be trained, 60 will be placed in a professional position to assist individuals negatively affected by substance use disorder.</i></p>	<p><i>186</i> of the 193 recovering individuals trained and certified have been hired to work as Peer Support Specialists with recovery organizations.</p>	<p><u>310</u> %</p>
<p><i>70 employers (businesses) will be trained as recovery-friendly workplaces.</i></p>	<p><i>76</i> Eastern Kentucky employers have signed Letters of Interest indicating their intention to train to become transformational employers and to hire individuals in recovery. Per the grant’s initial plan, these trainings have been and will continue to be delivered by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce under contract with the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, funded by the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE). The COVID-19 pandemic made arranging for these trainings difficult, due to employers’ shifting priorities in response to the pandemic stresses and challenges scheduling trainings with the Chamber.</p>	<p><u>108</u> % *</p> <p>* Expressed intent to train. Actual percentage that have completed “certification” training is lower.</p>
<p><i>Of the 70 employers (businesses) which will be trained as recovery-friendly workplaces, 63 will be certified as recovery-friendly workplaces.</i></p>	<p><i>94</i> Eastern Kentucky employers have either directly hired eKART participants or initiated an on-the-job training (OJT) or Work Experience placement for eKART participants, or had identified training that eKART participants entered in order to gain</p>	<p><u>134</u> % *</p> <p>* Employers that have actually hired or placed eKART clients.</p>

	<p>employment. eKART is finding that Eastern Kentucky employers prefer to meet their immediate workforce needs by hiring recovering individuals and learning as they go, rather than pursuing extensive training before hiring recovering individuals. eKART’s Success Coaches and JERSS have aided these employers in becoming recovery-friendly workplaces without formal training or certification.</p>	<p><i>The percentage of employers that have completed formal training is lower.</i></p>
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Further details about the activities that produced these results appear in the sections below.

SITE PLACEMENTS AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT — eKART’s statewide sister program SITE (Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment) is also engaging employers and producing significant hiring results for recovering individuals. SITE, which is also administered and delivered by EKCEP, began in August 2019 and has produced the following results as of January 31, 2022:

- Recovering clients hired: 1,745+
- Employer contacts: 3,950+
- Referrals given: 2,525+

RECENT/UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Describe in detail what happened during this reporting period, and explain how you implemented the approved scope of work. If there have been significant changes to your program during the course of the project, or if the project was implemented differently than described in your original proposal, please describe those changes here. If you retained a consultant, list their credentials and describe what they were paid to do. Include a copy of any executed contracts.

— SUMMARY

During the ninth and final performance period of the grant, the eKART initiative continued to produce its planned results and exceed most of its goals.

The 479 recovering individuals hired into unsubsidized employment by the region’s employers by the end of the ninth reporting period exceeds eKART’s objective of 150 hires for the entire three-year grant period. These total hires represent 319% of the target number of hires stated in the eKART work plan submitted to the Appalachian Regional Commission with this grant.

eKART also has already exceeded its target numbers for the entire grant period for:

- **Individuals in recovery placed in work-based training** — The 154 individuals in recovery that have been placed in work-based training as of January 31, 2022 represent 167% of the total grant target of 92.
- **Individuals in recovery placed in classroom-style training** — The 249 individuals in recovery that have been placed in classroom-style training represent 498% of the total grant target of 50.
- **Individuals in recovery hired by recovery-friendly employers after completing classroom-style training** — The 218 recovering individuals who have obtained employment after classroom-style training represent 506% of the total grant target of 43.
- **Individuals in Recovery Trained as Peer Support Specialists** — The 193 recovering individuals trained and certified as Peer Support Specialists represent 297% of the total grant target of 65.

Further details about the services that have been provided to clients are in the subsection “Client Services” below. That subsection also includes specific numbers for the ninth reporting period.

While Eastern Kentucky employers are responding to the call to become a part of the solution to the OUD/SUD crisis and its effects on the region’s workers, many are choosing to go directly into hiring recovering individuals with the intention of learning and developing best practices as they go, rather than waiting to be trained or formally certified as a recovery-friendly workplace before hiring. The result has been more direct hires, on-the-job trainings, and Work Experience placements than projected in the grant’s work plan, but fewer trainings and “certifications” of employers as recovery-friendly than had been expected. Nonetheless, a significant number of employers (76) have expressed an interest in training on how to provide a recovery-friendly workplace, even if they aren’t waiting for training before hiring. During this last reporting period, there was steadily increasing interest among employers in the concept of supporting the cost of Success Coaches assigned to specific businesses and dedicated to serving those business’s employees through an ERN (Employer Resource Networks) arrangement. Details are in the subsection headed “Employer Engagement and Involvement” below.

During the ninth reporting period, eKART’s partnerships with treatment providers, courts, and other community agencies continued to produce a steady flow of referrals of OUD/SUD recovering individuals from treatment providers to eKART for workforce re-entry services. This is evidenced by the 210 recovering individuals identified as appropriate and referred to eKART during the ninth reporting period by 40 treatment providers and community organizations, which raised the total referrals to eKART to 1,308 over the entire grant period. Details are in the subsection headed “Client Referrals” below.

Throughout the grant period, eKART’s stable, dedicated staff has become better trained and increasingly effective in working with individuals recovering from opioid use disorder (OUD)/substance use disorder (SUD), with treatment providers who have helped these individuals enter recovery and deal with its ongoing challenges, and with Eastern Kentucky employers who will hire these individuals and provide

them the opportunity to return to the workforce as productive, contributing citizens. Details are in the subsection “Program Staffing and Staff Activities” below.

During the ninth reporting period, eKART continued its collaboration and partnerships with the transformational employment programs provided by:

- Fahe — Fahe is a multi-state organization that uses its expertise in finance, collaboration, innovation, advocacy, and communication to achieve a more prosperous Appalachian region. With a focus on leadership, housing, education, health and social services, and economic opportunity, Fahe empowers the people and communities of Appalachia with the resources, opportunities, and tools needed to build a better life. Since 1980 Fahe has invested \$1.05 billion, generating \$1.6 billion in finance, directly changing the lives of 687,183 people.
- The Fletcher Group — The Fletcher Group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded by former Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher and his wife Glenna to research and promote effective practices and public policy to improve health and wellbeing with a focus on addictive and lifestyle diseases, including substance use disorders and other chronic lifestyle diseases. The Fletcher Group provides technical assistance to rural communities whose efforts to help those with opioid and other substance use disorders can benefit significantly from safe, sustainable recovery housing and other best practice services. Over the past 25 years, The Fletcher Group’s “Recovery Kentucky” initiative has helped thousands of Kentuckians recover from addiction and turn their lives around.
- Addiction Recovery Care (ARC) — Addiction Recovery Care (ARC) operates a network of more than 30 state-licensed residential and outpatient drug and alcohol abuse treatment centers in 17 Kentucky counties, including seven residential treatment centers: women’s centers near Ashland in northeast Kentucky, near Harlan in far southeastern Kentucky, and near London, KY; men’s centers near Morehead, KY, near Ashland in northeast Kentucky, and near Somerset in south-central Kentucky; and a center for pregnant women in Northeast Kentucky. These facilities offer a full continuum of care including detox, residential, transitional, intensive outpatient, outpatient, medically assisted treatment (MAT), vocational rehabilitation and job training. ARC has also recently opened a new 750-bed residential facility in Springfield, KY, on the campus of a former private college that will be its largest in the state. This facility, called “The Crown,” will include occupational training and practicum placements along with its medical rehabilitation treatment. Although ARC is a referring and training partner in the eKART effort, it is also an employer that sees itself as a customer for the services provided by the ERN Success Coaches because its workforce is largely comprised of individuals who are in recovery and may be subject to related challenges, stressors, and other factors that can negatively impact their recovery.

— CLIENT REFERRALS

The eKART staff has been quite successful in establishing collaborative referral relationships with residential recovery treatment centers, outpatient recovery service agencies, courts, and community organizations throughout Eastern Kentucky. Many of these relationships were established or in process before COVID-19 restrictions were implemented and continued to grow and be productive despite the

face-to-face contact restrictions, which are now beginning to be relaxed. This growing list of partners continues to join EKCEP in the eKART effort by referring a steady flow of recovering individuals who are ready to be placed in employment or career training and by providing ongoing aftercare for these individuals, including collaborating with eKART to ensure they succeed in their placements in work or training.

By the end of the ninth reporting period, the list of agencies and groups that have provided referrals and collaborated with eKART included:

- Addiction Recovery Care
- Addiction Recovery Care Transitional Housing – Letcher County
- Advent Health
- Appalachian Comprehensive Community Care (ACCC)
- Behavioral Health Group
- Carpenters Village Rehab Center
- Chad’s Hope, London KY
- Community Action organizations
- County attorneys
- Cumberland Hope Center
- East Kentucky Rehab Center.
- Edgewater
- EK Wellness Center
- Fletcher Group
- Freshstart
- Frontier Behavioral Health
- Goodwill
- Haven House, London KY
- Hickory Hill Recovery Center (KRCC)
- Hollyberry Recovery House, Hazard, KY (KRCC)
- HopeCity
- KY Family Health
- Kentucky River Community Care (KRCC)
- Kentucky River Community Care Transitional Housing
- Living Clean LLC
- Local drug courts and their judges
- Local health departments
- Mountain Comprehensive Community Care (MCCC)
- Mountain Comprehensive Health Care (MCHC)
- Mt. Recovery Services
- New Hope Recovery
- Pregnancy and Beyond (Primary Care Centers of Eastern Kentucky)
- Project Advance
- RRJ Solutions
- Recovery Centers of Kentucky
- Solid Ground Counseling & Recovery Centers
- Spero Health
- Sunrise Crisis Center
- Volunteers of America
- Winterberry Recovery House, Hazard, KY (KRCC)

During the ninth reporting period eKART received 210 referrals from these partners, bringing the total number of client referrals received to 1,308 by grant’s end. New eKART clients were entered into KEE Suite (Kentucky’s workforce services records system) and began receiving some level of services during the ninth reporting period. Those not enrolled either did not qualify for the program’s services, or chose not to continue with their enrollment. At the end of the grant, KEE Suite showed 1,149 participants enrolled in eKART.

eKART's referral relationships work both ways. In addition to receiving referrals, eKART has referred a total of 1,069 of its clients to partners for additional or supplementary services in order to meet the needs of eKART clients. Of this cumulative total, 335 such referrals were made during the ninth reporting period. The list of programs and services eKART clients were referred to includes Vocational Rehabilitation, counseling, housing, heating and cooling assistance, vehicle repair, criminal record expungement, assessments, student financial aid and support, Kentucky Department of Corrections Re-entry Program, Goodwill Industries "Cars to Work," childcare, Red Cross, Methodist Mountain Mission, Christian Appalachian Project, EKCEP's Opportunity Youth program, East Kentucky Re-Entry Council, Sunrise Crisis Center, Helping Hands, Healthy Workforce, St. Vincent Mission, WestCare, Lighthouse Mission, Red Bird Dental, Red Bird Tax Services, Water into Wine Food Pantry, Kentucky Homeplace, Fletcher Group, and Community Connections.

— CLIENT SERVICES

Although many eKART clients have successfully completed their program activities and gone on to unsubsidized employment, some of the clients enrolled in eKART were in various other earlier stages of the program at the end of the grant period (e.g., training). Some of these clients are enrolled in activities that have already been paid for by POWER grant funds, EKCEP matching funds, or other partners' matching funds, and will complete these pre-paid activities. Others will be completed with the support of a combination of ongoing funding by EKCEP or other partners under the direction and guidance of the SITE program, funded by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Kentucky Justice Cabinet, Office of Drug Control Policy.

As of January 31, 2022, the services provided to eKART clients and the outcomes of these services included:

- Four hundred and seventy-nine (479) clients have been hired into full-time, unsubsidized employment. This total includes forty-four (44) clients who obtained full-time unsubsidized employment during the ninth reporting period. The cumulative total of 479 unsubsidized hires exceeds the grant's goal of 150 unsubsidized hires (100 Individuals Hired by Employers After Completing Transitional Employment/Work-Based Training and 50 Individuals Hired by Recovery-Friendly Employers After Completing Classroom Training). The 479 hires represent 319% of the grant's end goal.
- Twenty-six (26) of the recovering individuals who have obtained full-time, unsubsidized employment with the assistance of eKART have performed well enough in their jobs to have received promotions from their employers, including six (6) who were promoted during the ninth reporting period.
- Fifty (50) eKART clients have started or completed GED classes or GED-Plus classes at Skills U (Kentucky Adult Basic Education), including three (3) who began this training during the ninth reporting period.
- One hundred seventy-five (175) clients are attending certification and/or career skills trainings, including four (4) who began these trainings during the ninth reporting period.

- Forty-four (44) clients have enrolled in college and are attending courses in pursuit of Associate Degrees, including twelve (12) who entered college trainings during the ninth reporting period
- Forty-eight (48) clients have completed or are currently taking part in Up-Skill trainings, including twenty-two (22) who entered these trainings during the ninth reporting period.
- One hundred fifty-four (154) clients have completed or are currently in work-based learning placements with employers, including twenty-seven (27) who began work-based learning placements during the ninth reporting period. To date, one hundred twenty-nine (129) eKART participants have gained full-time employment after completing a work-based learning placement. Work-based learning placements include:
 - Work Experience — One hundred thirty-eight (138) eKART have been placed in Work Experience placements, including twenty-three (23) in the ninth reporting period. Work Experience placements are multi-week work-based learning situations in which the client works for an employer, learning the employer’s business procedures and processes while learning (and demonstrating) appropriate workplace behaviors. The client’s wages during the Work Experience period are paid by EKCEP, using the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds that were committed as a match for the eKART grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission. Although an employer’s agreement to provide a Work Experience does not include a commitment to hire the worker, Work Experience placements regularly result in a hiring at the end of the placement period because the worker has proven his/her value to the employer during the placement.
 - On-the-Job Training (OJT) — Sixteen (16) clients have been hired and completed or are currently receiving On-the-Job Training (OJT) from their new employer, including four (4) who began OJT in the ninth reporting period. In an OJT, EKCEP provides a portion (usually 50%) of the clients’ wages with WIOA funds during a defined training period to compensate the employer for the additional costs associated with training the new worker.
- Thirty (30) clients have been assisted by eKART staff and partners in regaining state-issued licenses (including 4 RNs, 3 LPNs, 8 phlebotomists, 4 welders, and 11 CDL drivers) which they previously lost due to their SUD/OUUD issues. All of these clients have completed the process and regained their licenses, making them immediately employable.
- Sixty-four (64) clients are in the process of having their criminal records expunged, with guidance and assistance from eKART staff, Goodwill Industries, Anthem, and/or other partners. This total includes seventeen (17) who began this process during the ninth reporting period.
- Eight hundred and seventy-three (873) clients have also been provided valuable supportive services such as: Transportation/Gas, uniforms/work clothes, work boots/shoes, tools/equipment, IDs, tuition/book reimbursements from eKART, including two hundred forty-five (245) who received these services for the first time during the ninth reporting period.

Despite eKART’s success in promoting immediate hires, which may have diverted some clients who might otherwise have chosen training, 453 eKART clients have enrolled in or completed some form of training (either classroom or work-based). This total represents 319% of the end-of-grant objective of 142.

— EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

During the ninth and final reporting period for the grant, the eKART staff continued to contact and inform the region’s employers about the advantages of becoming a transformational (i.e., recovery-friendly) workplace and hiring recovering individuals. The cumulative total of employer contacts for the full grant period is 846, including 45 employers that were contacted during the ninth reporting period. Eastern Kentucky employers have risen quickly to the opportunity to participate in helping return recovering individuals to the workforce. Although a significant number of employers have expressed interest in the idea of training on how to become a transformational workplace, many other employers have “gone all-in” immediately and have begun providing full hiring or work-based training to individuals in recovery.

eKART asked employers who were interested in training to help them become recovery-friendly workplaces and provide job opportunities to recovering individuals to sign Letters of Interest. By the end of the grant, 76 Eastern Kentucky employers had signed Letters of Interest indicating their intent to train to become transformational employers and their willingness to hire individuals in recovery. Some trainings for employers began in November 2019, using the employer’s toolkit developed by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS). The scheduling and delivery of these trainings have been led by the staff of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce (who are also funded by KORE/CHFS), with the collaboration of CHFS and eKART staff. Limitations on gatherings and face-to-face trainings necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic complicated and slowed the delivery of these employer trainings. EKCEP’s SITE leadership (who were formerly eKART staff) are currently involved in discussions with CHFS and the Chamber to develop plans for delivering this training to interested employers.

As of January 31, 2022, a total of 94 Eastern Kentucky employers have either directly hired eKART participants or initiated an on-the-job training (OJT) or Work Experience placement for eKART participants, or had identified training that eKART participants could enter in order to gain employment. (On-the-job training involves an actual permanent hire of the participant, with the support of workforce development funds that pay 50% of the new workers’ wages during a defined training period. A Work Experience placement is a defined period in which a participant performs actual work at the employer’s worksite while learning employment skills and behaviors and developing a positive work history. The participant’s wages during a Work Experience placement are paid by EKCEP’s workforce development funds which represent local match for this ARC grant.) The businesses that have hired, provided OJT, or provided Work Experience placements for eKART participants include grocery stores, retail foods, construction, skilled trades, service businesses, manufacturing, hospitality, community service organizations, healthcare facilities, logging, broadcasting, legal services, local government, and SUD/ODU recovery service providers. These employers include:

- Addiction Recovery Care (ARC)
- Allen’s Wrecker Service
- Kentucky River Community Care (KRCC)
- Kentucky River Medical Center
- Knott County Fiscal Court

- Appalachian Comprehensive Community Care (ACCC)
- Appalachian School of Luthiery
- ARH (Appalachian Regional Healthcare) - Hazard
- ARH (Appalachian Regional Healthcare) - Whitesburg
- Boone Forest Products
- Breathitt County Fiscal Court
- Buckhorn Children’s Center
- Captain D’s restaurants
- Carl Barnes Used Cars
- Carpenter’s Village
- Christian Appalachian Project
- City of Manchester
- City Perk
- Comfort Suites
- Clemons Construction
- Combs Construction — Winchester
- Creekside Recovery Center
- Dairy Queen restaurant — Jackson
- Dajcor Inc.
- Debbie’s Tax Prep
- Digital Dimensions
- Edgewater
- Food City
- Frontier Behavioral Health
- Glen Martin Hammon Law Offices
- Go-Hire
- Goodwill industries
- Griffith Construction
- Grinder’s Construction
- Hall’s Trucking
- Hearth Foods
- Highlands Diversified
- Holiday Inn Express
- Hollyberry Transitional Housing
- Hope in the Mountains
- Hurley Electrical
- Jackson County Board of Education
- Jamie Jones Logging
- Jenny Wiley State Park
- John R Joseph Distribution
- Jones Brothers Logging
- K-wick Mart – Hindman
- Lion Apparel
- Logan Corp.
- Man Power
- McDonald’s restaurants
- Methodist Mountain Mission
- Mountain Arts Center
- Mountain Comprehensive Community Care
- Mountain Comprehensive Community Care (MCCC)
- Mountain Comprehensive Community Care,
- Mountain Recovery Services.
- Mt. Enterprises
- Oneida Baptist Institute
- Pennington Logging
- Perry County Fiscal Court
- Phillips Diversified
- Pikeville Medical Center
- Powell Valley Inc.
- Pregnancy and Beyond
- Price-less Grocery
- Quality Inn
- R&B Construction
- R&L Paving
- Rebound Center
- Recovery Center of Jackson
- Red Bird Mission
- Save-a-Lot — Hyden
- Serv Pro
- Sunrise Center
- Super Mart
- Taco Bell restaurant — Hazard
- Teleworks USA
- Tractor Supply
- Trending Upward
- Troublesome Creek Stringed Instrument Company
- Tully’s Restaurant
- Turner Brothers Auto
- TVS Cable
- Williamson Financial Services
- Williamson Properties
- Williamson Construction
- Wolfe County Animal Shelter

- KD Construction
- Kel’s Patriot Pizza
- Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants
- Kentucky River Community Care
- Wright Construction
- WYMT-TV

eKART has established Employer Resource Network (ERN) arrangements with six employers that hire workers from the EKCEP service region. An ERN arrangement involves an employer (or a network of employers) that recognizes the value of the services provided by a Success Coach in reducing turnover, absenteeism, and other workplace issues among their employees, and therefore is willing to pay all or part of the wages and other costs of a Success Coach dedicated to their business(es). ERN Success Coaches help ensure that recovering employees or employees with emerging OUD/SUD issues can succeed in their jobs, providing support and guidance to workers and assisting the employers in responding productively to any problems that arise. In an ERN, employers share the costs of services and/or resources available under eKART that they need but might not be able to pay for individually.

eKART has established paid ERN/Success Coach arrangements with:

- **Addiction Recovery Care (ARC)** — Addiction Recovery Care operates a network of more than 30 state-licensed residential and outpatient drug and alcohol abuse treatment centers in 17 Kentucky counties, including seven residential treatment centers: women’s centers near Ashland in northeast Kentucky, near Harlan in far southeastern Kentucky, and near London, KY; men’s centers near Morehead, KY, near Ashland in northeast Kentucky, and near Somerset in south-central Kentucky; and a center for pregnant women in Northeast Kentucky. These facilities offer a full continuum of care including detox, residential, transitional, intensive outpatient, outpatient, medically assisted treatment (MAT), vocational rehabilitation and job training. Recently ARC opened a new 750-bed residential facility in Springfield, KY, on the campus of a former private college that will be its largest in the state. Although ARC is a referring and training partner in the eKART effort, it is also an employer that sees itself as a customer for the services provided by the ERN Success Coaches because its workforce is largely comprised of individuals who are in recovery and may be subject to related challenges, stressors, and other factors that can negatively impact their recovery. Because ARC believes these workers can use help remaining productive and successful, they have executed a contract with EKCEP that calls for ARC to bear a significant portion of the cost of having an ERN Success Coach dedicated to serving its employees. ARC recognized the value and utility of the ERN Success Coach role and wanted to be the first employer under eKART to contribute toward the costs of providing this service in order to ensure that much of the ERN Success Coach’s time could be dedicated to its employees. This is the essence of the Employer Resource Network model, in which employers join together and pay for services and or resources that they all need but might not be able to pay for individually.
- **Logan Corporation** — Logan Corporation was founded in 1904 in Logan, WV. With facilities at 124 Ward Rd., Salyersville, KY, and in Logan, WV, Logan Corporation is a diversified company that supplies MRO's and manufactures a wide range of quality products for the mining, rail transport,

industrial, construction and power generation markets. Logan Corporation is an authorized distributor for Ansul, Hardox, Lincoln, and Honda, and manufactures value-added products such as wear liner kits for buckets, truck beds, and dozer blades, as well as an expanding line of Non-Complex Parts steps, ladders, and fenders that fit most mining, aggregate and construction equipment.

- Highlands Diversified Services, Inc. — Highlands Diversified Services of London, KY is a privately held, vertically integrated contract manufacturing company specializing in metal stamping, welding, powder coat painting, assembly, warehousing, and distribution. The company has a diverse customer base within the telecommunications, automotive, aerospace, appliance, and industrial equipment industries. Highlands Diversified is based in a county that adjoins the eKART service area and employs workers who live in eKART counties.
- Lion Protective Apparel — Lion Protective Apparel is a manufacturer of protective garments for firefighters. Lion’s plant in Beattyville, KY employs approximately 75 people in the production of thermal liners that comprise the innermost layer of firefighters’ protective garments. LION also has a manufacturing location in West Liberty, KY and a distribution and manufacturing facility in Hazel Green, KY (both also within the EKCEP service area). In total, LION currently employs approximately 400 people in Kentucky.
- Bear Precision Coatings — Bear Precision Coatings is a privately held manufacturer of high-end automobile parts located in Annville, KY.

Additionally, eKART collaborated in the establishment of an ERN arrangement with AppHarvest, Inc. AppHarvest is a high-tech indoor farming company which recently opened a 60-acre, 2.76 million-square-foot greenhouse operation in Morehead, KY. Built with an initial investment of over \$100 million, AppHarvest’s first mega-greenhouse is targeted to employ over 300 workers and aims to grow 45 million pounds of tomatoes annually for target customers that include grocery stores throughout the eastern U.S. The operation uses digital monitoring, sun and LED lighting, and cutting-edge hydroponic, aboveground growing systems, including nonchemical growing practices. Morehead is in a county adjacent to the eKART service area and the AppHarvest workforce includes some residents of the eKART service area. AppHarvest has already hired 50 recovering individuals in collaboration with SITE and is using the ERN arrangement to help support the workplace success of these individuals, as well as other employees who may be developing substance use issues.

Additionally, eKART continued to partner with Go-Hire during the final grant reporting period. Go-Hire is a Hazard-based private sector staffing and placement firm. In addition to working directly with some eKART participants, Go-Hire has helped expedite and expand eKART’s placement of recovering individuals by reaching out to eKART’s JERSS and Success Coaches for recommendations and referrals of recovering individuals for specific job openings that Go-Hire is helping regional employers to fill. Go-Hire’s connections and client list — and their support and endorsement of eKART’s mission — helped expand the number of placement opportunities for eKART clients.

Although the 76 Eastern Kentucky employers that have signed Letters of Interest indicating their intention to train to become transformational employers and to hire individuals in recovery exceeds the eKART work plan's second-year goal of 60 employers trained and certified as recovery friendly employers, the number of employers that have actually completed the training is lower than expected. Fortunately, many of these interested employers have not waited for training before hiring recovering individuals. eKART learned that many employers preferred practical advice and assistance (including ERNs) as they worked with actual hires instead of formal instruction and certification as a recovery friendly, transformational workplace.

SITE ERNs —The statewide Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (SITE) program managed by EKCEP is also promoting and developing the ERN model statewide to help employers ensure the success of recovering individuals that they hire. SITE has placed seven Success Coaches with employers across the state.

— **PEER SUPPORT ACADEMY TRAINING**

During the eKART grant period, a total of 193 recovering individuals had been trained and certified as Peer Support Specialists, enabling them to return to the workforce in jobs where they can help other individuals enter and complete recovery. These 193 new Peer Support Specialists represent 297% of the eKART end-of-grant target of 65. Of the 193 Peer Support Specialists, 55 were trained under the partnership between EKCEP and Addiction Recovery Care (ARC) and 138 were trained in collaboration with other recovery organizations.

One hundred eighty-six (186) of these 193 newly certified Peer Support Specialists have been hired in sustainable employment. In Kentucky, the work of a certified Peer Support Specialist is Medicaid billable, meaning that treatment organizations can hire as many Peer Support Specialists as their caseload demands without facing funding concerns — which all but guarantees that every recovering individual who earns this certification can find employment in the field.

During the ninth reporting period, an additional cohort of twenty-one (21) recovering individuals were progressing through training (pre-paid) to become certified as Peer Support Specialists under the partnership between EKCEP and Addiction Recovery Care (ARC).

Also, a class of eight (8) EKCEP-funded individuals is currently attending Addiction Recovery Studies courses through the Millard College recently founded by Addiction Recovery Care. The Addiction Recovery Studies curriculum includes training as a Peer Support Specialist.

SITE PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST TRAINING — The statewide Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (SITE) program administered and managed by EKCEP is also promoting Peer Support Specialist training in other parts of the state. SITE is working with several recovery programs that offer

practicums and experience that lead to certification, with the intent of hiring the individuals who complete the training.

— PROGRAM STAFFING AND STAFF ACTIVITIES

With the exception of the change of the project manager at the end of the eighth reporting period, the eKART staff experienced no turnover during the three-year grant period. Melissa Quillen, who had served as the eKART Project Manager, was enticed to leave EKCEP for a statewide director position in a related field and was replaced by Tesa Turner, her long-time assistant. Ms. Turner, who had been with eKART and directly supervised many of the program's field activities since its inception, did an excellent job of managing all eKART activities through to the end of the grant period — as well as managing the SITE activities. All other staff under the grant remained in place.

Several of the eKART staff will continue to serve Eastern Kentucky with the support of SITE funding. During the ninth eKART reporting period these staff members continued to train to advance their skills while working productively with employers and recovering clients. By the end of the grant, the eKART Job Entry and Retention Support Specialists and Success Coaches had completed 233 OUD/SUD trainings, including 75 completed during the ninth reporting period. Examples of these trainings include: training in the "Career Edge" virtual career coaching software, training in Addiction Recovery Care's "Addiction Recovery Care Anywhere" mobile app that provides recovery counseling and other services remotely, Workforce GPS Webinars, University of Kentucky HDI Customizing Employment Webinars, Peer Support training, GPRA (Government Performance and Results Act) data collection training, and motivational interviewing trainings. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the vast majority of these trainings during the ninth reporting period were attended online by eKART staff. All eKART Success Coaches and JERSS have attended mandatory KORE training on OUD/SUD, ERN USA trainings, training on KEE Suite and Sales Force (the record-keeping systems for eKART and SITE), Supportive Services Training, and Motivational Interviewing Training.

The stability and professional growth of the eKART staff helped it establish and expand collaborative referral relationships with recovery treatment providers, both residential and outpatient, which provided a steady stream of recovering individuals for placement in employment or career training. (Details are above in the section headed "Client Referrals.")

The eKART staff was also successful in encouraging and enabling employers to join in the eKART effort to help recovering individuals successfully reenter the workforce. (Details are above in the section headed "Employer Engagement and Involvement.")

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Describe any major issues that arose during the implementation of the project. What would you do differently if you were starting this project again? Knowing the types of difficulties you encountered and how you resolved them will guide us in offering technical assistance to future grant applicants. Address each issue separately, in its own

section, and describe how the issues were resolved.

The only significant problems that affected the implementation of eKART were the restrictions on face-to-face contact, public gatherings, and travel brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Programmatically, eKART also faced two unanticipated challenges: the reluctance of employers to attend trainings or earn any sort of “certification” as a recovery-friendly workplace before hiring recovering individuals; and the clients’ needs for supportive services not readily available from WIOA or other community resources.

Pandemic Restrictions — The pandemic restrictions on face-to-face contact and public gatherings forced eKART staff to alter the grant’s intended approach to interactions with clients, recovery treatment providers, partners, and employers. Like most private and public sector employees in the U.S., eKART staff learned to lean heavily on online communications (including text messaging, FaceTime calls, Zoom, social media, etc.), remote trainings, and virtual events to execute the grant’s mission. Staff, treatment providers, partners, and the region’s employers adapted quickly to this “new normal,” with the result that eKART was able to be productive and effective despite the restrictions — and even to exceed almost all of its goals. The close, congenial relationships that eKART staff developed with the clients they were assisting — as well as with the partners, treatment providers, and employers — are evidence of the extent to which eKART’s dedicated workers rose to the challenges presented by the pandemic restrictions and overcame them.

Employers’ Training Reluctance — The reluctance of employers to attend trainings or earn any sort of “certification” as a recovery-friendly workplace before committing to hire recovering individuals was a bit of a surprise. The eKART program design (and the subsequent design of SITE) included these trainings because it was expected that it would be difficult to persuade employers to hire people with a history of OUD/SUD issues. This expectation was based largely on the prevailing hiring practices at the time the eKART grant was written, when employers would routinely reject any applicant who admitted to prior OUD/SUD problems or an OUD/SUD-related arrest record. However, the vast expansion of the opioid epidemic and its impact on all levels of society and the workforce apparently convinced many employers that they must accommodate individuals in recovery in order to meet their workforce needs; faced with the choice between hiring recovering workers or not having enough workers to function, the employers choose to embrace recovering workers. The ERN/Success Coach services offered through eKART and SITE helped make this choice possible for employers by providing post-hire assistance to both the employers and the newly hired recovering workers, helping to ensure that the hires would be successful. Given the opportunity to re-start eKART, we would design the program with less emphasis on certification training for employers and place more emphasis and commit more resources to post-hire support, consultation, and in-process training for employers and recovering workers.

Clients’ Supportive Service Needs — The eKART program design anticipated that the clients’ supportive service needs would be met by a combination of the supportive services available with WIOA activities (using WIOA matching funds), the services of the recovery treatment providers, and other community resources. However, many clients trying to transition from recovery to work had needs that fell into the

gaps between these services. Supports for the costs of re-establishing a residence, reliable transportation, a work wardrobe, and other workforce re-entry needs were not readily available. WIOA supportive services are limited by law to support for program activities (e.g., training, work-based learning) and do not include post-hire supports. Fortunately, eKART was able to meet these needs with the less restricted SITE funds from the Kentucky Justice Cabinet, Office of Drug Control Policy. Upon EKCEP's request, the Justice Cabinet allowed a portion of its SITE funding to be used as "gap funds" to be applied to these unmet needs and provide the missing rungs on the ladder to re-entry to the workforce. The limit for gap funds spent on an individual client was \$500. Examples of uses of these gap funds included helping with apartment rental deposits, tires or other small automobile repairs, work clothing, eye glasses, and other incidental needs. (In large cities in other areas of the state, SITE provided bus passes for transportation to work for newly hired workers.) Although not overly expensive, these needed items were beyond the resources of people emerging from months of residential treatment, many of whom had completely depleted all their personal resources during their OUD/SUD struggles before entering treatment. Given the opportunity to re-start eKART, we would add a significant budget line item of gap funds to meet these workforce-entry needs.

As shown by the final results, eKART managed to address these relatively minor program-design issues and exceed its planned objectives and outcomes.

OUTLOOK FOR PROGRAM CONTINUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

If the program is expected to continue after the end of the ARC grant period, describe how activities will be sustained. Will the program continue with other funding, and if so, what other sources of funds have been identified? If the program is to be discontinued, has it served its purpose, or is there still a need to solve the problems you were addressing? What additional steps are being taken to obtain other resources needed to continue the project?

eKART's services and mission will continue beyond the end of this ARC POWER grant.

The successes produced by both eKART and its statewide sister effort SITE have led the Kentucky cabinets that provided matching funds for eKART and underwrote the statewide costs of SITE to commit to continue supporting EKCEP's workforce re-entry work with recovering individuals for the foreseeable future. The Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services (CHFS) and the Kentucky Justice Cabinet, Office of Drug Control Policy, have renewed their funding support for SITE, showing that those cabinets recognize the importance of productive, meaningful work as an essential element in recovery from OUD/SUD. This SITE funding — which had included matching funds covering a portion of eKART's costs in Eastern Kentucky — will assume many of the costs of eKART's services going forward. Additionally, a portion of EKCEP's annual formula funding under WIOA — which also served as matching funds for eKART — will continue to support some eKART activities in Eastern Kentucky. The eKART brand may dissolve and merge into the statewide SITE brand, but most of the services and all of the partnerships, collaborations, and staff are expected to continue.

Because private employers pay a significant portion of the cost of on-site Success Coaches in an ERN (Employer Resource Network) arrangement, the continuing growth and acceptance of the ERN model across the state bodes well for the sustainability of that element of OUD/SUD workforce re-entry services. As employers join together and pay for OUD/SUD recovery services and or resources that they all need but might not be able to pay for individually, these ERNs become privately funded rather than publicly funded, and thus will survive as long as they are productive and useful.

The opioid crisis and its effects on the workforce have drawn intense attention nationwide. Multiple sources of federal, state, and local funding are being made available, and a vast array of organizations (both public and private) are becoming involved, directing efforts and resources toward finding and implementing solutions for this crisis. This increased awareness bodes well for the availability of further resources and partnerships to support efforts like eKART for the foreseeable future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summarize your entire project and the lessons learned during its implementation. Include a review of your successes and suggest ways that your experience may be helpful to others.

The “Eastern Kentucky Addiction Recovery and Training” (eKART) program bridged the gulf between recovery and productive participation in the workforce for hundreds of individuals in EKCEP’s 23-county service area who were in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) and opioid use disorder (OUD). eKART accomplished this by: providing career coaching, training, work-based learning, and supportive services to individuals who had completed or were in the latter stages of a reputable treatment program which provided aftercare that included ongoing counseling, accountability, and support; by working with treatment programs to identify individuals who were ready for these workforce-reentry services; and by cultivating and supporting recovery-friendly transitional job opportunities with the region’s employers.

eKART helped regional businesses commit to providing a supportive environment for employees in recovery and learn how to provide this kind of environment, thus increasing the opportunities for jobs and/or work-based training available to recovering individuals. eKART then helped these employers find these employees by partnering with treatment providers to identify and recruit recovering individuals appropriate for those job opportunities. When needed, eKART provided training that qualified recovering individuals for available job opportunities, with an emphasis on work-based training opportunities. Using matching funds from SITE, eKART provided “gap” supportive services that provided necessary elements that the recovering individuals needed in order to begin working and re-establish themselves as self-sustaining workers. The Success Coaches in eKART’s Employer Resource Network (ERN) model helped ensure newly hired recovering employees got the best chance to succeed in their jobs by providing support and guidance to both these workers and their employers and by responding productively to any problems that might arise.

The eKART initiative also trained almost 200 recovering individuals who had completed a year-long residential treatment program to become certified Peer Support Specialists, enabling them to return to the workforce in jobs where they can help other individuals enter and complete recovery.

eKART greatly exceeded all but one of its projected program goals, in some cases by factors as high as 300 or 400 percent. (Details of these successes are provided throughout the previous sections of this report.)

The experience of eKART strongly reinforced the findings of a 2006 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Study on Benefit and Costs of Substance Abuse Treatment, which stated that gainful, meaningful employment is the second-most important factor in successful rehabilitation of individuals with SUD/ODU, exceeded only by a stay in an extended residential care program. eKART and its partner treatment organizations found that meaningful employment was a key factor in successful recovery from SUD/ODU. eKART also found that recovering individuals are hungry for and very grateful to receive job opportunities that give them a chance to prove that they can be viable, dependable, productive employees again.

eKART also learned that employers preferred to move “at the speed of business” rather than at the speed of education or government. Faced with the choice of either hiring recovering workers or not having enough workers to function, the employers choose to embrace recovering workers. Given the opportunity to attend training to learn how to accommodate recovering workers and be “certified” as a recovery-friendly workplace, employers preferred to hire recovering workers immediately and work out the details of how to support them in real time as they worked. The ERN/Success Coach services offered through eKART and SITE helped make this choice possible for employers by providing post-hire assistance to both the employers and the newly hired recovering workers, helping to ensure that the hires would be successful. That so many employers made this choice was a refreshing and productive change from employers’ previous prevailing refusal to hire people with a history of OUD/SUD issues or OUD/SUD-related arrests.

The partnerships and close collaboration with reputable treatment providers were an essential element in eKART’s success. Most eKART participants were recruited and served in collaboration with these treatment providers. Together, eKART and the treatment providers identified individuals to be served, trained, and/or placed in employment who had completed, or were in the latter stages of, treatment programs which provided aftercare that included ongoing counseling, accountability, and support.

eKART provided the “bridge” that recovering Eastern Kentuckians could use to cross from their treatment providers to the local employers that would hire them, enabling them to become productive, self-supporting, and self-respecting members of the workforce and the economy. However, the vastness of the addition problem currently affecting the Appalachian region will require ongoing initiatives like eKART to help the regional workforce recover and progress.

-- END --