

OPTIONS

SAVE LIVES

The Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety Initiative (OPTIONS)

Fiscal Year-to-Date (Oct '23–Sep '24)

Totals through March 31, 2024

Prepared by Daniel S. Soucier
Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center
University of Maine

This brief provides updates on the activities of Maine OPTIONS Liaisons through the statewide OPTIONS (Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety) initiative. This is based on data reported by OPTIONS Liaisons for Fiscal Year 2024 which runs from October 2023–September 2024. Liaisons are behavioral health clinicians working in all 16 counties in Maine, employed by behavioral health organizations contracted through the State of Maine, Office of Behavioral Health. In 2023, Governor Mills increased funding to expand the Liaison program, with additional Liaisons and recovery coaches being hired across the state.

Liaisons provide brief therapeutic interventions, conduct proactive outreach with communities at the highest risk of experiencing an overdose, de-escalate behavioral health crises, and engage in post-overdose follow up visits and referrals of persons in need, as well as affected others, to community- and state-based services. They collaborate and coordinate with those on the front lines responding to people experiencing an overdose or at risk of overdose, including first responders like law enforcement and EMS. Anyone can reach out or make a referral to their local OPTIONS Liaison at <https://knowyouroptions.me/options-liaisons/>.

This brief highlights reflects activities of the OPTIONS Liaisons across a spectrum of services for individuals and communities to stay safe, get well and stay well such as:

- Who makes referrals to OPTIONS Liaisons
- How these referrals are made
- Where OPTIONS Liaisons refer clients
- How clients engage with those referrals
- Demographics of clients served by OPTIONS Liaisons
- Number of individuals trained in overdose and anti-stigma education
- Number of community events
- Number of naloxone kits distributed and to whom

Additional resources, data, and visualizations are available at knowyouroptions.me and mainedrugdata.org.

Key Metrics Snapshot

During the most recent reporting period of March 2024 OPTIONS liaisons' engagement included:

- 399 client, training, or event contacts made with 102 additional client contacts attempted but unsuccessful
- 106 co-response or postoverdose follow-ups conducted, usually with law enforcement partners
- 90 individuals referred to treatment programs
- 95 individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- 268 individuals trained in overdose response and antistigma education
- 186 kits (372 doses) of naloxone (Narcan®) distributed

From October 2023 through March 2024 (fiscal year-to-date-totals), OPTIONS liaisons' engagement included:

- 2,896 client, training, or event contacts made with 406 additional client contacts attempted but unsuccessful
- 322 co-response or postoverdose follow-ups conducted, usually with law enforcement partners
- 691 individuals referred to treatment programs
- 756 individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- 1,208 individuals trained in overdose and antistigma education
- 1,570 kits (3,140 doses) of naloxone distributed

Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach (Referrals to Liaisons):

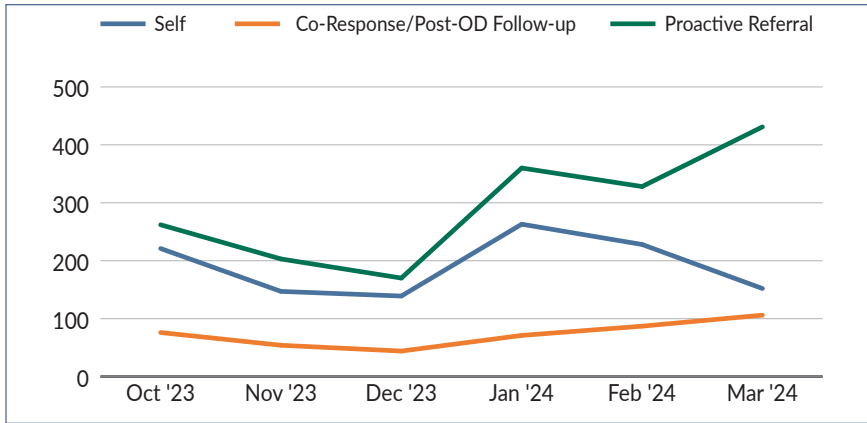
OPTIONS liaisons generate clients from operating alongside law enforcement officers as co-responders to nonfatal and fatal opioid overdoses as well as other substance-use-related public safety response calls. Co-response calls are those that OPTIONS liaisons respond to during the moment of crisis, whereas postoverdose follow-up visits are those that they respond to in the days following a substance-use-related crisis. Oftentimes, law enforcement partners accompany liaisons during both co-response calls and postoverdose follow-up visits.

OPTIONS liaisons also generate clients through self-referrals and proactive referrals. Self-referrals occur when individuals contact OPTIONS liaisons themselves. Proactive referrals are those made by public safety officials, clinicians, community-based substance use supports, and affected others.

The following chart and table show the number of law enforcement calls responded to and postoverdose follow-up visits conducted by liaisons along with the number of self and proactive referrals.

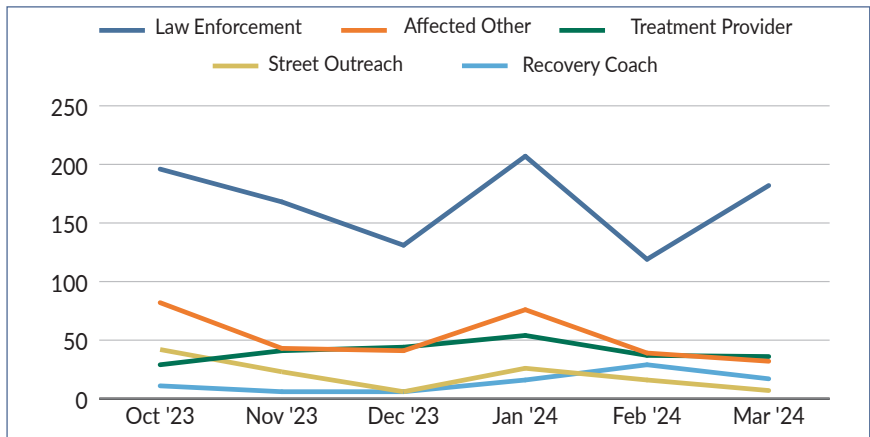
Proactive referrals to OPTIONS liaisons come from a variety of sources including law enforcement, treatment providers, affected others, other OPTIONS liaisons, recovery coaches, emergency department clinicians, and first responders. Data regarding the source of proactive referrals began being collected during the second year of the program in October 2021. The following chart show the five most prevalent proactive referral sources. Please note that referrals often come from multiple sources simultaneously. For example, a referral to an OPTIONS Liaison can come from a law enforcement officer, emergency department staff, and an affected other at one time. The five most prevalent proactive referral sources from October 2023–December 2023 are Law Enforcement (1,003), Affected Other (312), Treatment Provider (241), Street Outreach (120), and Recovery Coaches (100). Proactive referrals are also generated through a variety of other sources including Emergency Medical Staff, Public Health Agencies, Criminal Justice, and Religious Leaders.

OPTIONS Referrals by Type



Referral type	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24
Self	221	147	139	263	228	152
Co-Response/Post-OD Follow-up	76	54	44	287	87	106
Proactive Referral	262	203	170	360	328	431

OPTIONS Most Prevalent Proactive Referrals

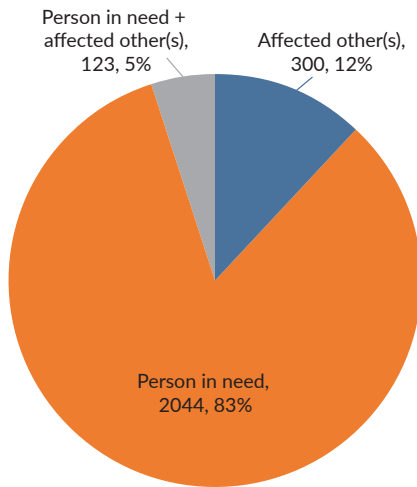


Referral type	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24
Law Enforcement	196	168	131	207	119	182
Affected Other	82	43	41	76	39	32
Treatment Provider	29	41	44	54	37	36
Street Outreach	42	23	6	26	16	7
Recovery Coach	14	7	7	26	29	17

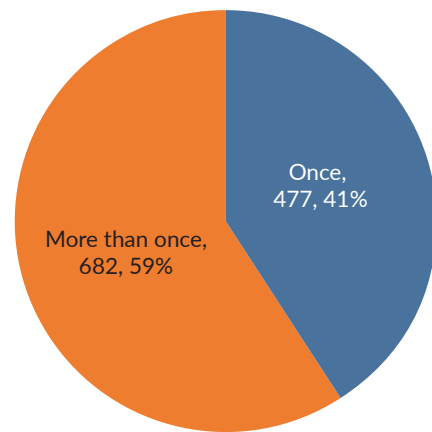
Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach (Demographics)

OPTIONS liaisons serve not only individuals in need but also affected others. In many counties, liaisons are known members of the community who are able to reach at-risk individuals and those that might not engage with other state-based harm reduction, treatment, recovery, or prevention services. The first chart shows the number and percent of clients who are persons in need (2,044, 83%) affected others (300, 12%) or both persons in need and affected others (123, 5%). The second chart shows the number and percent of clients who are first time utilizers of the OPTIONS program (477, 41%) or someone who has contacted Liaisons multiple times (682, 59%).

OPTIONS Client Breakdown by Type

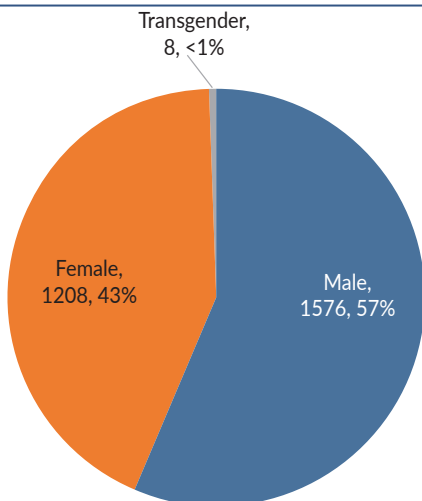


OPTIONS Utilization

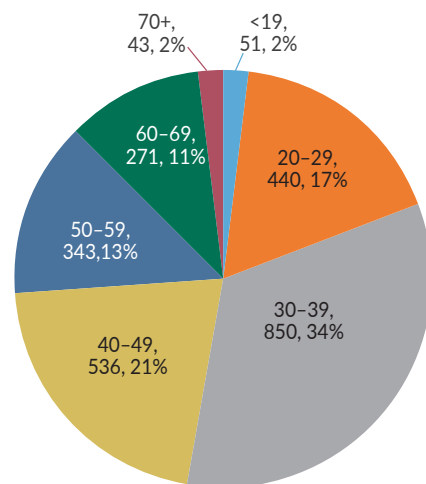


The following four charts show the demographic breakdown of clients served by OPTIONS liaisons: 57% of clients are male (1,576), 43% are female (1,208), and <1% are transgender (8). Two percent of OPTIONS clients are 19 years old or younger (51), 17% are between the ages of 20 and 29 (440), 34% are between the ages of 30 and 39 (850), 21% are between the ages of 40 and 49 (536), 13% are between the ages of 50 and 59

OPTIONS Clients by Gender

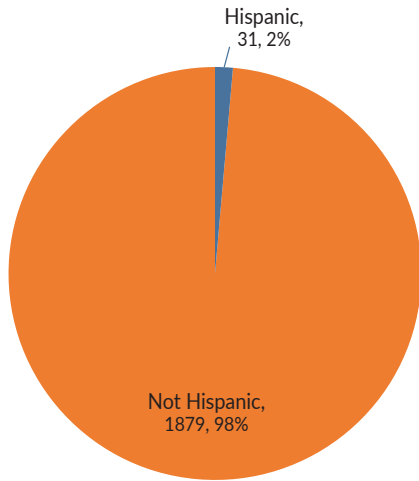


OPTIONS Clients by Age

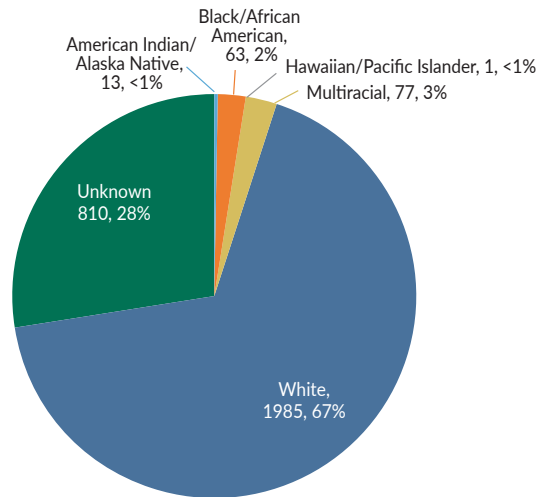


(343) and 13% are 60 or older (314). The ethnicity of clients is 98% not Hispanic (1,879) and 2% Hispanic/Latinx (31). The racial composition of OPTIONS clients is <1% American Indian/Alaska Native (13), 2% African American/Black (63), <1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1), 3% Multiracial (77), 67% White (1,985), and 28% Unknown (810).

OPTIONS Clients by Ethnicity

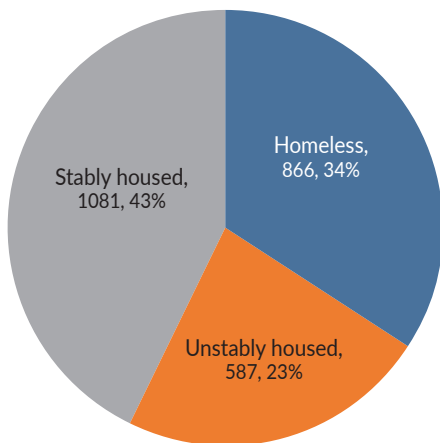


OPTIONS Clients by Race

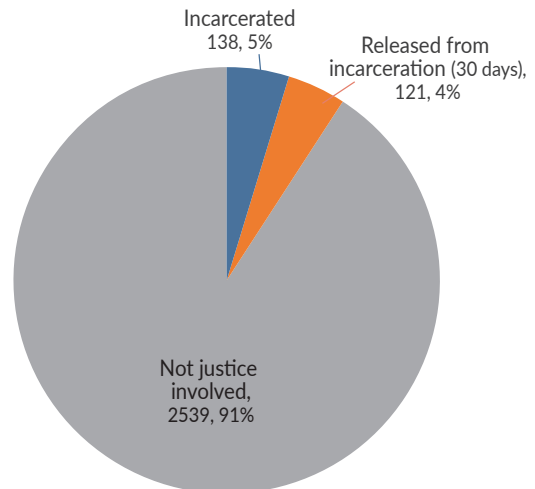


OPTIONS liaisons are effective at reaching individuals in need and affected others that are experiencing housing instability and experiencing homelessness as well as those who are—or have recently been—justice involved. The following charts show that from October 2023 to March 2024, 57% (1,453) of clients referred to OPTIONS liaisons are reported to be housing insecure; 23% (687) are unstably housed and 34% (866) are homeless. Those who have stable housing constituted 43% (1,081) of liaison clients. 5% of OPTIONS clients were currently incarcerated (138) and 4% had been incarcerated in the past 30 days (121).

OPTIONS Client Housing Status



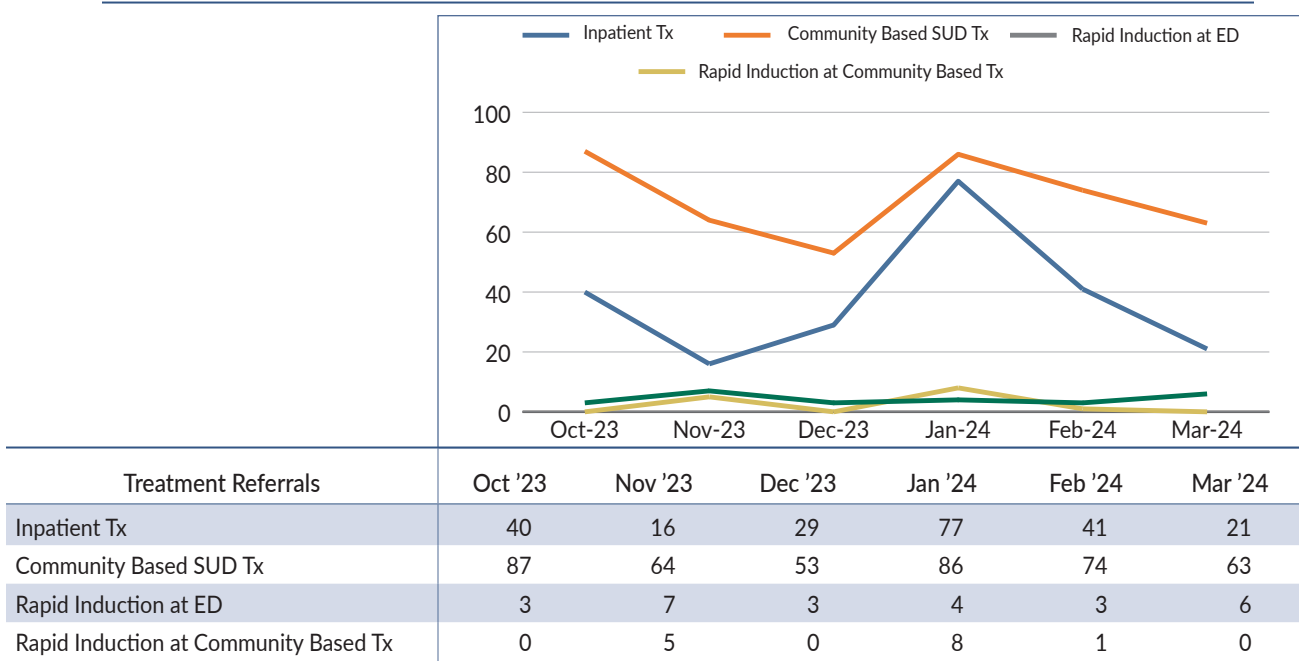
OPTIONS Client Justice Status



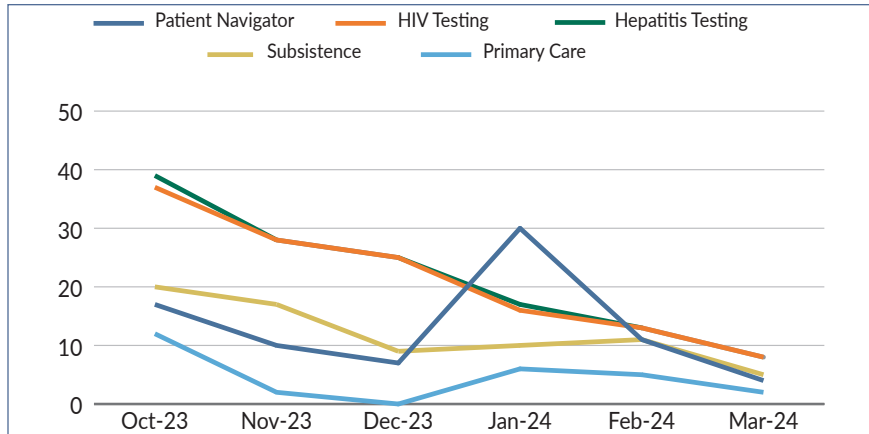
Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach and Safety (Referrals to Services)

OPTIONS liaisons connect individuals with state- and community-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services. The following charts show referrals from OPTIONS Liaisons to various services across these four focus areas of the State of Maine's Opioid Response Strategic Action Plan.

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Treatment Services

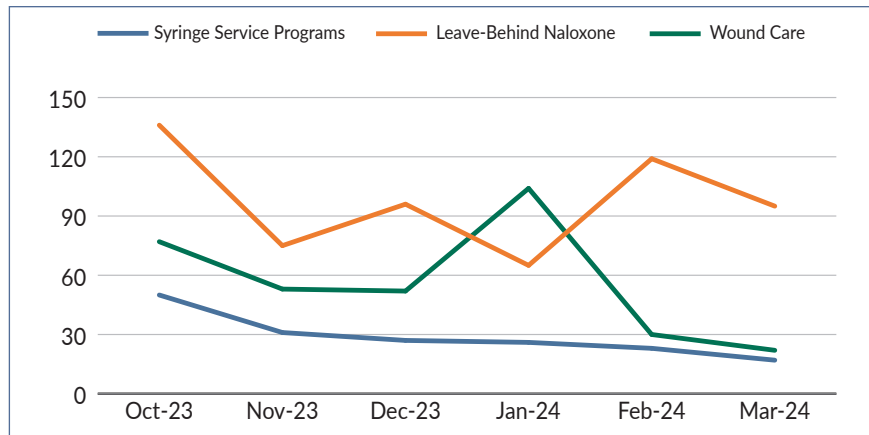


OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Prevention Services



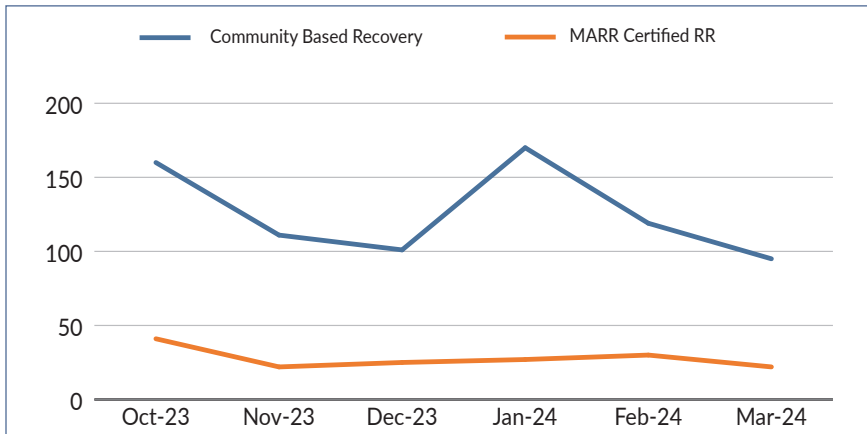
Prevention referrals	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24
Patient Navigator	17	10	7	30	11	4
HIV Testing	37	28	25	16	13	8
Hepatitis Testing	39	28	25	17	13	8
Subsistence	20	17	9	10	11	5
Primary Care	12	2	0	6	5	2

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Harm Reduction Services



Harm reduction referrals	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24
Syringe Service Programs	50	31	27	26	23	17
Leave-Behind Naloxone	136	75	96	65	119	95
Wound Care	77	53	52	104	30	22

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals for Recovery Services

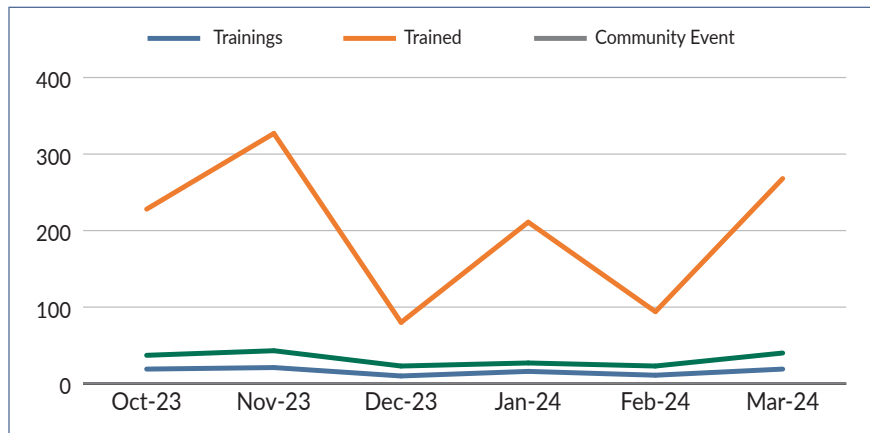


Recovery referrals	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24
Community-based Recovery	160	111	101	170	119	95
MARR Certified Recovery Residences	41	22	25	27	30	22

Overdose Prevention Through Safety and Naloxone

OPTIONS liaisons also serve as community educators conducting a variety of trainings and community events including Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution and anti-stigma trainings. The chart and table show the number and cumulative number of trainings conducted, individuals trained, and community events by OPTIONS liaisons from October 2023–March 2024. OPTIONS liaisons have conducted 96 trainings, trained 1,208 individuals, and conducted 193 community events.

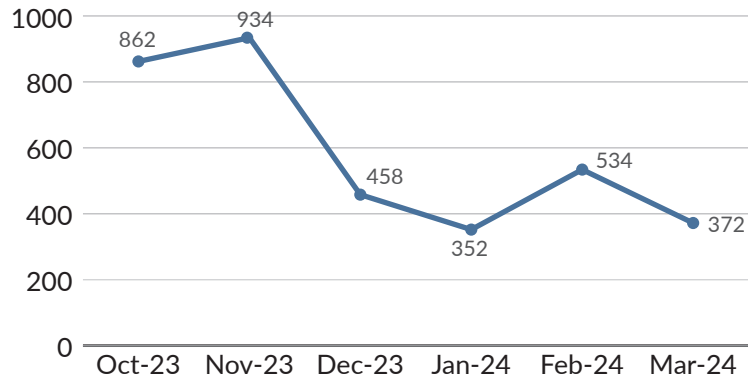
Community Events, Trainings, and People Trained by OPTIONS Liaisons



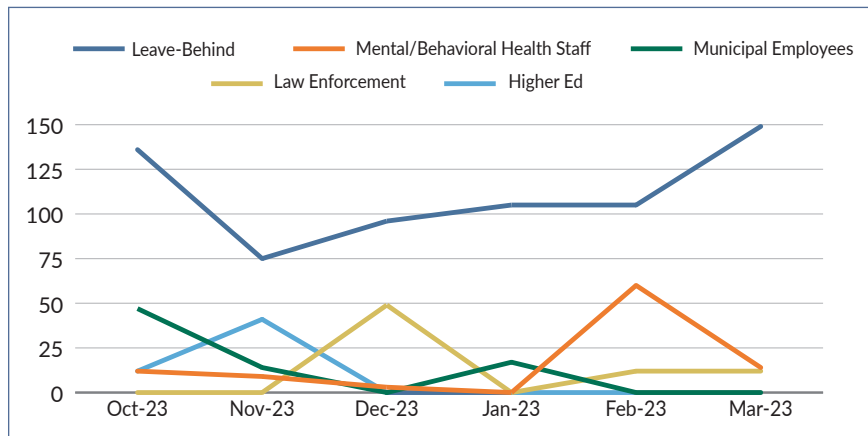
	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24
Trainings	19	21	10	16	11	19
Individuals Trained	228	327	80	211	94	268
Community Events	37	43	23	27	23	40

As part of trainings, community events, and outreach work, OPTIONS Liaisons serve as primary distributors of naloxone to various members of the community from people in need themselves, affected others, clinicians, municipal employees, educational institutes, law enforcement, and many others. The line chart below shows the total number of kits distributed from October 2023–March 2024. The line chart below shows the 5 most frequent receivers of naloxone distributed by OPTIONS Liaisons.

Total Doses of Naloxone Distributed by OPTIONS Liaisons



Largest Receivers of Naloxone Distribution by OPTIONS Liaisons



	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '23	Feb '23	Mar '24
Leave-Behind	136	75	96	105	105	149
Mental/Behavioral Health Staff	12	9	3	0	60	14
Municipal Employees	47	14	0	17	0	0
Law Enforcement	0	0	49	0	12	12
Higher Ed	12	41	0	0	0	0