

# OPTIONS

---

## SAVE LIVES

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

**Fiscal Year-to-Date (Oct '23–Sep '24) Totals through June 30, 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 frontlines 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 that 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](https://knowyouroptions.me) and [mainedrugdata.org](https://mainedrugdata.org).

## Key Metrics Snapshot

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

- 196 client, training, or event contacts made with an additional 83 client contacts attempted but unsuccessful
- 73 co-response or postoverdose follow-ups conducted, usually alongside law enforcement partners
- 96 individuals referred to treatment programs
- 67 individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- 5,086 individuals trained in overdose response and antistigma education
- 251 kits (502 doses) of naloxone (Narcan) distributed

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

- 4,117 client, training, or event contacts made with an additional 719 client contacts attempted but unsuccessful
- 724 co-response or postoverdose follow-ups conducted, usually alongside law enforcement partners
- 1,914 individuals referred to treatment programs
- 1,275 individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- 6,555 individuals trained in overdose and antistigma education
- 1,942 kits (3,884 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.

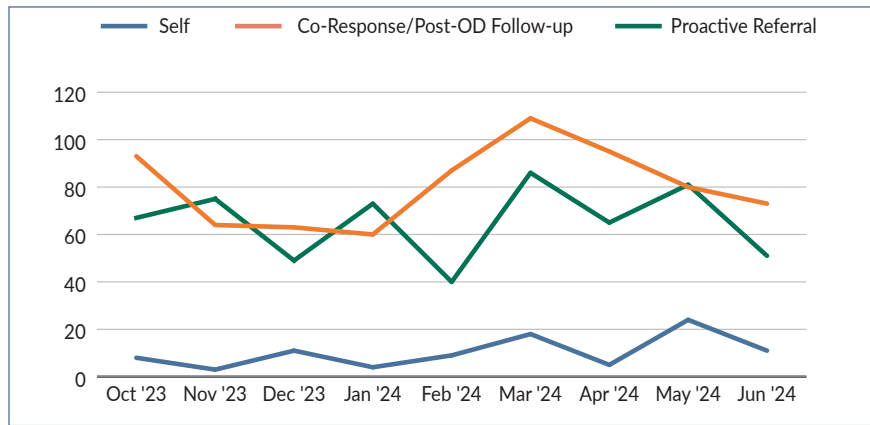
OPTIONS liaisons also generate clients through self-referrals and proactive referrals. Self-referrals occur when individuals contact OPTIONS liaisons themselves. Proactive referrals are those made by public safety officials, clinicians, community-based substance use supports, and affected others.

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 referrals sources from October 2023–June 2024 are

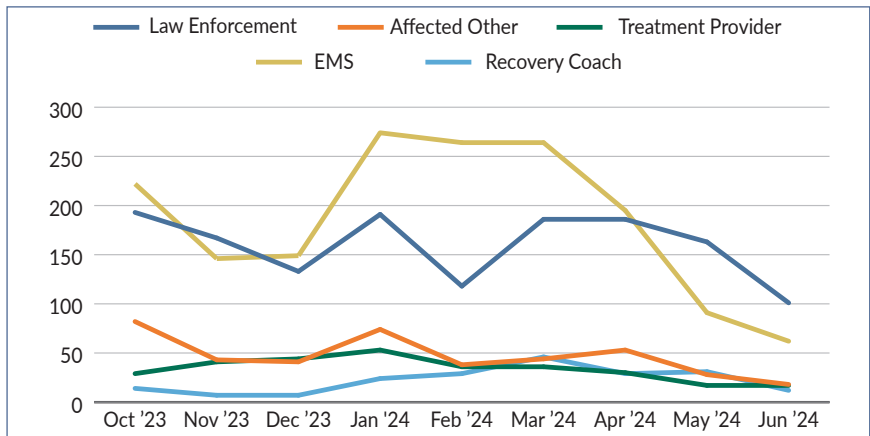
EMS (1,709), Law Enforcement (1,498), Affected Other (432), Treatment Provider (310), and Recovery Coach/Peer Support (240). Proactive referrals are also generated through a variety of other sources including Street Outreach, Public Health Agencies, Criminal Justice, and Religious Leaders.

### OPTIONS Referrals by Type



	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Self	8	3	11	4	9	18	5	24	11
Co-response/Post-OD Follow-up	93	64	63	60	87	109	95	80	73
Proactive Referral	67	75	49	73	40	86	65	81	51

### OPTIONS Most Prevalent Proactive Referrals

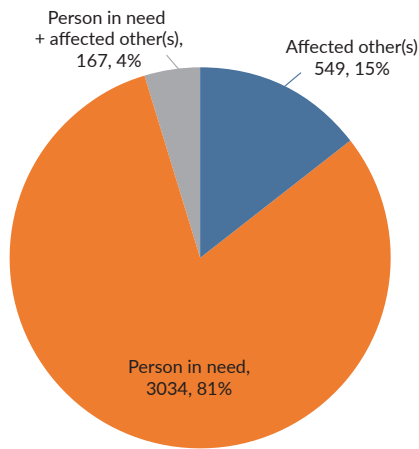


	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Law Enforcement	193	167	133	191	118	186	186	163	101
Affected Other	82	43	41	74	38	44	53	28	18
Treatment Provider	29	41	44	53	36	36	30	17	17
EMS	222	146	149	274	264	264	195	91	62
Recovery Coach	14	7	7	24	29	46	29	31	12

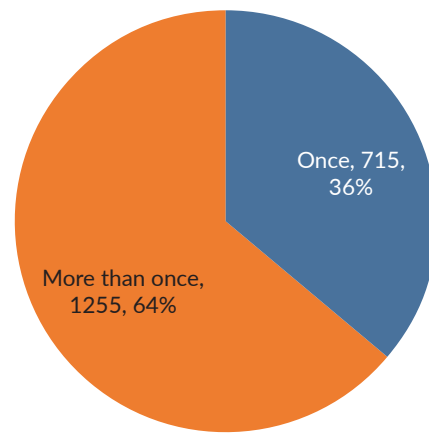
## Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach (Demographics):

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 (3,034, 81%) affected others (549, 15%) or both persons in need and affected others (167, 4%). The second chart shows the number and percent of clients who are first time utilizers of the OPTIONS program (715, 36%) or someone who has contacted Liaisons multiple times (1,255, 64%).

OPTIONS Client Breakdown by Type

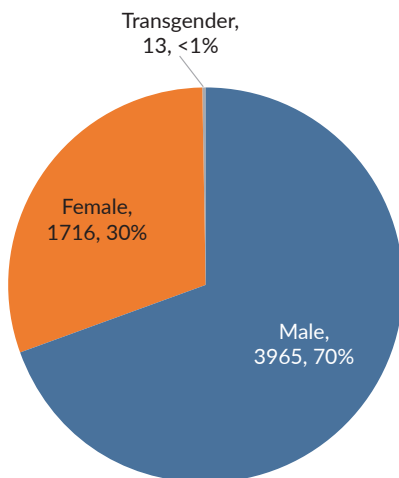


OPTIONS Utilization

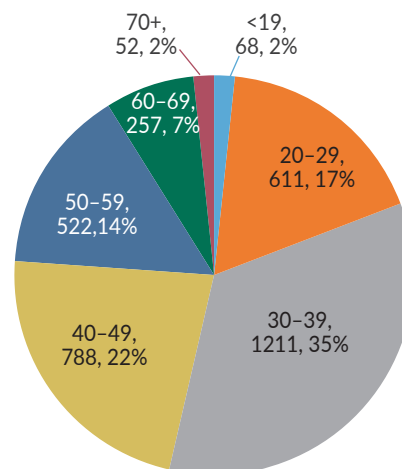


The following four charts show the demographic breakdown of clients served by OPTIONS liaisons. Seventy percent of clients are male (3,965), 30% are female (1,716), and <1% are transgender (13). Two percent of OPTIONS clients are 19 years old or younger (68), 17% are between the ages of 20–29 (611), 35% are between the ages of 30–39 (1,211), 22% are between the ages of 40–49 (788), 15% are between the ages of

OPTIONS Clients by Gender

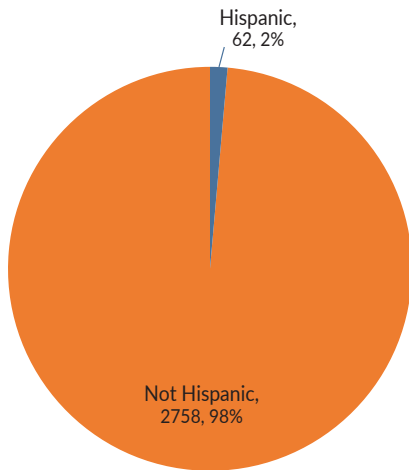


OPTIONS Clients by Age

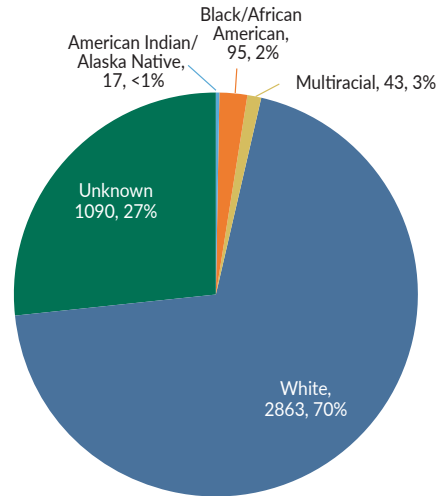


50–59 (522) and 9% are 60 or older (302). The ethnicity of clients 98% not Hispanic (2,758) and 2% Hispanic/Latinx (62). The racial composition of OPTIONS clients are <1% American Indian/Alaska Native (17), 2% African American/Black (95), 1% Multiracial (43), 70% White (2,863), and 27% Unknown (1,090).

OPTIONS Clients by Ethnicity

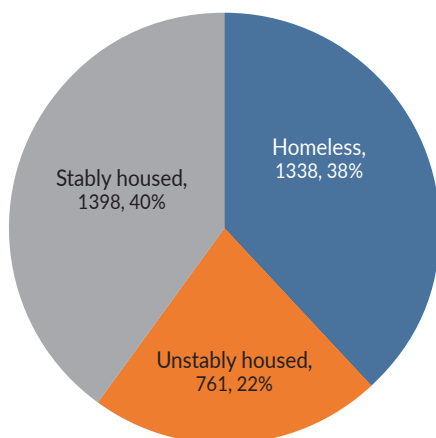


OPTIONS Clients by Race

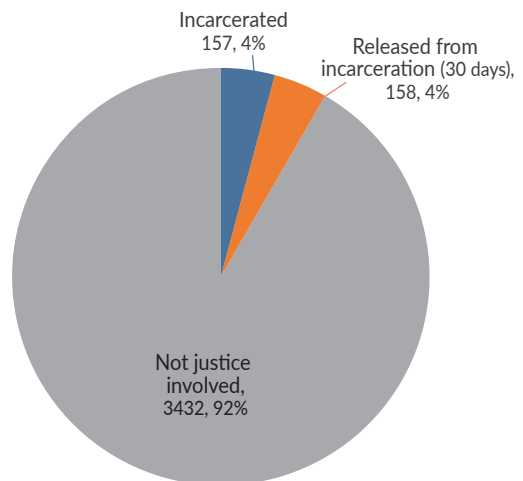


OPTIONS liaisons are effective at reaching individuals in need and affected others that are experiencing housing instability and experiencing homelessness as well as those who are—or have recently been—justice involved. The following charts show that from October 2023 to June 2024, 62% (2,099) of clients referred to OPTIONS liaisons are reported to be housing insecure; 22% (761) are unstably housed and 38% (1,338) are homeless. Those who have stable housing constituted 40% (1,398) of liaison clients. Four percent of OPTIONS clients were currently incarcerated (157) and 4% had been incarcerated in the past 30 days (158).

OPTIONS Client Housing Status



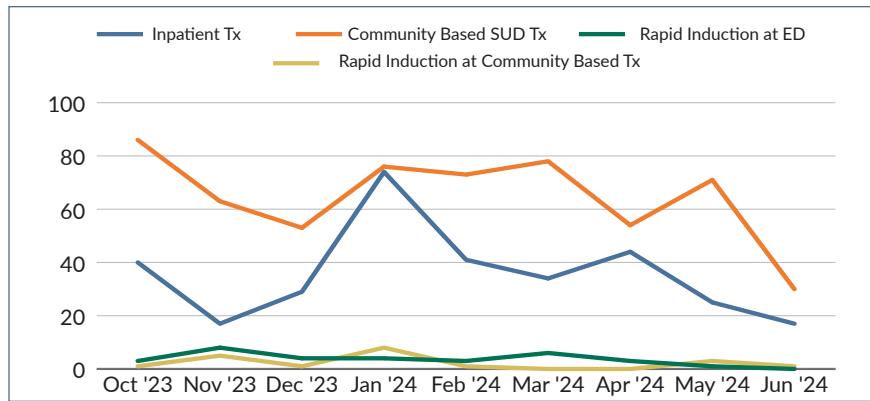
OPTIONS Client Justice Status



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

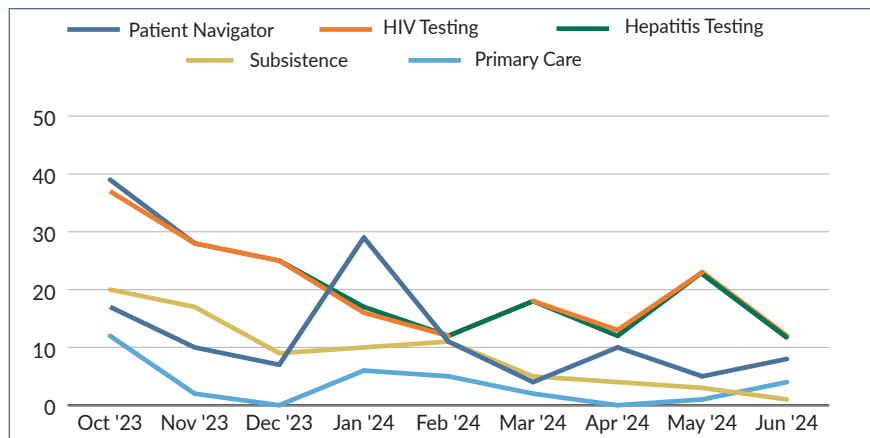
OPTIONS liaisons connect individuals with state- and community-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services. The following charts show referrals from OPTIONS Liaisons to various services across these four focus areas of the State of Maine's Opioid Response Strategic Action Plan.

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Treatment Services



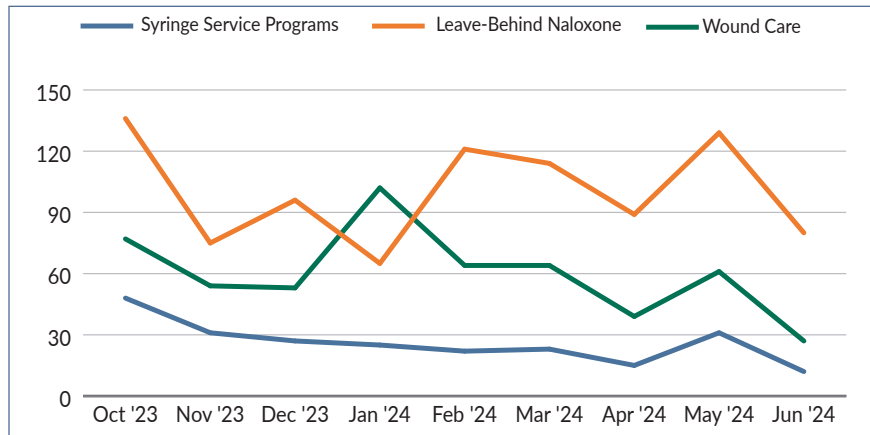
Treatment referrals	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Inpatient Tx	40	17	29	74	41	34	44	25	17
Community Based SUD Tx	86	63	53	76	73	78	54	71	30
Rapid Induction at ED	3	8	4	4	3	6	3	1	0
Rapid Induction at Community Based Tx	1	5	1	8	1	0	0	3	1

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Prevention Services



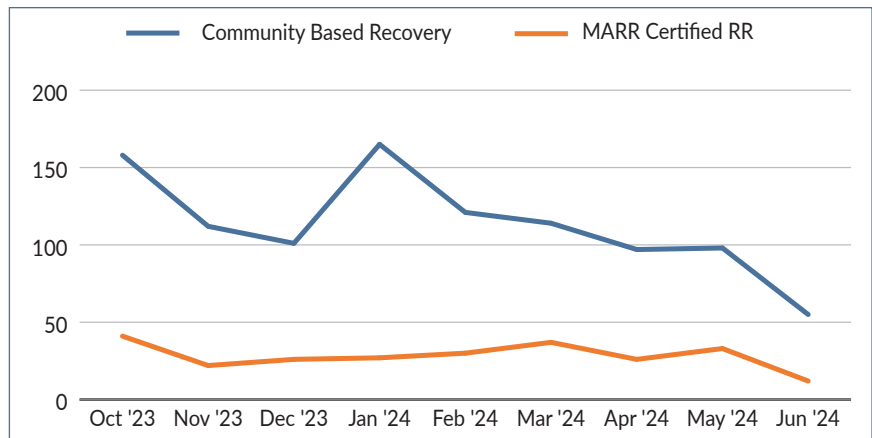
Prevention referrals	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Patient Navigator	17	10	7	29	11	4	10	5	8
HIV Testing	37	28	25	16	12	18	13	23	12
Hepatitis Testing	39	28	25	17	12	18	12	23	12
Subsistence	20	17	9	10	11	5	4	3	1
Primary Care	12	2	0	6	5	2	0	1	4

### OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Harm Reduction Services



Harm reduction referrals	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Syringe Service Programs	48	31	27	25	22	23	15	31	12
Leave-Behind Naloxone	136	75	96	65	121	114	89	129	80
Wound Care	77	54	53	102	64	64	39	61	27

### OPTIONS Liaison Referrals for Recovery Services

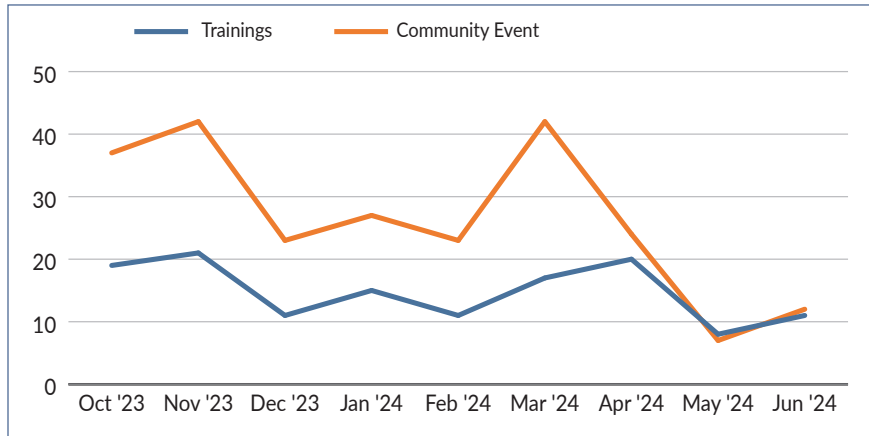


Harm reduction referrals	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Community-based Recovery	158	112	101	165	121	114	97	98	55
MARR Certified Recovery Residences	41	22	26	27	30	37	26	33	12

## Overdose Prevention Through Safety and Naloxone:

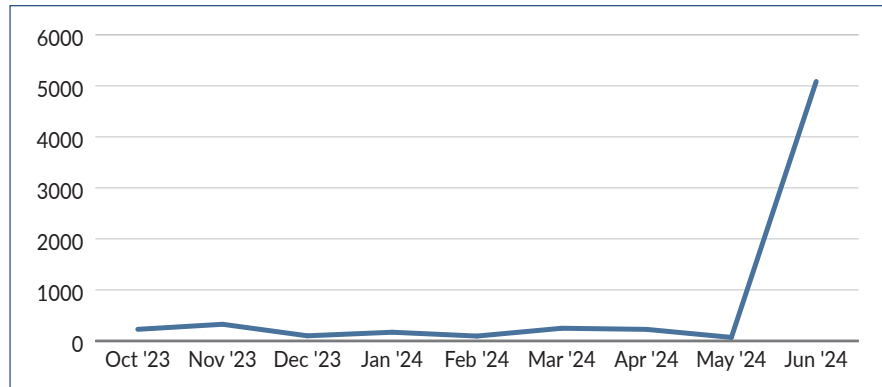
OPTIONS liaisons also serve as community educators conducting a variety of trainings and community events including Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution and anti-stigma trainings. The chart and table show the number and cumulative number of trainings conducted, individuals trained, and community events by OPTIONS liaisons from October 2023–June 2024. OPTIONS liaisons have conducted 133 trainings, trained 6,555 individuals, and conducted 234 community events.

Community Events and Trainings Conducted by OPTIONS Liaisons



	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Trainings	19	21	11	15	11	17	20	8	11
Community Events	37	42	23	27	23	42	24	7	12

People Trained by OPTIONS Liaisons

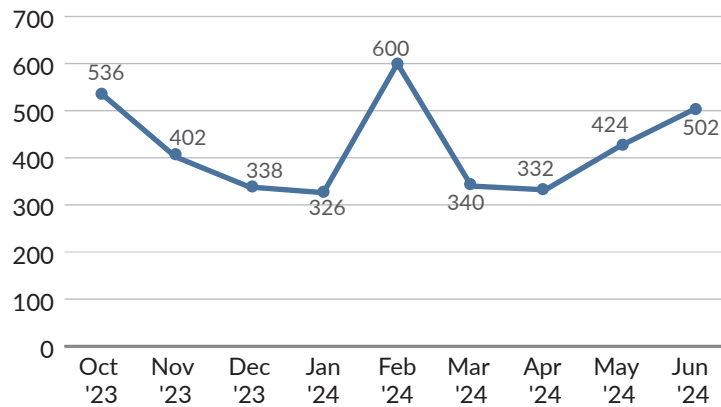


	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Individuals Trained	228	327	101	171	96	249	227	70	5086

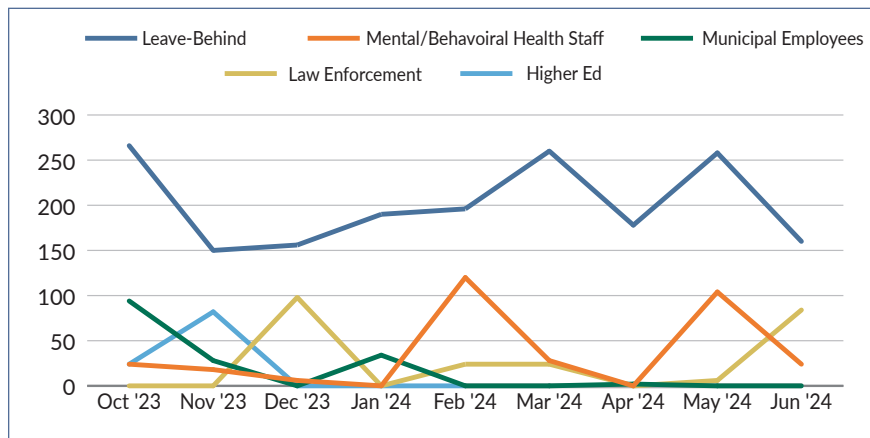


As part of trainings, community events, and outreach work, OPTIONS Liaisons serve as primary distributors of naloxone to various members of the community from people in need themselves, affected others, clinicians, municipal employees, educational institutes, law enforcement, and many others. The line chart below shows the total number of doses distributed from October 2023–June 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	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Leave-Behind	266	150	156	190	196	260	178	258	160
Mental/Behavioral Health Staff	24	18	6	0	120	28	0	104	24
Municipal Employees	94	28	0	34	0	0	2	0	0
Law Enforcement	0	0	98	0	24	24	0	6	84
Higher Ed	24	82	0	0	0	0	0	0	0