



Collective Response Initiative York Annual Meeting 2026



On February 5th, 2026, the Collective Response Initiative York (CRIY) hosted their third Annual Meeting. In January 2024, CRIY hosted its first annual meeting, marking the launch of the collective impact effort in the county. Immediately following the 2024 meeting, the Backbone staff began to guide the members of CRIY through a strategic process to identify actionable priorities, resulting in the creation of the Blueprint for Action.

In 2025, the Blueprint for Action moved from the page to practice as members began using the shared goals and priorities to guide collective work. The Blueprint served as a common reference point for planning, accountability, and collaboration, helping members see how their individual roles fit into a larger, shared strategy. By anchoring action in this collectively developed framework, CRIY shifted from alignment to implementation, building momentum and reinforcing a culture of shared ownership and responsibility for systems-level change.

Want to learn more about the Blueprint for Action?

[Click here!](#)

The meeting opened with remarks from President Commissioner Julie Wheeler, who reaffirmed York County's commitment to supporting CRIY and ensuring that opioid settlement funds are invested thoughtfully and responsibly to support long-term recovery and prevention efforts. Immediately following, the outgoing steering committee co-chair Becky Lockner and incoming co-chair Amy Evans shared highlights from CRIY's work in 2025 and offered a preview of priorities for 2026. Their reflections helped set the stage for the rest of the day's conversations and gave attendees a chance to see how their work connects to the broader effort.

Collaborative Action Planning Sessions

During this year's Annual Meeting, participants rotated through three breakout sessions aligned with CRIY's Blueprint for Action goals; reduce or delay the onset of substance use, improving access and retention in treatment and other services and increasing recovery capital. Each 30-minute session used rapid-fire engagement questions to gather practical insights from partners.

Reducing or Delaying the Onset of Substance Use

The first session focused on prevention and engaging youth and families in meaningful ways. Participants shared examples of family-centered activities that have brought communities together, including sports programs, cooking classes, and other pro-social events. Attendees also talked about how storytelling and youth voices can help shift public perception and reduce stigma. Participants also discussed opportunities to bring substance use education into workplaces, including employer-hosted naloxone training and substance use awareness programming.



Improving Access and Retention in Treatment and Services

The second breakout session focused on how service providers can better coordinate care and help individuals stay connected to treatment and support services. A common theme was the importance of clear communication between organizations. Participants noted that individuals sometimes experience frustration when they are asked the same intake questions by multiple providers or when roles between peer specialists and case managers are unclear. Groups discussed ways to improve real-time communication between agencies, including simple strategies such as shared email lists or faster referral pathways. Participants also emphasized the importance of regularly sharing up-to-date information about community resources so individuals can more easily connect with the right services.

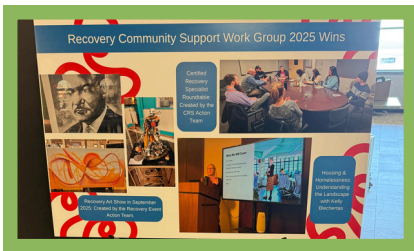
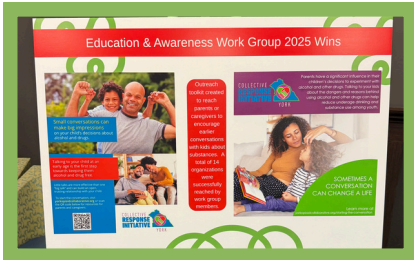


Increasing Recovery Capital

The third session explored the supports that help people maintain long-term recovery, often referred to as recovery capital.

Participants highlighted the impact of Certified Recovery Specialists (CRS) and discussed ways to increase public understanding of peer support services. Many groups emphasized building on programs that already work well, including alumni groups at treatment centers and recovery-focused community events.

Story sharing emerged as a recurring theme throughout the discussion. Participants noted that hearing personal recovery stories can reduce stigma, build trust, and help people feel more connected to the recovery community. Informal gatherings and recreational activities were also identified as important opportunities to strengthen relationships and community visibility.



Showcase of 2025 Wins and Successes

The Annual Meeting also included a “Wins and Successes” showcase, where CRIY work groups highlighted accomplishments from the past year on boards for participants to view throughout breaks in the day.

- The **Recovery Community Support Work Group** shared the launch of a CRS Roundtable, the successful Recovery Art Show during Recovery Month, and a learning session on housing and homelessness led by Kelly Blechertas.
- The **Treatment and Services Coordination Work Group** highlighted collaboration between York Day Early Learning and Colonial House, the development of a York County Behavioral Health Job Board, and a learning session on navigating legislative changes presented by Deb Beck, President of the Drug and Alcohol Service Providers of Pennsylvania.
- The **Education and Awareness Work Group** shared its development of an outreach toolkit for guardians and caregivers, designed to help families start conversations about substance use.
- The **First Responder Education Work Group**, which continued cross-agency collaboration to deliver Compassionate Overdose Response Education.
- The **MAT Action Team**, which works to ensure individuals leaving York County Prison maintain access to medication-assisted treatment as they transition back into the community.

If you're interested in learning more about CRIY or getting involved, please reach out to Collective Impact Coordinator, Kirstin Einsig at keinsig@yorkopioidcollaborative.org.

CRIY Steering Committee

CRIY's work is guided by a Steering Committee made up of community leaders and partners from across the behavioral health system.

Current Steering Committee members include:

- Billie Barton – Primary Actor, Family Member with Lived Experience Seat
- Ian Donat – Emergency Health Services Federation, First Responder Seat
- Amy Evans – York County Probation Services, Probation Services Seat
- Pete Fitzgerald – Herkey Houses, Recovery Housing Seat
- Joselin Hernandez-Gutierrez – York/Adams Drug and Alcohol Commission, Single County Authority Seat
- Yolanda Hunter – Recovery House of Worship, Faith-Based Organization Seat
- Melissa Leathery – York County Human Services, Human Services Seat
- Becky Lockner – Life Changing Pathways, Recovery Community Organization Seat
- Jennifer Lloyd - Colonial House Inc., Treatment Provider Seat
- Matthew McGirr – Primary Actor, Community Member with Lived Experience Seat

CRIY also recognized the service of Mary Dolheimer, who concluded her term representing the Family Member with Lived Experience seat on the Steering Committee.

Acknowledgements

The York Opioid Collaborative proudly serves as the backbone organization for the Collective Response Initiative York (CRIY), providing support, coordination, and facilitation for its ongoing efforts. As part of this role, the backbone team planned and implemented the Annual Meeting.

Additionally, CRIY would like to thank the Church of the Open Door, East York Campus for their generous donation of the space to host the Annual Meeting.

