



2 CENTER FOR
0 AFRICAN AMERICAN
2 RECOVERY
4 DEVELOPMENT

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ABOUT CAARD

Center for African American Recovery Development (CAARD) is a national organization built by Black Recovery Advocacy leaders, and Subject Matter Experts in the wellness and recovery movement.

With over 150 years of experience developing Recovery Community Organizations (RCO's) across the country, we recognize the need for a national collaborative effort that can effectively incubate the growth of culturally congruent community-based Black RCOs.

CAARD serves as the epicenter for African American recovery advocacy leaders to connect to technical assistance, infrastructure sustainability and funding supports across the national spectrum.

Join CAARD to help further our mission and vision of bringing powerfully built recovery support services to African American communities.



MISSION

To advance the development and sustainability of African American Recovery Community Organizations through capacity building, education, and advocacy.

VISION

We envision equitable access to integrated and culturally-congruent recovery support services for all African Americans across the nation.



WHAT IS A RECOVERY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

An (RCO) is an independent organization led and governed by people with lived experience focused on wellness and recovery.

An RCO can provide any of the following:

- Leadership by people in recovery, respecting all wellness pathways;**
- Resource coordination providing community members with access to life building information, services and peer recovery mentorship ;**
- Peer-based recovery support activities, such as training recovery peers;**
- Recovery focused promotion and outreach programming in community education;**
- Progressive health -focused policy advocacy activities to foster life- positive communities and reduce the stigma of substance use disorder;**
- Social activities and events that engage community members in behavioral health awareness and support of harm reduction initiatives;**
- Community mission and vision platforms that focus on addiction recovery.**

WHAT WE DO?

- ✓ Identify, mentor and uplift community leaders and recovery champions in Black communities ;
- ✓ Establish and advance Black-run & Black- led recovery community organizations in national communities that have a significant African American population;
- ✓ Discover and amplify culturally distinct and unique recovery pathways, and to assist established RCO's with cultural competency;
- ✓ Advocate for African Americans to receive quality and equitable access to life-affirming recovery support services;
- ✓ Build a cohesive voice of Black RCO's providing industry expertise, training and technical support to bolster organizational infrastructure and sustainability

HOW WE PLAN TO DO IT?

- ✓ Educate
Direct RCO support, training, and mentorship; Technical webinars and workshops that are culturally congruent and aimed towards Black Recovery support and the development of sustainable and effective RCOs.
- ✓ Alleviate
Organize and make accessible a network of industry-related comprehensive resources that help in securing national funding.
- ✓ Elevate
Advocate for resources and fair policies through the use of our respective journeys as Recovery Advocates and the stories of African American recovering communities.





BLACK RCO'S: BUILDING A STRONG BOARD

Building a strong board of directors for a Black Recovery Community Organization (RCO) is crucial for several reasons:

- **Representation Matters:** A committed and available board of directors includes individuals from various industry backgrounds focusing on those who understand the unique challenges faced by Black communities;
- **Credibility and Trust:** Having well-respected individuals on the board can enhance the organization's credibility and trustworthiness within the community;
- **Strategic Guidance:** An experienced and skilled board can provide valuable strategic insight setting clear organizational goals, developing effective strategies, and navigating complex challenges;
- **Resource Mobilization:** A strong board can assist in fundraising efforts utilizing networks and connections that can help secure financial support, sponsorships, and partnerships with other organizations or agencies;
- **Community Engagement:** Board members serve as ambassadors for the RCO, engaging with the community, advocating for its needs, and fostering connections with other community organizations to better understand and address the specific needs of the Black community;
- **Leadership Development:** Board service provides leadership development opportunities for individuals within the Black community. It empowers individuals to take on leadership roles and become advocates for recovery and positive change.



MEET THE TEAM

Nyla Christian

Executive Director



Nyla is a CAARD founding board member and leads CAARD as a Certified Interventionist and Peer Specialist guiding local, state, and national stakeholders in building culturally congruent community-based supportive programming that focuses on diverse inclusion in behavioral health and wellness support services.

Anita Bradley

Board President



Anita has served as an Advisory Consultant under two Presidential Administrations and is a CAARD founding board member. Anita has secured over \$50 million in grants in her tenure as Founder and CEO of Northern Ohio Recovery Association.

Iisha Wesley

Board Vice President



Iisha is a CAARD founding board member and sitting Parliamentarian. Iisha is fluent in Nonprofit Leadership, Community Engagement, Quality Redesign Programming, and is trained in Marketplace Insurance, and Public Speaking.

Dr. Jonathan Lofgren

Board Member



Dr. Jonathan Lofgren is a Professor at Minneapolis College in Addiction Counseling and a CAARD founding board member. Dr. Lofgren's "A Black Paper" has served as the foundation for growth of CAARD and budding Black RCO's across the country.

Dora Wright

Board Member



Dora is a CAARD founding board member and the Founder and CEO of Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition. CRCC is recognized as a pivotal recovery liaison between the community and local supportive housing entities and mental health centers in Chicagoland and has just been recognized as the 2024 National Rally for Recovery Hub Event.

Adrianna Craft

Project Coordinator



Adrianna joined CAARD summer 2023 to manage program and organizational administration. Adrianna has a commanding operations background and a passion for positive mental health and trauma initiatives in the Black community.

CAARD BOD: COMMUNITY IMPACT



Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition

Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition was founded in 2012 by Dora Wright. CRCC is a Peer lead, Peer driven Recovery Community Organization. We are a peer-driven and peer- led and a member of Faces & Voices Association of Recovery Community Organizations (ARCO)



Northern Ohio Recovery Association (NORA)

Northern Ohio Recovery Association was founded in 2004 by Anita Bradley. NORA provides culturally relevant chemical dependency services with dignity and respect to youth, adults, and families in Northeast Ohio



Minority Recovery Collective Inc. (MRCI)

Minority Recovery Collective Inc. was founded in 2020 by Natasha Cheatham. MRCI provides mental health education and recovery support for BIPOC youth and young adults overcoming addiction, mental health challenges, and trauma.



LivingWell Project (LWP)

LivingWell Project was founded in 2021 by Nyla Christian. LWP's mission is to support Peer Recovery Certification as an accessible and inclusive pathway to effective and sustainable recovery from addiction, alcoholism and mental health challenges for women in Black communities.





African American RCO Capacity Building Project

CAARD provides essential technical assistance in the creation of RCOs that are culturally tailored to meet the unique needs of African American communities:

- Engaging the local recovery support community in strategy initiatives
- Securing the critical support of local political and health care stakeholders
- Facilitating 501(c)(3) processes
- Partnering in community needs assessments to ensure that each RCO is attuned to the unique requirements of its locale.

The urgency of our mission is underscored by sobering national statistics. With numbers soaring post pandemic, recent years have witnessed a devastating 44% increase in drug overdose fatalities among African Americans from 2019 to 2020, compared to a 30% increase for individuals of all racial backgrounds. CAARD, born out of this pressing crisis, is a collaborative of successful leaders within the RCO movement with the experience and cultural insight needed to engage community members.

As we build nationally, we will continue to focus on providing comprehensive and culturally informed training in organizational and board development, the delivery of peer-driven SUD/ODU, and overdose prevention services, and funding sustainability and effective fiscal management.

CAARD is dedicated to focusing on culturally tailored strategies to combat Opioid Use Disorder, Substance Use Disorder, and overdose fatalities in underserved communities. Our central emphasis is empowering local communities by birthing community specific, enduring RCOs that can bring about substantial positive change in the lives of African Americans within these regions.



Technical Assistance, Training, and Consultation Offered by CAARD

- **Organizational Development Support:** Guidance on establishing and structuring RCOs, including advice on forming a mission, vision, and organizational objectives that align with the needs of communities of color;
- **Resource Mobilization:** Assistance in identifying and securing funding sources, building grant writing skills, and financial management strategies to sustain and grow RCOs;
- **Program Development:** Help in designing and implementing culturally sensitive programs and interventions for substance use disorder, including practice- based evidence and peer support models;
- **Cultural Competency Training:** Industry corporate coaching and training staff and volunteers within RCOs to understand and address the specific needs of the communities they reflect, fostering inclusivity and cultural sensitivity.
- **Advocacy and Engagement Strategies:** Coaching on effective community engagement, partnership building, and advocacy techniques to amplify RCO's impact and reach throughout diverse communities
- **Technical Training:** Offering workshops or seminars on leadership development, and operational aspects, such as legal compliance, research & data, and best practices for organizational efficiency.





CAARD Partnership Outcomes:

Community Engagement and Empowerment

- CAARD's mission involves engaging grassroots community leaders in the self-determined formation of RCOs. Our participatory approach ensures that the solutions and strategies developed are rooted in the lived experiences and needs of underserved communities.

Advocacy and Sustainable Solutions:

- Beyond immediate support, CAARD promotes systemic change in addressing the specific impact of substance use disorders in BIPOC communities. Our guidance helps BIPOC led RCOs advocate for resource policy changes and sustainable programming strategies directly improving health outcomes and reducing disparities.

Network and Resources:

- Through our collective of experts, we offer a network of resources, connections, and best practices that can be shared with BIPOC RCOs, offering a wealth of knowledge, and national expertise.

CAARD Technical Training Team:

- Our team at CAARD is a working Board of Directors and staff who serve as experts available to deliver technical training and assistance. Moreover, we are the Founding Board of Directors with direct access to industry experts well-versed in the specific needs of BIPOC communities.



WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW



CAARD RCO COMMUNITIES

2023 In Progress:

- New Orleans Recovery Collective (**NOLA RC**)
- Memphis Shelby County Recovery Collective (**MSCRC**)

2024 Projected:

- Mobile, Alabama
- Orangeburg, South Carolina

CAARD PUBLISHED MEDIA

- **CAARD 2022 Policy Paper:** Culturally Specific Solutions for Black Recovery Communities
- **For The Culture: CAARD & The Black Recovery Movement-** Ongoing Virtual Series
- **CAARD : Recovery For The Culture-** Newsletter



CAARD PUBLICATIONS



CAARD At-A-Glance

Why build RCOs for the Black community?

- **To address the unique, specific and cultural needs that are shared and familiar in Black communities;**
- **To address the lack of leadership and representation in recovery advocacy spaces. Representation matters and speaks to cultural relevance and congruence;**
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY: To directly address the EXPONENTIAL rise in opioid overdose and overdose deaths in Black communities.**

About Us

Our vision is to advance the development and responsibility of African American recovery-oriented organizations through our capacity building, advocacy and education.

Our Mission

Our vision is to advance the development and responsibility of African American recovery-oriented organizations through our capacity building, advocacy and education.

Our Vision

Our vision is to advance the development and responsibility of African American recovery-oriented organizations through our capacity building, advocacy and education.

Why CAARD?

There is a significant need for strong recovery community organizations across the nation that can meet the unique cultural needs of the Black community and provide a path to recovery. The need is to create a path to recovery that is culturally relevant and addresses the unique needs of the Black community. The need is to create a path to recovery that is culturally relevant and addresses the unique needs of the Black community.

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(Appendix A)

The Importance of Black Recovery

African American recovery is restorative, holistic, and preventive; it includes physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth. It embraces values and traditions of African American culture, and it's communal and interconnected with our people.

Recovery involves participating in family, neighborhood, community, and individualized healing that contributes to sustained health and wellness.

CAARD
African American Recovery and Recovery Principles

African American Recovery defined:

African American recovery is restorative, holistic, and preventive. It includes physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth. Recovery practices honor and traditions of African American culture, and it's communal and interconnected with our people. Recovery involves participating in family, neighborhood, community, and individualized healing that contributes to sustained health and wellness.

Principles of Recovery for African Americans:

1. **Hope.** With all that we have endured, hope increases in recovery; it's the belief that meaningful recovery is a bright future.
2. **Purpose.** No purpose in recovery for African Americans involves activities which help individuals and families reach meaningful change, and that those changes also strengthen and support the health and wellness of our neighborhoods and communities.
3. **Cultural Expression.** Cultural expression is a protective factor that can be manifested in various ways: art, dance, movement, music, poetry, singing, and other forms of creative expression.
4. **Cultural celebration.** Cultural holidays, art, dance, movement, music, poetry, singing, and other forms of creative expression.
5. **Recovery is a journey.** Recovery involves healing historical and present traumas in our body, mind, and community.
6. **Recovery is a journey.** Recovery involves healing historical and present traumas in our body, mind, and community.
7. **Recovery is a journey.** Recovery involves healing historical and present traumas in our body, mind, and community.
8. **Recovery is a journey.** Recovery involves healing historical and present traumas in our body, mind, and community.
9. **Recovery is a journey.** Recovery involves healing historical and present traumas in our body, mind, and community.
10. **Recovery is a journey.** Recovery involves healing historical and present traumas in our body, mind, and community.

Recovery is a journey. Recovery involves healing historical and present traumas in our body, mind, and community.

(Appendix B)



BLACK RECOVERY: PRACTICE & PURPOSE



CAARD Policy Paper

Center for African American Recovery Development is a pivotal force in building Black Recovery nationally:

"While RCOs are a wonderful way to support those in recovery, an equitable way to support Black people in recovery is through Black-led RCOs which are set apart from other RCOs.

Black-led RCOs provide representation through racial mirroring, both in their staff and in the peer recovery support volunteers. Simply put, the race/ethnicity of the staff and peer recovery support volunteers "mirrors" the race/ethnicity of the people using and enjoying the RCOs."

Culturally Specific Solutions for Black Recovery Communities

Executive Summary

Another RCO that is an example is the Northern Ohio Recovery Community (NORCO), where members and those in recovery voluntarily donate and contribute to support themselves. They also engaged users in various ways through their recovery journey. NORCO also engaged users in various ways through their recovery journey. NORCO also engaged users in various ways through their recovery journey.

They have been used by the Association of Recovery Educators (ARE) to train staff in the Black community and have been used by the Association of Recovery Educators (ARE) to train staff in the Black community and have been used by the Association of Recovery Educators (ARE) to train staff in the Black community.

"We had one simple purpose and that was to support recovery in the Black community and have been used by the Association of Recovery Educators (ARE) to train staff in the Black community and have been used by the Association of Recovery Educators (ARE) to train staff in the Black community."

(Appendix C)

A Black Paper

Moving the Recovery Movement into the Black Community across the United States

This paper examines the possibility that addiction, treatment, and recovery communities can emerge for African Americans. The current evidence suggests that recovery is not sufficient to meet the needs of the African American community. The social determinants of health and the structural inequities associated with the recovery movement. It is time to focus our collective efforts on recovery and considerable others in strengthening recovery support and activities within our own communities.

The intent of this paper is to advocate for recovery and recovery advocacy in Black communities across the United States of America. The way we will achieve this goal is to organize recovery advocates, recovery organizations, and other community entities to build and strengthen Recovery Community Systems, Services, and Support within the African American culture across and communities across the nation. Single efforts to fix symptoms and strength of Forces and Values of Recovery have not proved their ability. Forces and values inherent in the African American community, however the present and the future, must be used with the goal of creating a sense of that work specifically into African American communities. A RCO's strategic approach goes the opposite and the forward from which is held to be true, this paper may or may not address Forces & Values and suggest they be our platform, however at the only stage that is truly operational is to suggest by our group.

Recovery in the Black Community should be defined by African American's in recovery, not recovery advocates, experts and stakeholders to be addiction, treatment, and recovery fields.

- 1. Organize to empower
- 2. Support recovery for national initiative
- 3. Research African American recovery
- 4. Research African American recovery
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- 19. Research African American recovery
- 20. Research African American recovery

A CAARD Recovery Meaningful Language for and by African American people and community

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A Black Paper

Why are Black run, Black led RCOs needed in the Black community?

A historical and strategic perspective...

A Black Paper: Moving the Recovery Movement into the Black Community

across the United States,

Dr. Jonathan Lofgren

Read "A Black Paper" at

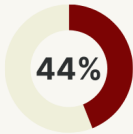
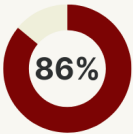
www.thecaard.com





About Us

We are a national team of African American subject matter experts that have over 100 years of experience in developing African American led Recovery Community Organizations. We are utilizing this combination of experience to develop culturally-congruent Recovery Community Organizations that address substance use and mental health challenges.



Black Overdose Death Rate Increase (15-24)

Compared to other age groups within racial/ethnic groups, Black persons aged 15-24 years experienced the largest relative overdose death rate increase from 2019 to 2020 (86%).

Black Overdose Death Rate Increase (Overall)

Compared to other racial/ethnic groups, overall relative overdose death rate increases were highest among Black persons from 2019 to 2020 (44%).



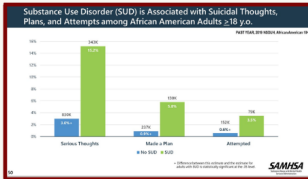
Our Mission

Our mission is to advance the development and sustainability of African American recovery community organizations through capacity building, education, and advocacy.



Our Vision

Our vision is for all African Americans across the nation to have equitable access to integrated and culturally-congruent recovery support services.



Serious Thoughts, Plans, and Attempts of Suicide for Blacks (18 and Older)

African Americans with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) have a significantly higher rate of serious thoughts, plans, and attempts of suicide than African Americans without SUD.



Why CAARD?

We recognize the great need for strong recovery community organizations across the nation that can reach and serve marginalized communities. We are determined to use our combined experience to address the pressing issues faced by individuals and families struggling to attain equitable health, wellness, substance use, and mental health recovery support services.



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Center For African American Recovery Development



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African American Recovery and Recovery Principles

African American Recovery defined:

African American recovery is restorative, holistic, and preventive; it includes physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth. Recovery embraces values and traditions of African American culture, and it's communal and interconnected with our people. Recovery involves participating in family, neighborhood, community, and individualized healing that contributes to sustained health and wellness.

Principles of Recovery for African Americans:

1. **Hope.** With all that we have endured, hope increases in recovery: it's the belief that maintaining recovery leads to a bright future.
2. **Purpose.** Nia (purpose) in recovery for African Americans involves activities which help individuals and families make meaningful change, and that those changes also strengthen and support the health and wellness of our neighborhoods and communities.
3. **Cultural Expression.** Cultural expression is a protective factor that can be manifested in cultural celebrations, cultural holiday's, art, dance, movement, music, poetry, singing, spoken word, and theater.
4. **Trauma Informed Recovery.** Recovery involves healing historical and present trauma in our body, mind, and community.
5. **Recovery** is supported through socio-economic-political-cultural justice. This activism involves seeking, pursuing, and demanding justice in all areas of life, and is an important aspect of African American culture and recovery.
6. **Joy.** In recovery, joy is an inner experience of happiness and satisfaction with life; it becomes an inspirational light for our community.
7. **Recovery is a dimension of Freedom.** Recovery is healing, empowering, restorative and liberating for African American individuals, families, and communities.
8. **Advocacy.** African American recovery concerns itself with the community. In the spirit of mutual aid societies and civil rights movements, recovery involves taking a stand for, lifting-up, in solidarity with and speaking-out for the health and wellbeing of our community.
9. **Spirituality.** Spirituality in recovery is often maintained with a strong sense of connection, peace, meaning, and love. There are multiple pathways of spirituality in recovery, including: religion, Imani (faith), mindfulness, breath work, physical disciplines, belief in higher powers and beyond.
10. **Family, neighborhood, and community driven.** African American recovery includes connection with the recovery community, family, friends, neighbors, and the community as a whole.

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Substance Use and Co-occurring Disorders Recovery and Recovery Principles for African Americans

Culturally Specific Solutions for Black Recovery Communities



African American
Behavioral Health
CENTER OF
EXCELLENCE



Culturally Specific Solutions for Black Recovery Communities

Executive Summary

RCOs are a long-term sustainable recovery support model that bridges the gap between substance use disorders (SUD) and recovery. They also expand access to evidence-based treatment while advancing racial equity with respect to drug policies. RCOs are vitally important and when they're led by Black people in recovery, they provide examples to Black people seeking recovery that there is a way out of substance use disorders. When RCOs are invested in Black communities Black people in recovery are ushered into an inclusive space where they can see people who look like them through racial mirroring.

This has been done well by the Association of Persons Affected by Addiction (APAA) founded by Joe Powell in 1998 in Dallas, TX. In a 2019 blog post Powell states, "We had one simple purpose and that was to spread recovery in Dallas, TX. Now 24 years later, we know through experience that the RCO model is ideal for African American communities impacted by addiction and co-occurring mental health challenges. Recovery flourishes in a community that is connected to a network of strength-based services; and that network thrives because of the experiential knowledge and lived experience of the people in recovery and allies." [1] Not only this, APAA boasts some incredible statistics [2]: It has been estimated that recovery support services (including per support services) have saved over \$3.4 million in healthcare costs, a 72% savings over 12 months. Over half (54%) of coaching participants improved their housing status as renters or owners of their living quarters after 12 months, compared to 32% at enrollment. Employment increased to 58% from 24% at enrollment.

Another RCO that is an example is the Northern Ohio Recovery Association (NORA), whose mission and vision is to empower individuals, families and communities to support lifestyles of recovery and establish innovative care to support continued recovery of the communities we serve, respectively, through the values of integrity, excellence, self-care, social justice and teamwork. NORA's peer recovery support specialists have lived experience with recovery and support their mentees in finding the recovery path best suited for them. Moreover, they are also very connected to the community which is imperative when thinking about the plethora of needs - employment, housing, educational, social services, mental health, and community health - a new person in recovery will have.

Taking a granular look at opioid use and the impact of opioid overdoses and overdose deaths in the Black community presents evidence of how RCOs can be a nonjudgmental source of support and a community-based bridge to recovery and subsequently a new life. The answer to support Black people in recovery is to ensure RCOs and RCCs have the funding they need to support Black communities.

“We had one simple purpose and that was to spread recovery in Dallas, TX. Now 24 years later, we know through experience that the RCO model is ideal for African American communities impacted by addiction and co-occurring mental health challenges.
Joe Powell
Founder, APAA”

Current Landscape

The *National Drug Control Strategy*[3] acknowledges the importance of recovery as evidenced by their inclusion of, “Building a Recovery-Ready Nation.” In that section, recovery support services (RSS), recovery community organizations (RCOs), and recovery community centers (RCCs) are discussed as mechanisms for facilitating recovery. It also noted that non-clinical services provided by individuals with lived experience or peers are important.

RCOs also offer a range of services such as relapse prevention, housing and employment support, social and recreational services, as well as other activities. As a result of the services provided by RCOs, positive outcomes result. RCOs serve populations in need such as low income people, those with mental health challenges, or SUD can benefit from RCOs.

The *National Drug Control Strategy* does not discuss the importance of RSS and RCOs in the Black community. While it acknowledges that Black individuals with substance use disorders often face prejudice, stigma, and discrimination, it does not discuss the importance of RSS, RCCs, or RCOs in the Black community as well as organizations such as these which are Black-led.

Several factors contribute to the lower reach of formal treatment in Black communities, including mistrust of the medical system[4] and discrimination encountered in formal SUD treatment settings. Many of these factors also lead to why US Blacks take longer to complete substance use disorders treatment,[5] and are less likely to complete treatment episodes for substance use disorders treatment courses,[6] indicating a greater need to augment formal treatment services with more flexible and accessible recovery support services. It is for these reasons that RCOs are ideally poised to mitigate these barriers.

Since they are peer-led, community-based, non-profit entities, RCOs often provide trusted information to address/mitigate issues of trust and can provide a supportive environment in which barriers to SUD care, including racial discrimination at clinics can be discussed, and where advocacy and societal change are part of the mission.

Where RCOs are Needed

Of note is Principle 2 in the *National Drug Control Strategy* whose stated aim is to “make recovery possible for more Americans.”

Consistent with this principle is the *National Drug Control Strategy*'s call for the expansion of peer recovery support services as well as adopting standards for the peer workforce, RCCs, RCOs, and other peer led organizations. Missing from the *National Drug Control Strategy* is any mention of the needs of Black communities to have a peer workforce from the Black community.

Investment in RCOs is highly variable across the US, and yet, the focus of this policy brief is the Black community who seeks to recover SUD, as such, it is important to illuminate the impact of RCCs, RCOs, and other RSS within the Black community.

Racial Disparities Exist

The *National Drug Control Strategy* notes that peer specialists work in a plethora of settings, where they help those seeking recovery while also helping those in recovery. They also play a vital role in the lives of those with active SUD, survivors of overdose, as well as with programs such as access to clean syringes, street outreach, mobile clinics, and more. Given this observation, it is critical to note that the disparities amongst race for overdose deaths reveals that among US whites, the rate with which overdose deaths were increasing slowed down in the period from 2016 to 2018.

For US Blacks, the number of overdose deaths continued to exponentially increase during the same time from 2016 to 2018 in an unabated continuation of the trend from previous years (2012 to 2016). According to CDC data, overdose death rates for Black people are 44% compared to 22% for whites during the same time.[6] In fact, Black people 15-24 years of age had an 86% increase in overdose deaths during 2019-2020 which was the largest rate increase when compared with other racial groups.[7] Not only is the Black community losing its young adults, but in 2020, the overdose death rate among Black men 65 years and older was nearly seven times that of white men 65 years and older.[8]

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has a research portfolio that seeks to look at, amongst other topics, research that advances the design of stigma-free patient-centered systems of care such that people who experience addiction can recover and sustain their recovery over the long-term. This effort is soliciting applications that address understudied areas of opportunity, particularly those that focus on fundamental barriers to reducing overdose deaths at the individual, provider, organizational, community, or system levels. Such efforts require the involvement of organizations like CAARD who can ensure that Black people in recovery are actively involved in this important agenda, thus setting priorities of focus in this area of research.

Moreover, President Biden proposed \$11.2 billion for Health and Human Services (HHS) in the FY 2022 budget, a 54% increase from the previous year's enacted budget, to expand access to substance use prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery support services (RSS). Again, organizations like CAARD are devoted to fostering community involvement in recovery-oriented services and need to be actively engaged and invested in financially through adequate funding; thus, recovery efforts need to receive a substantial allocation of funds from that budget.

RCOs Expand Access to Evidenced-Based Treatment

It has been suggested that a comprehensive continuum of care model of addiction versus an acute model of care be used as a practice standard"[9] , also called the recovery-oriented system of care (ROSC). This model of care is collaborative and comprehensive pulling together resources and support to provide wraparound services for the person embarking on recovery. Recovery community organizations (RCOs) are a valuable addition to the ROSC model by supporting individuals with their recovery, in their own communities. RCOs are in alignment with this model because it addresses the fact that everyone needs something different in their recovery journey, recovery is not a straight line, but rather, it is a "process along a continuum"[10], and finally, support from peers, family, spirituality, and the community are imperative for people to have a chance to participate fully in their own recovery. To do that, engagement is imperative. A 2020 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) report indicated that "most individuals do not, and may not need to, engage in clinical treatment to initiate and sustain recovery."[11] This bolsters the importance of RCOs and RCCs within communities because people engage with processes of recovery where they live.[12]



RCOs Advance Racial Equity With Respect to Drug Policy

To contextualize this problem, there is a significant difference between how Black community members seeking recovery / treatment are treated compared to how similarly situated white people are treated. In the mid-1980s, Black people were disproportionately criminalized for their dependence and addiction to crack cocaine[13], [14]. A negative side effect was the over criminalization through mass incarceration of Black people who instead needed recovery support and resources[15],[16]. Moreover, returning from incarceration was not made easy since the main issue - the underlying SUD - was not addressed by the incarceration or interaction with the carceral system or the prison industrial complex. Whereas when RCOs and/or RCCs are used for those released from prison industrial complex, the community-based approach improves treatment adherence and reduces harms associated with SUD.[17] While this is just one example of the impact of unaddressed substance use and absent recovery-oriented services, there are others that are more simple and no less harmful to the individual or their community. Unemployment, lack of stable housing, lack of educational opportunities, or isolation are consequences that can arise out of unaddressed substance use and absent recovery-oriented services such as peer-led recovery support for Black people led by Black people in recovery.[18]



“

Recovery Consultants of Atlanta utilizes evidence based practices which have been effective in the African American community. And advisory and governing boards are led by individuals who are Black and reflective of the community.”

Cassandra Collins
Recovery Consultants of
Atlanta // Georgia

Why Black Communities Need Black-Led RCOs

RCOs that address recovery from substance use disorders for Black people, led by Black people, are a necessary, viable, and essential way to help those who are experiencing these concerns. Concerns which can be addressed by RCOs whose roles also encompass relapse prevention and recovery enhancement.

While RCOs are a wonderful way to support those in recovery, an equitable way to support Black people in recovery is through Black-led RCOs which are set apart from other RCOs. Black-led RCOs provide representation through racial mirroring, both in their staff and in the peer recovery support volunteers. Simply put, the race/ethnicity of the staff and peer recovery support volunteers “mirrors” the race/ethnicity of the people using and enjoying the RCOs.[19], [20], [21] Eken et. al. (2021) suggests that those with marginalized social identities, including Black participants, were “more likely to report a desire for provider cultural competence.”[22] This then leads to the potential for greater inclusion. Many Black people who have reached out for recovery support have felt isolated, especially if they are the only Black person in the group or meeting. This can lead to not fully integrating or participating in their own recovery.

Methodology

The Center for African American Recovery Development (CAARD) prepared a survey via Google form with open-ended and close-ended items that was distributed to 45 RCOs across the country. Data collection began on July 23, 2022, and concluded four weeks later on August 22, 2022. Survey participants were asked about their experiences with their respective RCOs. Almost half of those who received the survey responded (n=22; 49%). Once the data was gathered, it was coded and several common themes emerged which will be discussed in greater detail later. Limitations using this formate include, but are not limited to, respondents needing to have access to wifi, a smartphone, a laptop, or desktop which means there could be underrepresentation and underreporting.

Findings

The study conducted by CAARD indicates there is additional evidence that culturally congruent services specifically for Black people seeking recovery are needed. The two themes that emerged from the survey data are: (1) respondents representing white RCOs indicated they did and do not provide culturally appropriate or congruent services for Black people and (2) there are greater financial implications for Black-led RCOs insofar there are financial disparities that exist and contribute to the lack of resources needed to appropriately address the needs of Black people who seek recovery.

Black-run and led RCOs indicated they experienced increased scrutiny which resulted in significant administrative burden and



surveillance creating increased work overload leading to discrimination and inequality. Appropriate oversight is necessary and should be applied equally and consistently among all ethnic groups as shown by Black-led RCOs narratives.

When Black people are set up for success they are provided culturally congruent services in a community setting such as within the Black-led RCO space - 50% of clients remain sober and clean.[23] With respect to cultural congruence, the RCOs dedicated to Black people have programs rooted in Ubuntu ("I am because you are") which is healing and affirms the person's perceived weaknesses or areas of growth. When Culturally congruent, or Black-led RCOs affirm the identities of Black people seeking recovery services, resources, and support thus mitigating barriers to community, supportive services, and treatment. RCOs led by whites indicated that their services were not culturally responsive or specific to Black people in recovery which often leaves Black people excluded which leads them to attempt to figure out recovery on their own or through faith-based methods, which often do not address their SUD needs so while they might receive support, they do not receive the support needed to bridge the gap between active addiction and recovery.



Appendix C

Another important consideration that the CAARD survey illuminated is that a main barrier to resources is specifically related to funding. First, providers that have historically received funding, continue to receive funding even without showing positive impact or outcomes. Second, this feeds into lack of inclusion whereby these providers maintain the status quo suggesting that they're complicit in the 'old boys' network'. According to the recent CAARD survey, the white organizations faced few barriers to funding. Whereas, the survey results indicated that Black RCOs experienced greater scrutiny and discrimination. The marked difference in responses from Black-led RCOs and RCOs run by white people illuminated this disparity. Finally, it was determined that treatment centers are getting funding that is dedicated to treatment centers and funding that should be going to RCOs since the funding eligibility for the grants is open to community based organizations, of which both treatment centers and RCOs are apart. Because there are greater requirements to prove eligibility as an RCO, especially a Black-led one, treatment centers are better able to secure funding.[24]

Resiliency of People With Lived Experiences

“

Our culture is rooted in Ubuntu healing, so we affirm the individual's uniqueness while celebrating the collective shared experiences throughout our programming. We also lean on our data collection effort asking our community directly how we can best serve and address issues.”

Iisha Wesley
Minority Recovery
Collective Inc // Indiana

“

We also allow alternatives to strictly clinical care through peer support, arts and art therapy, life skills, credit courses, for example. We are proud to offer a yearly conference which is the only conference centering Black / African American mental wellness, health, and the arts where peers, practitioners, and those that serve the Black community in this capacity can come learn and educate one another on their experiences dealing with the traditional mental health system, offer suggestions, have their voices heard, and connect with people that serve the Black community.”

Sheri Hall
Poetry for Personal
Power // Kansas

RCCs Are Agents of Social Change

Black-led RCOs provide culturally relevant recovery-oriented services for Black people contribute to a healthier Black community by reducing substance use and promoting employment, stable housing, educational opportunities, parenting support, civic engagement, and more.

A nationwide survey of RCCs highlighted the dedication of RCCs to support social change and social justice. Of the surveyed RCCs (60% of the 202 RCCs identified nationwide), nearly all (98%) indicated that their RCC is anti-racist. These centers actively promote anti-racism in a variety of ways: by creating safe spaces for Black individuals to gather (70%), engaging in conversations about anti-racism with their members (68%), and hosting presentations and workshops about anti-racism (29%).[25] RCCs serving Black communities can also support anti-racism as equitable organizations providing these communities the resources and support that they need through racial mirroring, inclusive practices, and peer recovery supports within a safe space.

	Total n=122 % (n)	ARCO n=57 % (n)	Other RCCs n=65 % (n)	Group Difference p
Takes anti-racism stances (% yes):	95.1 (116)	94.6 (53)	98.4 (63)	0.34
RCC engages in these activities to promote anti-racism:				
Host presentations and workshops about (anti-)racism	28.7 (35)	28.1 (16)	29.2 (19)	0.89
Have conversations about (anti-)racism with participants and employees	68.0 (83)	68.4 (39)	67.7 (44)	0.93
Targeted outreach efforts towards BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities in your area	49.2 (60)	57.9 (33)	41.5 (27)	0.07
Create safe spaces for BIPOC individuals to gather	69.7 (85)	68.4 (39)	70.8 (46)	0.78
Encourage employees and participants to speak out against racist and discriminatory behavior	68.0 (83)	70.2 (40)	66.2 (43)	0.63
Examine your RCC's policies and protocols for discriminatory practices	74.6 (91)	82.5 (47)	67.7 (44)	0.06
Release official statements regarding your RCC's stance on anti-racism	29.5 (36)	35.1 (20)	24.6 (16)	0.21

Recommendations and Financial Call to Action

The ask is twofold. First, fund Black recovery community organizations (RCOs) in Black communities where Black people in recovery live. It is our position that funding these specific projects will allow Black people in recovery to create their own solutions to community level problems. Second, elevate Black voices to set the agenda for ongoing research. Black people need to participate in research both as participants and as researchers and evaluators. This has the potential to build resiliency and recovery capital in the Black community. Simply put, Black voices need to be elevated, their perspectives considered, and their lived experiences amplified. The mission of Center for African American Recovery Development (CAARD) is to advance the development and sustainability of African American recovery community organizations (RCOs) through capacity building, education, and advocacy. Based on research and CAARD's data analysis, we will begin targeting Memphis, TN and New Orleans, LA to begin this pivotal work.

Grant Information

This work is supported by grant 1H79FG000591 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). All material appearing in this publication, except that taken directly from copyrighted sources, is in the public domain and may be reproduced or copied without permission from SAMHSA or the authors. Citation of the source is appreciated. The opinions expressed herein are the view of the contributors and do not reflect the official position of SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this document is intended or should be inferred.

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BLACK RECOVERY MATTERS!

“Bringing culturally responsive recovery pathways to our communities is direly important!

Black-run and Black-led recovery community organizations are essential.

They fill a crucial gap in the healthcare system by providing relevant support while breaking down barriers, reducing disparities, and promoting healing for our loved ones in in the Black community.”

- Nyla Christian, CAARD Executive Director

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CAARD is currently funded by F.O.R.E

