



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

NELSON SMITH  
COMMISSIONER

DEPARTMENT OF  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Post Office Box 1797  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1797

Telephone (804) 786-3921  
Fax (804) 371-6638  
[www.dbhds.virginia.gov](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov)

December 18, 2023

Item 312.L1 of Chapter 2 of the 2022 Acts of Assembly directs the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to report on the distribution and use of funds provided to members of the Virginia Association of Recovery Residences. The language states:

*Out of this appropriation, \$1,700,000 the first year and \$1,700,000 the second year is provided to make grants to members of the Virginia Association of Recovery Residences for recovery support services. The association must ensure that members accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Peer Recovery Support Services (CAPRSS) receive a share of these funds. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services shall report to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by August 1, 2023, and each year thereafter, on the distribution and use of the funds authorized in this paragraph.*

In accordance with this item, please find enclosed the report for Item 312.L1. Staff are available should you wish to discuss this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nelson Smith'.

Nelson Smith  
Commissioner  
Department of Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Services

CC:  
The Honorable John Littel  
Susan Massart  
Mike Tweedy



# **Grants for Recovery Support Services**

## **Report on Item 312.L1**

October 1, 2023

***DBHDS Vision: A Life of Possibilities for All Virginians***

## **Preface**

Item 312.L1 of Chapter 2 of the 2022 Acts of Assembly directs the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to report on the distribution and use of funds provided to members of the Virginia Association of Recovery Residences. The language states:

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# Introduction

The Virginia Association of Recovery Residences (VARR) utilized \$1,610,780 in FY 2023 of the \$1,700,00 first year funds allocated by the Virginia General Assembly. A summary of the FY 2023 expenditures is found in the chart below. **This report outlines information provided directly by VARR on the programs that were funded with this allocation.**

## Summary of FY 2023 General Fund Expenditures

Expenditure Category	Amount	Percentage of total expenditure
VARR Indigent Bed Disbursement and 30-Day Program Services	\$710,780	44.12%
Recovery Corps	\$450,000	27.94%
Get Help Platform and Technology	\$240,000	14.90%
VARR Administration	\$90,000	5.59%
Employment Readiness Training Program	\$80,000	4.97%
National Alliance of Recovery Residences (NARR) Standards and Training	\$40,000	2.48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,610,780</b>	

In an effort to track resident data and financial disbursements associated with the FY 2023 funding stream, VARR uses the Advanced Recovery Management System (ARMS). In ARMS, financial subscriptions are assigned to residents to track utilization of funding in real-time and allow VARR to filter resident data sets specifically by the funding stream that they are associated with. Also located in ARMS is the Recovery Capital (REC-CAP) instrument. Residents are guided through REC-CAP by trained navigators at their recovery organization. Recovery residence operators and their trained navigators utilize the REC-CAP evaluation to assess and measure an individuals' recovery capital. The scored evaluation results are used to create informed recovery care plans to help residents resolve barriers to recovery and unmet service needs and grow recovery strengths and increase recovery capital. (More on recovery capital is found on page 5 under the Indigent Bed Funding Model.)

## Distribution and Use of Funds

### **VARR Indigent Bed Disbursement/30-Day Program Services – \$710,780**

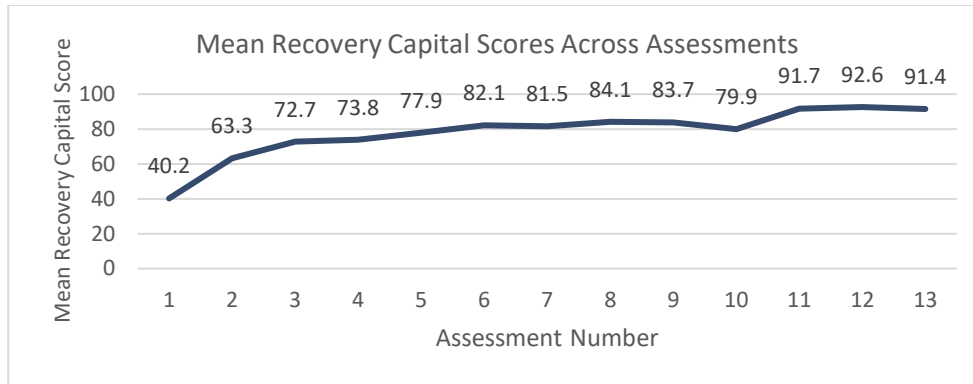
VARR's Indigent Bed Funding Model affords individuals with financial barriers who are seeking recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) access to recovery housing and recovery support services. Typical individuals who receive assistance from indigent bed funding are those who have a substance use disorder, are unemployed, would otherwise be homeless and express a desire to achieve recovery from substance use disorder. VARR has also noted that this funding has significantly increased equitable access into recovery residences for non-white individuals.

The indigent bed funding model is divided into two support models:

- 1) **Indigent Bed Nights** – Indigent bed nights are single units equivalent to one night in a recovery residence. These units provide individuals with financial barriers access to safe, alcohol and drug free, recovery housing.
- 2) **30-day Program Services** – 30-day program services are single units equivalent to 30 nights in a recovery residence including a suite of additional support services. These units designed for individuals who have a low recovery capital index (RCI) score who present significant barriers to recovery and need a higher support level of care. 30-Day Program Services provide individuals 30-days in a recovery residence with a structured schedule that is curriculum-driven, and other defined support services and life skills development. It includes recovery support services, day programming, activities and events, assertive linkage to mutual aid support groups and development of a recovery plan. Residents are also provided transportation to recovery-related activities, criminal justice and medical appointments, and more. They are also provided groceries and essential items weekly.

A snapshot of Indigent Bed Funding data is found below:

- **Utilization** – VARR reported that 16 certified recovery residence operators qualified to receive indigent bed funding during the fiscal year. VARR certified recovery residence operators qualify for indigent bed funding by fully implementing the measure, plan, engage functionality of the REC-CAP platform to demonstrate the delivery of recovery support services to individuals in certified recovery residences. In total, VARR reported 534 unique individuals benefited from the indigent bed and program funding and a total of 12,077 nights in a recovery residence were supported. Each of these unique individuals either received indigent bed funding, 30-day program services, or a combination of both.
- **Demographics** –Among the 534 unique individuals supported by the FY 2023 funding, 66 percent were white and 34 percent of an ethnicity other than white. VARR reported 57.8 percent of those were male, 41.2 percent female, and one percent other. While the primary population served by VARR certified recovery residences are those with substance use disorder (SUD), within this population there are a variety of individuals with co-occurring needs. VARR reported that the top four sub-populations served using FY 2023 funding by VARR certified recovery residence providers funding included persons with SUD who also identify as having: 1) co-occurring mental health disorder diagnoses, 2) felony convictions, 3) recent incarcerations, and 4) receiving Medication Assisted Treatment.
- **Pathways to Recovery** – VARR reported that 77 percent of residents who received FY 2023 funding support reported that they were involved with some version of a 12-step mutual aid support group as their recovery pathway. 21 percent of residents reported no commitment to a recovery pathway, and the remaining 2 percent reported that they attended SMART recovery, Refuge Recovery, or some other pathway.
- **Improvements to Recovery Capital** – VARR reported that the overall recovery capital score (ORCS) of residents increased significantly from the original baseline evaluation first follow-up (from a mean of 40.2 to 63.3) and a further increase from first to second follow-up of a further mean increase of 9.4 points on the total ORCS. This data indicates the longer an individual is retained in certified recovery housing, the greater their recovery capital increases and stabilizes. Indigent bed funding helps individuals remain in recovery housing so that they can achieve these higher levels of recovery capital.



### **Recovery Corps – \$450,000**

Through a partnership with VARR, Recovery Corps has expanded the capacity of recovery organizations across VA. Beginning August 28, 2023, VA Recovery Corps will be statewide with over 70 members beginning their service. Trained AmeriCorps members serve as Recovery Navigators and Recovery Project Coordinators. Through their service, members provide much needed capacity to public agencies and recovery nonprofits. The program is part of Public Health AmeriCorps — an innovative new partnership from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and AmeriCorps. Recovery Corps is managed by Ampact, a national nonprofit that incubates and scales evidence-based AmeriCorps programs.

Recovery Corps paid for seven Navigators to become earn their Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS). Other members also earned their certification through their AmeriCorps service hours and taking the exam on their own. In this way, the partnership helped to expand the peer workforce. Project coordinators streamlined intake procedures, developed reentry resources for participants released from incarceration, and developed programs for pregnant and parenting peer support, among other projects. Recovery corps data provided by VARR is as follows:

- 43 AmeriCorps members enrolled across 11 sites
- 23 AmeriCorps members serving as of June 15, 2023
- 46,603 Service hours
- 461 Number of participants served through April of 2023

### **Get Help Platform and Technology – \$240,000**

VARR reported that the Get Help Platform provides a Digital Continuum of Care Platform™ with an Association Management System (AMS) and Search Widget. This provides state National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) affiliates and members coordination of real-time bed availability, referrals, and use of recovery residences, and other social services, including recovery community organizations. It also provides a customizable certification management system to VARR. Current and future VARR members can establish and manage their certification in the system, as well as perform functions necessary to meet requirements of certification. Features include storing all documentation required for certification, facilitating and documenting internal system communications related to certification, and streamlining a clear process of certification for new and existing members.

Get Help established prioritized and direct lines of communication for VARR to assist VARR

with their needs. VARR receives assistance retrieving data reports, technical assistance, and training for their members using Get Help products. The platform maintains a searchable state-wide registry of certified recovery residences and allows VARR members to claim and manage their organization’s profile. Get Help also maintains and continues to develop the Advanced Recovery Management Systems (ARMS) platform utilized by VARR. They accommodate VARR and their members by routinely updating and modifying the platform to fit their specific needs and dedicate multiple staff to a weekly customer success meeting with VARR staff.

**Administration – \$90,000**

VARR did not provide details on how these funds were spent. VARR provided a statement that the amount used for administration and support of the programs is only six percent of the allocation, whereas the allowable administrative limit under the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is 10 percent. This serves as an indirect cost rate to administer, support, and report on the programs that are funded.

**Employment Readiness Training Program – \$80,000**

One of the biggest obstacles faced by those living in recovery housing is finding meaningful employment due to gaps in work history, former incarcerations, and lack of employable skills. VARR partnered with REAL LIFE to pilot a modified curriculum with individuals living in certified recovery residences. In late spring, the curriculum was piloted with seven VARR-certified organizations. A total of 107 classes were administered to 56 participants.

Led by REAL-LIFE staff, the 10-module curriculum was offered virtually and in person. The curriculum was developed to facilitate participants in transitioning back into community or embarking on a new career. By increasing organizational skills, resume development, and more, participants receive invaluable guidance and support to make informed career choices. VARR reports that training with the Employment Navigation Program Curriculum and working with a REAL-LIFE Employment Navigator to secure employment, has led to a 97 percent job obtainment rate for those who are eligible, with an 85 percent retention over a year later.

**NARR Standards and Training – \$40,000**

NARR Standard 3.0 is a series of twenty 90-minute modules that equips the participant to create or update recovery residence policies and procedures to meet NARR Standard 3.0. Each component of the national standard is intended to be reviewed in an engaging, experiential way that enables the participant to understand and implement the standard into their recovery residence practice and ultimately meet certification requirements. VARR reported FY 2023 funding was used to provide 156 hours of training time as shown below:

NARR Standard 3.0 Modules	
Course Assignments	284
Completed Courses	132
Courses in Progress	14
Total Training Time	156 hours

## **Conclusion**

This report encompasses year one of funds for members of the VARR recovery support services. DBHDS remains supportive of recovery residences as a critical element of Virginia's continuum of services for people with substance use disorders. DBHDS is also committed to ensuring services that use state general funds are used in an efficient, accountable manner and will continue to work with VARR in year two to provide more detail on the uses of funds in this appropriation.