

COLLEGIATE RECOVERY 101



The Vision

Collegiate culture that embraces recovery

To truly create accessible campuses, colleges and universities must have initiatives that recognize and support students in recovery (Brown, 2020).

A collegiate recovery program (CRP) or collegiate recovery community (CRC):

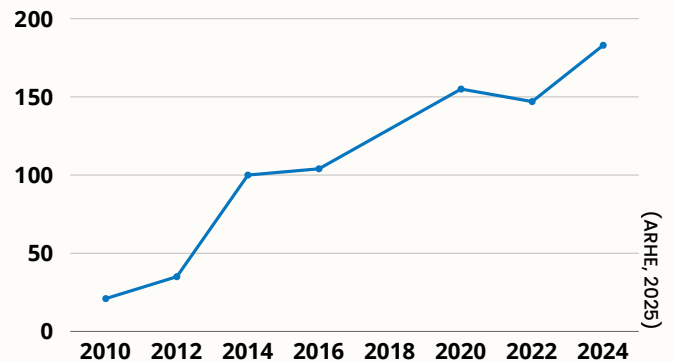
- is a supportive environment within an institution of higher education.
- reinforces the decision to engage in a lifestyle of recovery from substance use disorder (SUD).
- values peer-recovery support services.

(ARHE, 2025)

Each program is as unique as the institution itself.

Growth of Collegiate Recovery

ARHE Institutional Members



Why Does It Matter?



2023

27.1%

- In 2023, 27.1% of young adults aged 18 to 25 met diagnostic criteria for a substance use disorder.

(SAMHSA, 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health).

- Students with SUDs are more likely to experience academic difficulty, drop out, or fail to graduate. Providing recovery support **improves retention and completion outcomes.**

(NSDUH; Postsecondary National Policy Institute).

- Students in recovery exist on every campus – though stigma often discourages disclosure. An estimated 3 to 5 percent of college students identify as in recovery – over 650,000 students in the US!

(Smith et al., 2023; Transforming Youth Recovery, 2016)

650K

U.S. Students

Who Does It Help?

- Every person may be impacted by substance use issues at some point in their lives, if not from their own use, then from someone they know.

CRP Best Practices

Sustainable programs should have:

- Dedicated staff
- A dedicated space
- Recovery-supportive programming
- Community and peer support

(Vest et al., 2021)

Funding Best Practices:

- Programs with multiple, braided funding streams tend to serve nearly twice the number of students; are more likely to have dedicated space, provide structured relapse management policies, and integrate diverse recovery pathways.

(Hennessy et al., 2021; SAMHSA, 2024; Vest, 2025)

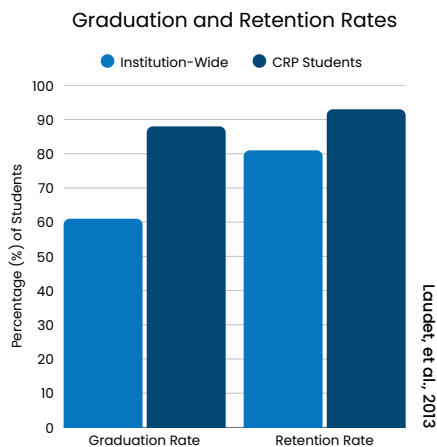


Visit www.collegiaterecovery.org
for additional information

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Student Success



- Students involved in CRPs collectively have a higher average GPA than the general student body. (Laudet, et al., 2013; Ashford, et al, 2018; Vest et al., 2021)
- Students involved in CRPs improved their GPAs from pre- to post-recovery, as well as across semesters while in recovery. (Hennessy et al., 2021)

What's the Return?

- Engaged students** become **engaged alumni**.
- Thriving students** equates to **fewer problems** and **lower costs**.
- CRPs help **reduce medical emergencies, student conduct issues, and dropout rates**.
- They **strengthen campus safety** while providing **critical student support**.
- CRP students are **deeply engaged**. Most students in CRPs participate in recovery-related services for more than 5 hours per week, often surpassing engagement levels seen in other student services. (Smith et al., 2023)
- 92% of students engaged in CRPs **remain in recovery** while in college. (Vest et al., 2021)
- 90% of alumni persist into **long-term recovery** post-graduation. (Vest et al., 2021)
- CRPs reduce the **recovery and relapse cycle by 15 years** while producing educated citizens. (Laudet et al., 2014)

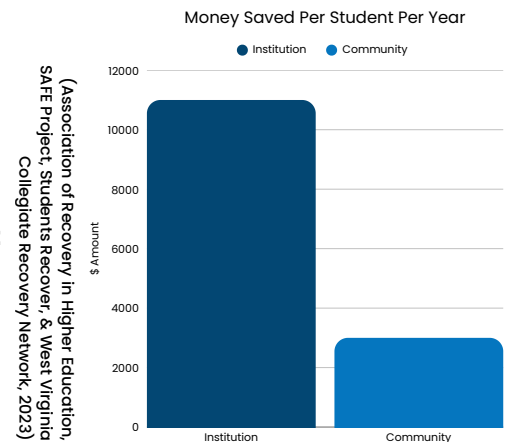


Student Support

- Having a **strong therapeutic alliance with CRP staff** increases one's sense of recovery identity. **Strong recovery identity** mitigates the impact of trauma on recovery capital and **higher recovery capital** predicts more stability in recovery. (Francis & Bannard, 2024)
- When students in recovery are supported, they contribute to a **healthier campus environment**, shifting the narrative around substance use and fostering cultures of well-being. (Vest et al., 2025)

This form of **Tertiary Prevention** is in alignment with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act.

(Congress, 1989)



- CRPs are a **cost-effective** investment and can actually be **cost-saving to an institution**. CRPs are also **cost-saving to the broader community**. (Castedo de Martell et al., 2022)

Investing in recovery support aligns with national efforts to **combat the addiction crisis**, reinforcing higher education's role as a partner in public health. (Vest et al., 2025)



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