

FORD COUNTY ROSC FY25 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

Bringing the community together to build a recovery support system to improve health, wellness, and quality of life, through education, stigma reduction, and access to resources.

Funded in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services,
Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery.

Ford County Demographics FY25 (US Census Bureau 2024)

Ford County is home to several communities, each contributing to the county's character and economy. Gibson City, the largest city, is known for its strong agricultural industry and community events. Paxton, the county seat, houses government offices and historical landmarks. Other towns and villages include Roberts, Melvin, Piper City, Sibley, Elliott, Kempton, and Cabery, all of which have deep agricultural roots and small, tight-knit communities. These areas offer a mix of residential living, local businesses, and farming, shaping the rural identity of Ford County.

Population & Demographics

Category	Data
Total Population	13,250
Veterans	876
Foreign Born Population	2.5%
Age Distribution	5.6% under 5 years, 23% under 18, 19.9% aged 65+
Female Population	50.1%

Regarding families and living arrangements, there are 5,728 households, with an average of 2.27 people per household. Most residents, 90.7%, have lived in the same house for at least a year, and 4.1% of individuals speak a language other than English at home.

Housing data shows that there are 6,262 housing units, and 74.1% of these are owner-occupied. The median value of owner-occupied homes is \$118,100, and the median monthly cost for homeowners with a mortgage is \$1,217. The median gross rent is \$836, and 8 building permits were issued in 2023.

When it comes to technology, 93% of households have a computer, and 85.4% have a broadband internet subscription. Educationally, 91.9% of people aged 25 and older have graduated from high school, and 19.4% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

Health data reveals that 11.1% of people under age 65 have a disability, and 6.6% of people under 65 do not have health insurance.

Economy & Income

Category	Data
Civilian Labor Force (16+)	61.2%
Female Workforce Participation (16+)	55.6%
Median Household Income	\$60,782
Per Capita Income	\$32,674
Population Below Poverty Line	11%

¹[U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Ford County, Illinois](#)

Ford County ROSC Community Survey Findings and Accompanying Data

The FY25 Ford County ROSC Community Survey examined community awareness, perceptions, and needs related to mental health, substance use disorder (SUD), and recovery resources. With 100 participants, it offered valuable insights into public attitudes, service accessibility, and awareness of the Ford County ROSC Council. The findings will help identify gaps and shape future initiatives to strengthen community support for recovery.

Respondents represented a range of demographics, with 7% under 18, 22% aged 18-34, 18% aged 35-44, and 53% aged 45 and older. Income levels varied, with 19% earning under \$25,000, 28% between \$25,000-\$49,999, and 38% earning \$50,000 or more. The majority (98%) identified as Caucasian/White, while 2% identified as African American/Black or Pacific Islander. Geographically, responses came from multiple towns across Ford County, including Paxton, Gibson City, Loda, Piper City, Melvin, Saybrook, and Roberts.

By highlighting community perspectives and service gaps, the survey serves as a critical tool in guiding efforts to improve recovery support and resources in Ford County.

ACCESS TO AND AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

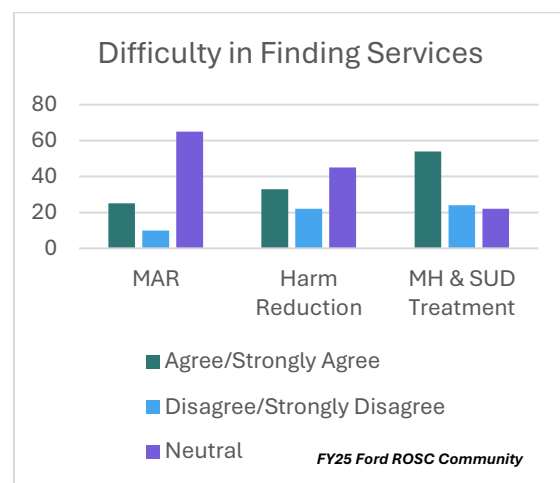
ACCESS TO SERVICES

More than half of the individuals who participated in the FY25 Ford County ROSC Community Survey expressed that they found it challenging to access mental health and substance use treatment services in the community.

A larger proportion of respondents, specifically **38%**, do not think that all individuals have equal access to resources, in contrast to **31%** who perceive it as equitable. This suggests the presence of potential obstacles, such as income disparities, insurance coverage, language barriers, and more.

According to the ²[Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment](#), access to addiction and substance abuse providers is slightly lower in

the service area compared to the state and significantly under the national average. It was also stated that there were still issues with access to providers in mental health and substance use, with significant waits in some cases.



Survey Question: Is difficult to find Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR), harm reduction, and mental health and substance use treatment

The ³[ECICAA Community Needs Assessment](#) has identified significant obstacles faced by rural populations in Ford County in accessing medical, mental health, and food services, primarily due to a lack of transportation options in these areas. This finding is corroborated by the ⁴[Ford County Public Health Department IPLAN](#), which noted that

38.81% of survey respondents indicated insufficient access to public transportation within Ford County. The Survey also showed **36.03%** of respondents reporting that mental health services are inadequate in Ford County.

ACCESS TO RECOVERY SUPPORTS

The results of the FY25 Ford County ROSC Gap Analysis which is shown on page 7, indicate that there are no recovery homes or inpatient treatment options available in Ford County. The lack of these resources can create significant challenges for individuals, making it difficult to find and sustain recovery due to unstable housing, elevated stress and insufficient support resources, thereby

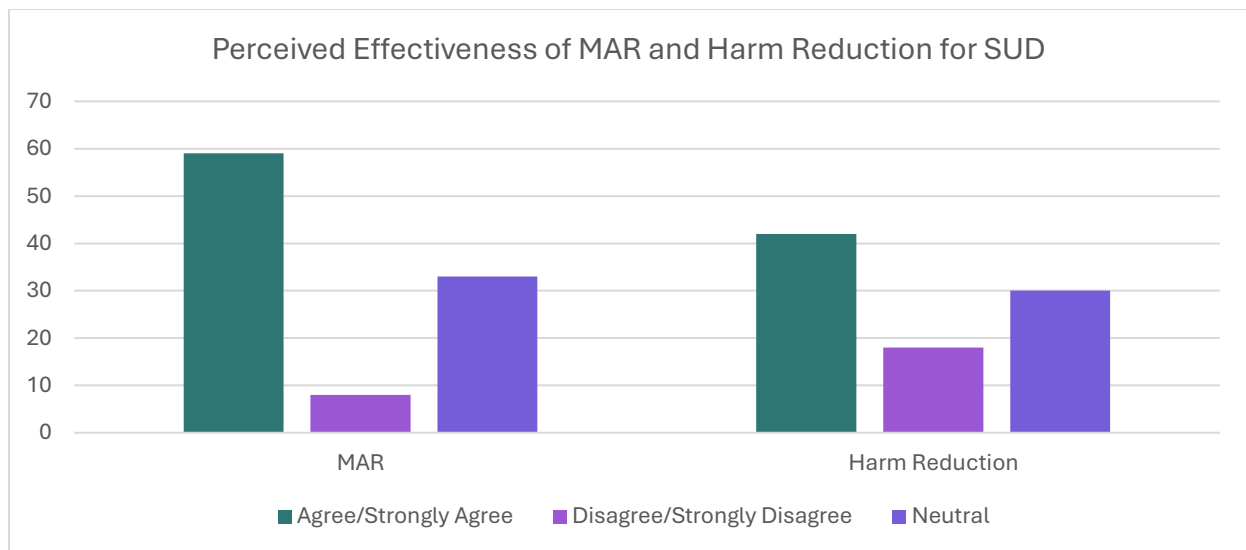
creating significant barriers to treatment and recovery. The gap analysis also revealed there are limited outpatient, harm reduction, and peer support services. The limited availability of these services and supports increases health risks, isolation, and barriers to recovery, leading to more overdoses, disease transmission, and limited access to care and support.

AWARENESS OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

As illustrated in the graph on page 2, when asked if it is difficult to find Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR), harm reduction, and mental health and substance use treatment services, many respondents expressed a neutral opinion regarding MAR providers (**65%**) and harm reduction services (**45%**) available in the community. This could suggest gaps in awareness and/or services are not widely accessible.

The results of the survey indicate that **60%** of individuals consider MAR to be an effective treatment for substance use disorders. However, a significant **35%** of respondents remained neutral, pointing to a potential need for further education and awareness efforts.

As noted in the ⁴[Ford County Public Health Department IPLAN](#), the 2019 County Health Rankings report shows that the county has a mental health provider ratio of 220:1, higher than Illinois' 480:1. This suggests that while resources exist, a lack of awareness remains a concern, making services less accessible.

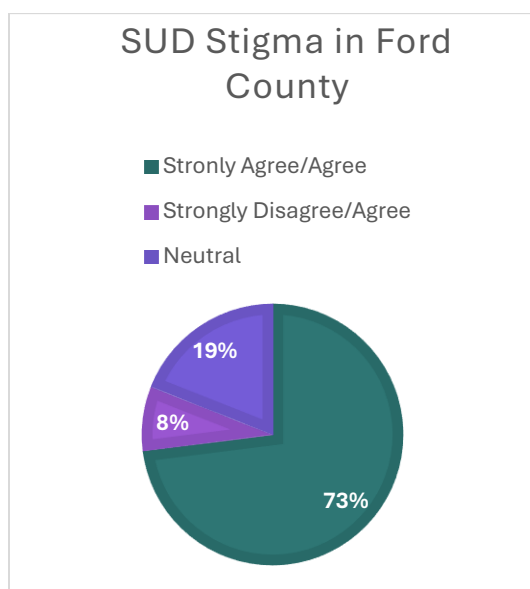


FY25 Ford ROSC Community Survey

Survey Questions:

1. *Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR), medications used to treat substance use disorders, is an effective approach to recovery.*
2. *Harm reduction services, such as Narcan and syringe service programs, help reduce the risks associated with drug use.*

PERCEPTIONS OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) AND RECOVERY

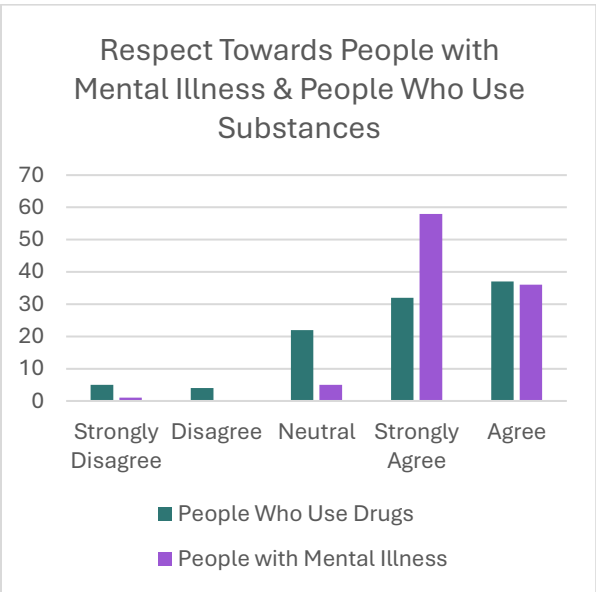


FY25 Ford ROSC Community Survey

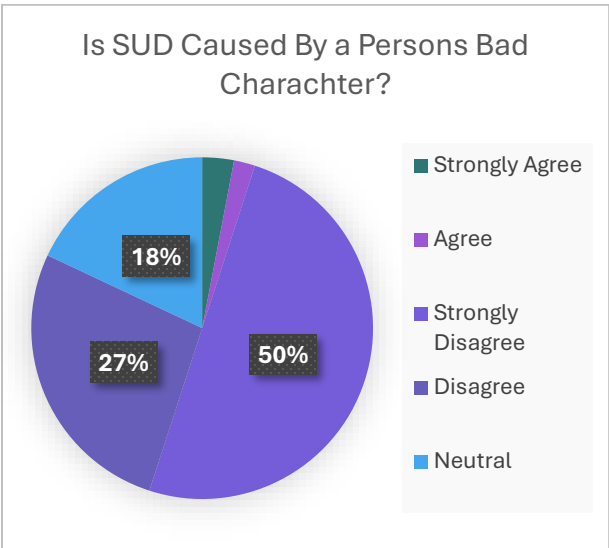
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER STIGMA

The FY25 Ford County ROSC Community Survey indicates that approximately **75%** of participants indicate that there is a stigma associated with individuals who have a substance use disorder in our community, while around **20%** remained neutral. This highlights the presence of stigma and a significant level of awareness regarding the issue within the community.

The survey showed that people are generally more accepting and understanding of mental health challenges than substance use disorders. 94% believe individuals with mental health challenges deserve respect, only 68% extend that same level of respect to those struggling with substance use, indicating lingering stigma or misconceptions about individuals with substance use challenges.



Survey Question: People with a mental illness deserve respect.
Survey Question: People who use drugs deserve respect.



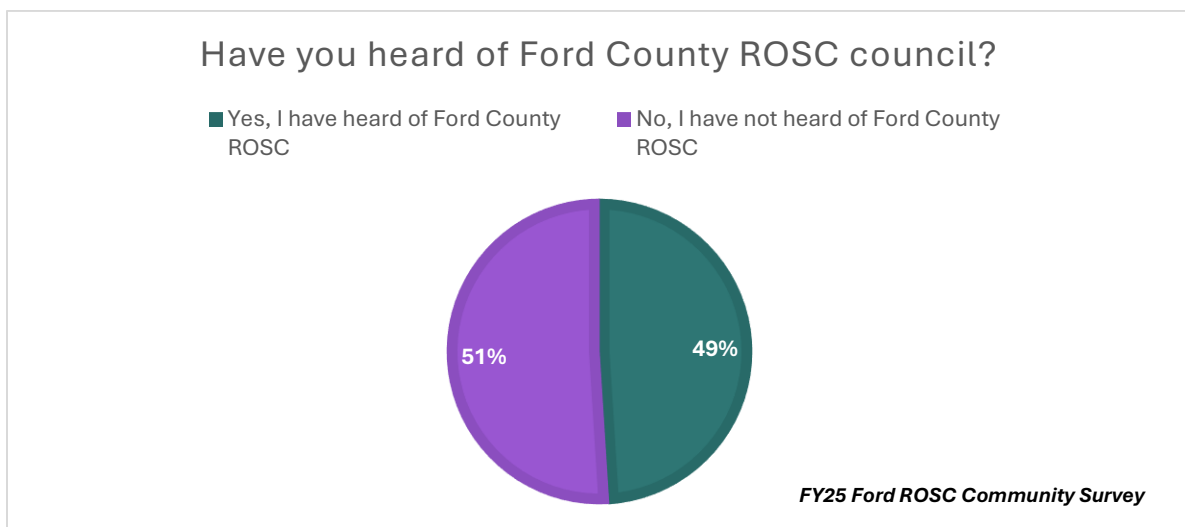
FY25 Ford ROSC Community Survey

Most respondents (77%) disagree with the idea that substance use disorder (SUD) is a moral failing, recognizing it as a health condition. However, 23% (5% agree, 18% neutral) still hold some stigma or uncertainty. The neutral group is key for education, as they may lack knowledge rather than believing SUD is a character flaw.

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE FORD COUNTY ROSC

ROSC AWARENESS

The data shows that **51%** of respondents are not familiar with ROSC, suggesting the need for improved outreach efforts. However, **49%** of respondents possess some knowledge of ROSC, having heard about it through sources such as Facebook (**31%**), word of mouth (**21%**), community events (**15%**), community flyers (**12%**), YouTube (**1%**), and other unspecified sources (**51%**). This awareness presents an opportunity to leverage these existing channels to boost the visibility of ROSC in the community.



Ford County ROSC FY25 Gap Analysis

The following Ford County gap analysis was developed based on survey results, a SWOT analysis, and an examination of the existing assets in Ford County. As part of this effort, Ford County ROSC recently completed a Community Asset Map, which identifies key resources such as healthcare services, support groups, educational programs, and local organizations. This tool provides a clearer picture of the county's strengths while also highlighting areas where additional support may be needed. The Ford County Community Asset Map can be accessed here: [Ford County ROSC Community Asset Map](#).

Gap Area	Current State	Need to Address This
Behavioral/Mental Health Workforce Challenges	Shortage of mental and behavioral health resources/professionals.	A shortage of behavioral health resources and professionals leads to service gaps and untreated mental health and substance use challenges in the community, making recovery and overall well-being more difficult to achieve.
Inpatient Recovery Services	There are no inpatient treatment facilities located in Ford County; the closest one is more than 30 miles away.	The lack of accessible inpatient care forces individuals to travel long distances, creating a barrier to treatment.
Outpatient Recovery Services	The availability of outpatient treatment services, which were already limited, has further reduced.	Limited outpatient services reduce access to treatment, which can make it harder to find and maintain recovery.
Transportation	Transportation options are very limited, impacting access to resources and services outside of Ford County as well as those within the county.	Limited transportation creates barriers to treatment, support groups, medical care, court services, and other vital recovery resources that play a significant role in recovery.
Stigma	There is a stigma and lack of understanding surrounding SUD (substance use disorder)/MH (mental health.)	Negative views around substance use and mental health create a barrier that deters individuals from seeking recovery due to fear of judgment.
Resource Awareness	Lack of awareness of current resources available for substance use disorders and mental health challenges.	Lack of resource awareness limits access to recovery services, support groups, and treatment, making it harder to find needed support.

Ford ROSC Awareness	There is limited awareness of the Ford County ROSC.	As ROSC is a lead connection to various prevention, treatment, and recovery supports, increasing awareness will also increase access.
Peer Support	There are limited peer support groups, reducing opportunities for individuals to access ongoing recovery support.	Limited peer support reduces shared experiences and encouragement. Without this support, individuals may feel isolated and struggle to maintain long-term recovery.
Recovery Housing	There are no local recovery home options available in Ford County.	The lack of local recovery homes can create significant challenges for individuals, making it difficult to find and sustain recovery due to unstable housing, elevated stress and insufficient support resources.
Harm Reduction	There are limited harm reduction services in Ford County as well as limited awareness of the ones that are available.	Without harm reduction services, individuals face higher health risks, increased stigma, and fewer connections to support. This can lead to more accidental overdoses, the spread of diseases, and barriers to recovery.

Ford County SWOT Analysis FY25

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of ROSC • Medical professionals that support MAR and Recovery • Gibson Hospital • GROW-Dr Austman • Community Collaborations • Small but mighty, very supportive community, always someone there to help • Mental health resources and supports • Educated professionals • Opportunities for collaborations, Councils/Panels to join-Ford County Network Panel • Willingness to participate on ROSC council and sober activities • Referral network • County government • Strong cross sectors from community wealth of knowledge • Legal representation • Stakeholders with lived experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of appointments when the individual is ready for treatment, the window is small • Leaders need more education on substance use disorder and recovery • Not a lot of sober friendly activities for families, more support groups, and we need champions to take this challenge on • Lack of support groups – need faith-based meetings • Due to the limited size of our county, we frequently lack access to the necessary resources. Progress tends to be gradual, which means we require more action and less discussion. • Lack of transportation • Housing for sober living • Lack of awareness of resources available • Limited support for family members of people with SUD (Alanon and other supports)
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing awareness of stigma within the community that we can leverage • Significant opportunity for education—mental health and substance use disorders • Expansion of broadband access to improve connectivity and resources. • Support transportation efforts • Providing information/resources to help workplaces support recovery • Strengthen recovery capital to build a more supportive community. • Identify additional community stakeholders to participate • Continue to identify people with lived experience to serve on ROSC • Continue to partner with local organizations to host sober social events. • Explore opportunities to integrate peer support into recovery services. • Expand education and awareness around substance use disorder and mental health. • The need for more awareness of ROSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAR is available; however, the capacity is full for GROW, Dr. Austman. Need more availability • Need more group involvement regarding outreach events, one or two people cannot do everything • Funding and policies, uncertainty

Strategies for Expanding ROSC in The Community & Ways to Offer Support

1. Increase Public Awareness & Community Engagement

- Host community forums, recovery/sober social events, and community discussions around identified community priorities and opportunities.
- Use social media and public facing platforms to highlight to showcase ROSC achievements and highlight our initiatives.
- Engage local media to share positive recovery stories and information.

2. Strengthen Community Partnerships

- Collaborate with law enforcement, healthcare providers, social services, and community organizations to create integrated support systems, enhance crisis intervention, raise awareness, share resources, advocate for supportive policies, and gather feedback to improve recovery assistance in the community
- Create a ROSC Subcommittee to help plan and guide ROSC/recovery efforts.

3. Increase Training & Education

- Offer training for community leaders, workplaces, and first responders on harm reduction, multiple paths to recovery, substance use disorder (SUD), trauma-informed care, and recovery-friendly practices.
- Provide recovery-related workshops and webinars for service providers, employers, and the public.
- Invite experts in recovery, mental health, and substance use disorders to share knowledge and best practices with the community.
- Promote the 'Reframing Recovery' campaign to reduce stigma and help the community better understand recovery.

4. Improve Awareness & Access to Resources

- Continue to update and promote the existing virtual resource guide with information on local recovery services, training opportunities, and funding opportunities.
- Partner with local organizations to distribute printed materials, virtual resource guides, and a community asset/resource map.

- Identify, support, and advocate for transportation solutions to help people access recovery services.
- Work to raise awareness about available resources, through social media, community events, and any other additional outlets identified by staff and Ford ROSC Council members.
- Promote and support expansion of peer recovery resources, ensuring more individuals have access to peer support networks and services.

5. Advocate System Changes

- Support businesses in creating inclusive workplaces by providing information on recovery-friendly workplaces.
- Share funding opportunities with local partners, including grants, donations, and government sources, to support and grow initiatives.

6. Expand and Support Recovery Housing Options

- Work with local leaders to support the development of more recovery housing.
- Educate the community and policymakers on the importance of recovery housing.
- Identify and support opportunities for expanding or creating new recovery housing options.

REFERENCES AND DATA SOURCES

¹U.S. Census Bureau. "QuickFacts: Ford County, Illinois." *United States Census Bureau*, [[U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Ford County, Illinois](#)]

²Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services. *2024 Gibson City Community Health Needs Assessment*. 2024. [[2024 Gibson City Community Health Needs Assessment.pdf](#)]

³East Central Illinois Community Action Agency. *ECICAA 2021-2024 Community Needs Assessment*. 2021-2024. [[ECICAA-2021-2024-Community-Needs-Assessment.pdf](#)]

⁴Ford County Public Health Department. *FCPHD IPLAN Final Report 2019-2024*. 2019-2024. [[FCPHD- IPLAN FINAL - 2019-2024.pdf](#)]