Kentucky Addiction Policy Advocacy Council (KyAPAC)
State Legislative
Policy Priorities

A coalition of individuals in recovery and organizations who support those in recovery to further the integration of recovery supported spaces across the commonwealth.

Based on the 2026 Legislative Priority Questionnaire responses, five major themes emerged as the most pressing community challenges impacting treatment and recovery. People Advocating Recovery will be highlighting key policy changes that could significantly improve support for people in recovery over the biennium.

1. **Housing Instability and Recovery Housing Shortages: Ensure every level of recovery housing is available in communities across the commonwealth and expand affordable housing access.**(**≈69% of respondents**)

A majority of respondents identified the lack of stable, affordable housing as a critical barrier. This includes both general housing affordability and specialized recovery housing or sober living facilities for people transitioning out of treatment. Without a safe and supportive place to live, individuals leaving treatment often struggle to maintain recovery. Respondents described an urgent need for transitional housing programs and more affordable living opportunities. Improving access to stable housing was the most frequently cited priority, suggesting policymakers should focus on expanding funding for recovery residences, sober living homes, and housing assistance for those in early recovery. One respondent emphasized the damaging cycle that results from inadequate housing options:

"I can't express how much recovery housing is needed in our community. These people are going to treatment and coming right back to where they were sick at. It's just a vicious cycle." *– Survey Respondent*

2. **Transportation Barriers: Strengthen transportation infrastructure** (**≈58% of respondents**)

The second most common challenge is the lack of reliable transportation to treatment centers and support services. This barrier is especially acute in rural areas and for individuals who do not have a personal vehicle. Many survey participants noted that without transportation, people cannot access counseling, outpatient programs, support meetings, or even residential treatment. One community member explained that even getting to inpatient treatment can be difficult due to transportation gaps: ***"Transportation for people [is] needed to be admitted to inpatient [treatment]."*** Lack of public transit or affordable ride services leaves many people stranded, making it nearly impossible to attend regular treatment appointments or recovery

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activities. Strengthening transportation infrastructure or providing transit vouchers/shuttle services for treatment could greatly improve access to recovery in many communities.

3. **Treatment Cost and Insurance Constraints: Innovate new payment systems that support higher outcomes, linkages to step down supporting retention rates** (**≈45% of respondents**) Nearly half of the respondents brought up affordability as a major barrier to seeking treatment. High costs of rehab programs, therapy, and medications, along with limited insurance coverage, put formal treatment out of reach for many individuals. Even when treatment is available, inadequate insurance (or no insurance at all) means people cannot afford the help they need. One participant wrote: **"Health care coverage. Therapy is expensive."** This sentiment was echoed by others who noted that if insurance doesn't cover treatment, most people simply won't get it. Another respondent put it bluntly: "It's all about access and insurance paying." Gaps in Medicaid coverage, strict insurance criteria, or high co-pays deter people from entering or continuing treatment. For example, a person may lose Medicaid eligibility once they get a job, interrupting their care. Overall, the survey indicates a strong desire for policy solutions to make treatment more affordable, such as expanding insurance coverage for substance use disorder treatment, increasing state funding for programs that support longer term , and reducing out-of-pocket costs for recovery support.

4. **Limited Employment Opportunities and Reentry Support** (**≈32% of respondents**) – About one-third of respondents highlighted challenges related to finding employment and rebuilding their life during and after treatment initiation. People in recovery, especially those with a history of substance use or a criminal record, often struggle to secure jobs due to stigma and lack of "second chance" opportunities. As one survey respondent observed, "lack of jobs and transportation" are major obstacles – noting that even when someone is ready to work, there may be few employers willing to hire them or accommodations (like flexible schedules for treatment) are not available.

Several respondents specifically mentioned the need for more second-chance employers who will hire individuals with felonies or past addictions. Without stable employment or job training, it's harder for people to sustain recovery and regain independence. This theme also ties into criminal justice barriers: people exiting jail or prison face additional hurdles in finding work and support. Strengthening reentry programs, incentivizing employers to hire people in recovery, and providing job training or education were all implied as important steps. Policies that address employment discrimination, provide tax credits to recovery-friendly employers, or fund vocational programs could greatly assist those striving to turn their lives around.

5. **Family Responsibilities and Lack of Childcare Support** (**≈25% of respondents**) – A significant number of survey participants pointed out that family obligations, especially childcare, are preventing individuals from getting help or staying engaged in recovery. Parents of young children often have no safe or affordable childcare options while

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they attend treatment sessions or recovery meetings. This leads to difficult choices – many delay or forgo treatment because they cannot leave their kids.

One respondent explicitly noted this barrier, writing that people worry about “leaving their kids and partners” when considering treatment. The fear of losing custody or not being there for family can keep someone from entering a residential program or even attending evening support groups. Additionally, some mentioned caregivers of other dependents (like elderly family or even pets) face similar challenges. When no support system exists to help care for their loved ones, individuals in need of treatment feel stuck. This theme suggests a need for policies that provide family-centered recovery support – for example, funding for on-site childcare at treatment facilities, programs that allow parents to bring children to treatment with appropriate accommodations, or financial assistance for childcare during recovery programs. By addressing these family-related barriers, more people could pursue recovery without sacrificing their responsibilities at home.

In summary, these five themes – housing, transportation, treatment affordability, employment/reentry support, and family/childcare needs – were the predominant challenges identified by community members in the survey. Together, they paint a picture of the gaps in the recovery ecosystem that require attention. Each of these areas points to a potential policy priority for the next two years. By using this feedback as a framework, People Advocating Recovery can focus their advocacy on expanding housing and transportation services, making treatment more accessible and affordable, improving employment opportunities for those in recovery, and developing family-oriented recovery supports. Addressing these core issues through legislative and policy changes will remove critical barriers and help more individuals achieve and sustain long-term recovery.

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