

# Supporting Youth in Opioid Recovery

A Multi-Generational Approach



Opioid overdose is the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18-45. Meanwhile, the number of youth affected by opioid addiction is rising rapidly, but available support & recovery services are not.

## In Georgia:

From 2018 - 2022:

- The rate of opioid overdose deaths **more than doubled**, from 8.2 deaths per 100,000 residents to 18.1.
- Youth **aged 10-19** experienced a **52% increase** in number of opioid-related ED visits.

Between 2019 - 2022:

- There was an **800% increase** in fentanyl-involved overdose deaths **among adolescents.**

## Current State-Funded Youth Recovery Programs in Georgia



### Recovery Support Clubhouses:

#### 8 Clubhouses for youth ages 13-17

Offers peer support, life skills training, educational assistance, and career development to help youth maintain a healthy lifestyle. Also, they connect young people to community resources for long-term recovery.



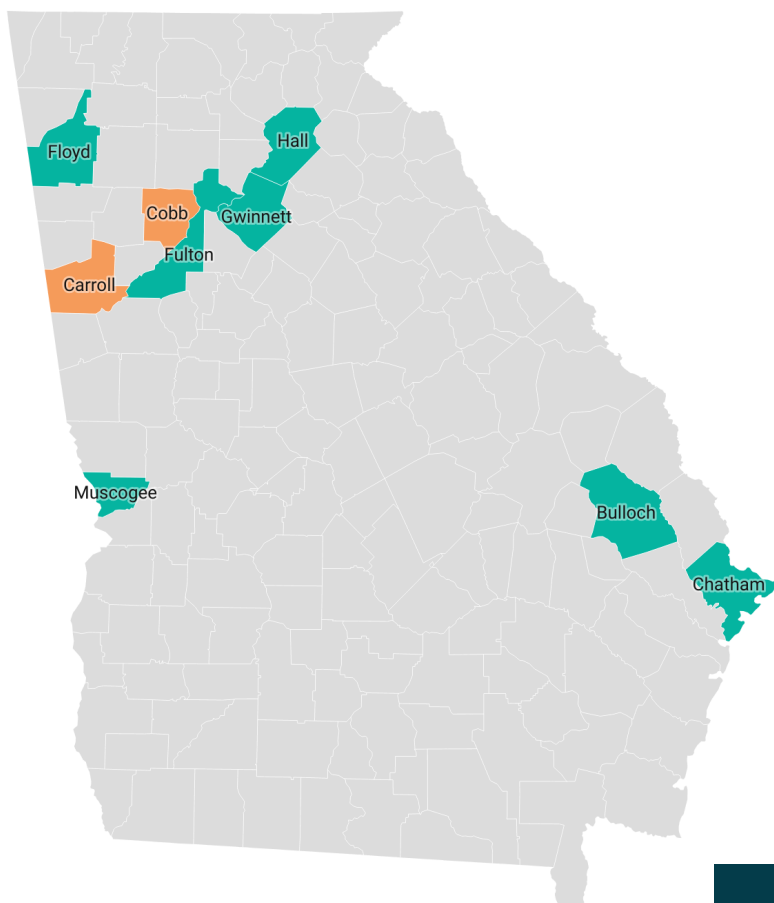
### Adolescent Intensive Residential Treatment (IRT) Programs:

#### 2 IRT Programs for youth ages 13-17

Provides 24-hour support for adolescents needing structured, supervised care for substance use disorders. Offers individualized treatment plans, education, and programming to support recovery.

## Map: State-Funded Youth Recovery Programs

- Adolescent Intensive Residential Treatment Program (IRT) - 2 total
- Adolescent Recovery Support Clubhouse - 8 total





# Program Criteria for Youth Recovery

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Programs designed to help youth struggling with substance use disorder should meet key criteria to ensure effective, lasting recovery while incorporating family support. Below are essential elements that we recommend programs should strive to include:

## Peer Support

- Integrate peer support systems that allow youth to connect with others who share similar experiences.
- Consider Certified Peer Specialists for Youth (CPS-Y) involvement to provide guidance and support.

## Comprehensive Support Services

- Provide services addressing mental health, physical health, life skills, financial literacy, education, employment, and family counseling.
- Do not restrict medically prescribed medications for participation.

## Family Involvement

- Actively engage families in the recovery process through regular, pro-social, positive activities.
- Offer whole-family programming at least once a month.
- Host community listening sessions with caregivers and youth for continuous feedback loop.

## Evidence-Based Practices

- Utilize evidence-based practices and interventions that have been proven effective in treating SUD in youth.
- Incorporate evidence-based recovery support strategies for long-term success.

## Accessibility

- Provide services regardless of insurance or financial status.
- Offer support in the client's preferred language.

## Cultural Sensitivity

- Tailor programs to meet the needs of diverse populations.
- Recognize how cultural factors influence addiction and recovery. This includes understanding stigma, bias, and systemic barriers that different communities face.



# Program Criteria for Youth Recovery

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Programs designed to help youth struggling with substance use disorder should meet key criteria to ensure effective, lasting recovery while incorporating family support. Below are essential elements that we recommend programs should strive to include:

## Outcome Measurement

- Implement mechanisms to track program effectiveness.
- Use data for continuous improvement and accountability.

## Continuum of Care

- Include and/or collaborate strategies along the continuum of care of prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support.
- Ensure seamless transitions between care stages.

## Equity & Anti-Poverty Mindset

- Address barriers and circumstances to ensure equitable access.
- Shift mental models by valuing lived experience as expertise, fostering inclusive and trust-based engagement, and ensuring communities feel empowered before participation.

## Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Maximize resources by coordinating across state agencies.
- Strengthen partnerships for holistic support.

## Protecting Youth Privacy

- Ensure confidentiality and safeguard personal information.
- Implement secure data practices.

## Workforce Improvements

- Ensure fair compensation for recovery center staff.
- Recognize and support staff contributions, skills, and time appropriately.