

**Recovery Connections of Central Florida  
Funding Proposal to Maitland Fire-Rescue Department**

**About Recovery Connections:**

Recovery Connections is a Recovery Community Organization (RCO) serving Orange, Seminole, Osceola, and Brevard counties. The hallmark of an RCO is that it is a nonclinical organization led by representatives of the local recovery community. Over half of the Board of Directors identify as people in long term recovery. All frontline service providers, called Certified Recovery Peer Specialists (CRPS), have lived experience recovering from substance use disorders (SUD).

This lived experience uniquely positions peer specialists to listen without judgment and support people with empathy and compassion. All services are provided at no cost to participants, most of whom are uninsured or underinsured.

The Recovery Community Center, open seven days a week, is a safe space to meet with peer specialists, relax and connect with others in a community lounge, access public computers to link to vital resources, and attend recovery support group meetings.

At the initial Recovery Support Services (RSS) session, participants complete the Recovery Capital Scale (RCS), an assessment which measures internal and external assets contributing to recovery. Peer specialists then support participants in creating a Recovery Management Plan (RMP) recognizing their barriers, strengths, and helping them set goals to recognize their full potential.

Referrals to critical, life-changing services are driven by a robust internal database with over 160 resources and a 24/7 hotline (407-RECOVER) staffed by peer specialists that receives an average of 1,200 calls per month. In addition to treatment and recovery supports, peer specialists link individuals to services that break down barriers to care such as housing, transportation, and mental health services.

Recovery Connections launched its services on July 1, 2022, in response to the community's need for more resources and the strain on local providers created by the opioid epidemic. As of May 31, 2024, 1,759 people have received support. Our data shows that approximately 90 percent of participants improve their recovery capital. Those who are critically under resourced or unhoused at the time of intake show the most significant improvements in their recovery capital as they grow their support system by engaging in RSS.

**Funding Request:**

If approved, funding from the Maitland Fire-Rescue Department will provide wraparound support to participants. This request will address issues such as healthcare, food insecurity, access to transportation, communication, clothing, and ancillary needs such as co-pays for physical and mental health appointments. Wraparound support meets people where they are with compassion and empathy, providing the stability they need to continue their path of recovery.

While our peer specialists work with participants to improve their internal recovery capital (e.g. self-esteem or coping skills), there is a clear gap in the availability of resources that can improve an individual's external recovery capital. Recovery Connections' findings are supported by data in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment that outlines the lack of financial resources and a complex system

that creates barriers to care. In early recovery, people often have a myriad of needs that, if not met, significantly increase stress levels and the likelihood of return to use. As a hub for recovery, Recovery Connections aims to meet the holistic needs of participants and streamline care navigation.

Improving outcomes for individuals with SUD is an ongoing challenge. Long term engagement, increased access to care, addressing barriers and sometimes, medication therapy in conjunction with recovery supports are proven ways to sustain a person’s success in recovery.

Funding will specifically provide support for Recovery Connections participants in the following areas:

- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Provider Visits and/or Medication:** Recovery Connections will partner with Clear Futures, a healthcare provider who specializes in treating patients with opioid use disorder (OUD). Clear Futures provides MAT services – assessing, treating, and prescribing and providing medications as needed. Physician Assistants (PA) typically administer Buprenorphine, a pharmacotherapeutic medicine that occupies the receptors in the brain that are usually occupied by the opiate drug. Buprenorphine can be administered alone or with other supporting medication such as Naltrexone.

PA visits will be facilitated at the Recovery Community Center, providing easy access to recovery resources. When participants are there to meet with the PA, they can engage in recovery support services with a CRPS, helping address their holistic needs and work towards future goals. Funding provided through this proposal will cover the costs of 100 PA visits.

- Transportation:** Transportation is a common barrier for Recovery Connections’ target demographic of uninsured and underinsured individuals. Monthly bus passes will be provided to increase access to recovery supports, employment opportunities, and other critical services. Funding provided through this proposal will provide 150 monthly bus passes.
- Compassion Fund:** Individuals seeking recovery from SUD often have a myriad of needs. Funding provided through this proposal will allow Recovery Connections to meet participants where they are, with the flexibility to address wide-ranging needs such as food insecurity, lack of basic care products, and more. Examples of support that could be provided through this fund include grocery store gift cards, clothing, hygiene products, or cell phones.

**Proposed Budget:**

Service	Budget	Cost per Participant	Description
PA visits with MAT provider and/or medication	\$8,500	\$85 per PA visit	Up to 100 PA visits and/or medication
Month bus pass	\$6,750	\$45 per pass	150 monthly bus passes at discounted nonprofit rate
Compassion fund	\$9,750	N/A	Fund to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and hygiene
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>		