

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR



Julie Burns

JULIE BURNS
President & CEO



Steve Pollock

STEVE POLLOCK
Board Chair

Dear Friends,

In 2023, RIZE advanced our fight to end the overdose crisis with a renewed commitment to building strong networks and breaking down barriers to change in our hope of reaching **zero stigma, zero deaths**.

RIZE has consistently worked to stay ahead of the evolving nature of the overdose crisis. We supported our community through the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, workforce shortages and burnout, and some of the most devastating overdose mortality numbers on record. We remain dedicated to ending stigma, centering the voices of people with lived experience, and ensuring everyone has access to quality care regardless of who they are or where they live.

We invested over \$2.5 million in novel approaches to ending the overdose crisis, bringing our total investment to over \$14 million since our founding. Through initiatives like *Taking Action to Improve Access and Equity in Opioid Use Disorder Care*, we awarded nearly \$900,000 to community organizations committed to disrupting systemic racism in addiction care across the state. We also

expanded our *Harm Reduction Training (HaRT) Scholars Program*, creating a pipeline of social workers trained in harm reduction principles.

The overdose crisis continues to have an impact on multiple and interconnected systems, yet silos stifle progress. To break down barriers and build connections, RIZE engaged stakeholders from across the opioid ecosystem in a multi-month process to align approaches and share decision-making. This process resulted in a Community Framework for Change that offers guidance to tackle current challenges, leverage the strengths of our ecosystem, and support ongoing efforts in a coordinated way.

In the year ahead, we will embark on a new chapter in our mission to end the crisis. In partnership with the state, RIZE will launch a new community grantmaking program to equitably distribute funds from the opioid settlements to community organizations and municipalities on the frontlines of the overdose crisis. As we humbly and proudly embrace this immense responsibility, we are indebted to our community partners and funders. Together, we have forged the path that has brought us to where we stand today. We invite you to learn about our work and our partners who make it possible.

COMMEMORATING OUR FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

In March 2023, RIZE brought together our partners in the nonprofit, healthcare, and business communities to reflect on the five years since our founding with pride for all that we have accomplished and ready for the work ahead. We were honored to be joined by Governor Maura Healey, House Ways & Means Chairman Aaron Michlewitz, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, and State Secretary of Health and Human Services Kate Walsh.



As AG, I met a lot of families hurt by opioids. People who lost parents, children, and siblings. Folks on their road to recovery. They drove our work, and they still do. I know RIZE shares that commitment. Glad to be with them for their 5th year in this fight.

— **GOVERNOR MAURA HEALEY**

RIZE has been a gravitational force over the last five years in putting all these pieces together - raising awareness, lifting up voices of people at the heart of the issue, and getting the right people in the room to have the right conversations.

— **CHAIRMAN AARON MICHLEWITZ**



Top: (from left to right) Jack Connors, Co-founder, Camp Harbor View, and RIZE Board Member; Secretary Kate Walsh, Health and Human Services; Steve Pollock, President, Dental, Sun Life U.S., and RIZE Board Chair; Julie Burns, President & CEO, RIZE; Governor Maura Healey; Chairman Aaron Michlewitz, House Ways and Means; Stephen Murray, Director, SafeSpot Overdose Hotline
Bottom-left: Governor Maura Healey
Bottom-right: Stephen Murray

OUR APPROACH

RIZE is committed to ending the overdose crisis by addressing the underlying conditions that contribute to it. We're most effective when we collaborate with communities that are willing and ready for change. By partnering with those who are closest to the problem and breaking through barriers, RIZE adds depth, breadth, and creativity that can often go beyond the support of public or institutional efforts. We bring together the most dedicated community leaders, the best problem solvers, and anyone who believes that together, we can be a powerful force for change. Our call to action is urgent, and stakeholders are ready.

For more information on our work, visit:
rizema.org/impact-areas





INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

We collaborate closely with the community to create all-encompassing, inclusive, and enduring plans that prioritize empathy and individual needs at every stage of care. We provide funding for the most promising models, breakthroughs, and strategies to combat this crisis in every community. Our approach is defined by our openness to new ideas and emerging issues.



\$2.5M
in total grants and
program investments



69
community partners
received funding



140
experts and individuals with
lived and living experience
contributed to our community
change framework and
grant review and advisory
committees

Taking Action

Through *Taking Action to Improve Access and Equity in Opioid Use Disorder Care*, **RIZE awarded over \$880,000 to four nonprofits** that are centering the needs of people who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

- **Baystate Medical Center Emergency Department (Springfield):** Providing harm reduction supplies and naloxone in the ED to people who smoke or snort drugs.
- **Casa Esperanza (Tewksbury):** Enhancing inpatient acute treatment services (ATS) and clinical stabilization services (CSS).
- **Metro Boston Alive and Massachusetts General Physicians Organization (Boston):** Facilitating a partnership between a prevention and recovery support services organization and a substance use disorder clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital.
- **Women's Lunch Place (Boston):** Supporting a recovery navigator to facilitate opioid use disorder treatment at a day shelter for women experiencing homelessness and poverty.

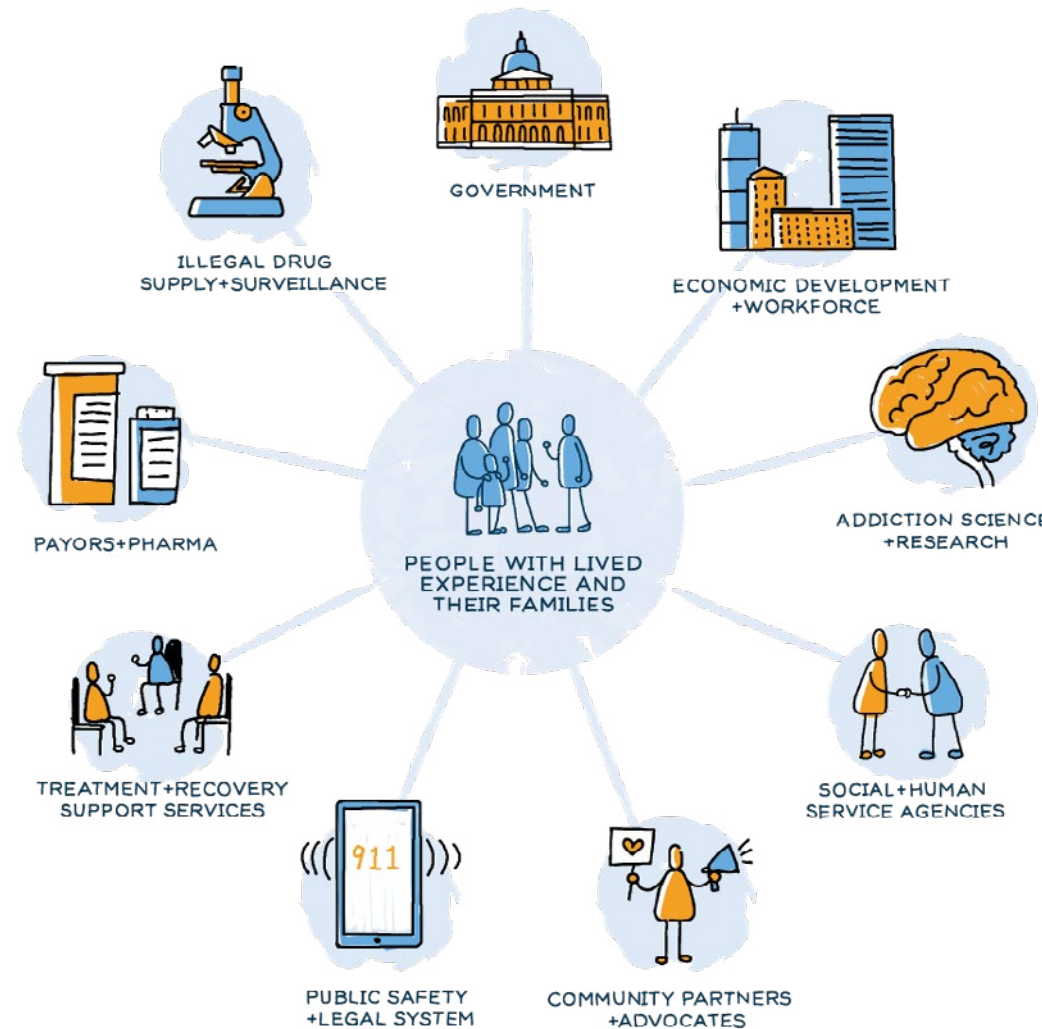
Scaling Programs That Work

In September 2023, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced it would fund and expand the Massachusetts Overdose Prevention Helpline, the first state-funded overdose prevention helpline in the nation. RIZE first funded a pilot of the helpline at Boston Medical Center's Grayken Center for Addiction through our Together We RIZE 5th Anniversary Grant Program in 2022. **Learn more** →



GENERATING KNOWLEDGE

RIZE has served as a convener and connector of key stakeholders — practitioners, researchers, decision-makers, community leaders, and people affected by substance use — based on trusted relationships and credibility among the opioid ecosystem since our founding in 2017. This past year, RIZE took bold action to break down barriers, cultivate connections, and facilitate a unified approach to ending the overdose crisis.



Community Framework for Change

We engaged **over 70 stakeholders** in a collaborative process to create a Community Framework for Change. Over several convenings between May and September, collaborators from across the ecosystem defined the problem, co-created a shared vision, identified common goals to realize the vision, and determined strategies to spur action. The resulting framework utilizes network and field-building approaches to identify opportunities for alignment, distribute leadership, and share decision-making power to solve the challenges associated with the overdose crisis and its continued devastation across Massachusetts.



GENERATING KNOWLEDGE

We continue to fund and promote research and evaluation to enhance visibility, broaden the evidence base, and inform policy. In 2023, RIZE was proud to have our funded work shared and thought leadership included in a variety of spaces, from conferences to acclaimed media outlets.



51 press mentions
in 2023

RIZE's work was featured in **8 presentations** at **6 conferences**:



Association for Multidisciplinary
Education and Research in
Substance use and Addiction



**Rx and Illicit
Drug Summit**



BUILDING INCLUSIVE NETWORKS

A thriving ecosystem approach requires a diverse and engaged network. RIZE continues to create opportunities to give voice to and learn from people with lived experience and enable collaboration for wide-scale change. In 2023, we engaged over 1,500 people from across health care, social services, government, business, and advocacy.



1,570+
people engaged
at events



27
RIZE events

TRAININGS

- Housing First University
- Harm Reduction Intensive Trainings
- Eviction Prevention Strategies
- Assertive Engagement Series
- Continuing Education for Pharmacists, Social Workers, and Medical Professionals

TOPICAL EVENTS

- Recovery Month Film Series with the City of Boston
- Pharmacy & OUD Innovation Workshop
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council Municipal Roundtables

NETWORKING

- RIZE 5th Anniversary Event
- Co-creating Solutions to End the Overdose Crisis



Top: Community partners work together to co-create solutions to end the overdose crisis
Bottom: Graphic scribe, Karyn Knight Detering, captures ideas and themes from RIZE's Design Lab







THANK YOU

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