

ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR

Dear Stakeholders,

The opioid overdose crisis continues to evolve. Community needs have shifted, the political landscape has changed, and we continue to grapple with the fallout from bewildering federal funding and policy decisions.

The challenges facing individuals, families, and communities remain complex and urgent.

At our launch nearly a decade ago, then-Governor Charlie Baker stated, “This is a relentless foe. Relentless. If we are not willing to be relentless in our response, our chances for success will be significantly diminished. Now the good news is ... I do believe we can and will be relentless.”

“Relentless” has been our credo. With our partners, we have increased treatment retention for thousands of individuals, supported innovative approaches to harm reduction, expanded training for students and providers, strengthened the addiction treatment workforce, and educated the public about the implications of the overdose crisis. We study what works, identify under-resourced areas, and strategically invest in promising programs. Then we scale up. We share all that we learn to inform policy and empower others to take action.

Our work at RIZE and Mosaic Opioid Recovery Partnership demonstrates that meaningful progress demands sustained commitment, trusted relationships, and deep partnerships with those most impacted. We have seen a reduction in fatal overdoses in the

Commonwealth. This is not a coincidence; it has been achieved through consistent investment, shared knowledge, and collaboration. RIZE is dedicated to ensuring that organizations on the front lines have the resources, data, and partnerships necessary to save lives and strengthen communities.

As we near our 10th anniversary, we reflect on the importance of prioritizing communities, highlighting lived experience, and reinforcing our ecosystem in collaboration. Our role is to ensure that the work continues, evolves, and becomes stronger over time.

We are grateful to our partners, grantees, donors, and community leaders who make our work possible. Together, we are building a more coordinated, responsive, and compassionate approach to ending the overdose crisis. And we will remain relentless in this pursuit.

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Julie Burns".

JULIE BURNS
President and CEO



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Joy B. Rosen".

JOY ROSEN
Chair, Board of Directors

OUR APPROACH

RIZE has grown significantly in both scope and impact in just a few years. As we've evolved, so has our approach. We know that addressing a crisis as complex as the overdose crisis requires thinking beyond traditional boundaries. Collaboration, inclusivity, and shared learning are central to how we operate. We seek out diverse perspectives and intentionally engage people with lived and living experience so that the voices of those most affected help shape our work.

We strive to build trusting partnerships, sharing power whenever possible and demonstrating humility across all our initiatives. We make every effort to be objective in our approach and data-driven in our evaluation. We actively seek and respond to feedback, viewing ourselves as humble learners who recognize we do not have all the answers.

Our support extends beyond funding. We invest in relationships, learning, technical assistance, and collaboration because meaningful progress is built over time. We aim to be responsive, approachable, and accessible to our partners and the broader field.

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





INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

RIZE’s multifaceted strategy to address the complexity and enormity of the overdose crisis is effective because it is based on evolving realities on the ground. We monitor the success of our initiatives, listen to and learn from each other, and hold each other accountable toward a shared vision of “Zero stigma. Zero deaths.” Our key focus areas are enhancing the addiction treatment workforce, fostering a culture of harm reduction, and increasing access to equitable addiction treatment. Our approach is iterative, supporting and building upon these areas to maximize our effectiveness and impact.



\$9.65M

invested in grants and programs

MOSAIC FAMILY RESILIENCE
\$7.5M

NETWORK ONE
\$140,000

MOSAIC MUNICIPAL MATCHING ROUND ONE
\$1.485M

IMPROVING ORAL HEALTH
\$125,000

HaRT SCHOLARS
\$376,440

JOANNE PETERSON AWARD
\$25,000

45 community partners received funding



62

subject matter experts and individuals with lived and living experience served on our grant review and advisory committees



Top: Elsa Gomes Bondlow and Brendan Little, Co-founders of the HALO Initiatives, a Mosaic Family Resilience grantee. Bottom: Enlace De Familias, a Mosaic Family Resilience grantee.

HARM REDUCTION TRAINING SCHOLARS PROGRAM

RIZE is equipping future social workers with tools to improve the care and quality of life for their clients with opioid use disorder. Our Harm Reduction Training (HaRT) Scholars program, launched in 2021 as the first paid, harm-reduction-focused internship for Master of Social Work students in the country, introduces students to careers in addiction treatment and infuses harm reduction into their professional practice, regardless of specialty.

We started this program with the understanding that social work and harm reduction share important commonalities and that integrating the fields would provide valuable, much-needed access to harm reduction services. Five years of evidence demonstrate strong support for integrating these two fields to improve services for individuals who use drugs. The program not only offers students paid practicum hours and training but also provides clinical support to placement sites, thereby expanding discussions around harm reduction in the field of social work.

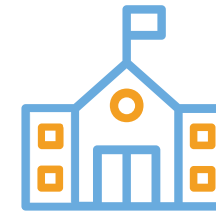


21

Scholars received training in 2025

4

participating institutions
(Bridgewater, Boston College, Simmons, Westfield State)



18 placement sites hosted Scholars

100%

of alumni indicated a likelihood of pursuing careers in the OUD field



78%

of alumni reported seeking roles that incorporate harm reduction



Top: Professor Jeff Steen, PhD, of Simmons University (top row, center), with HaRT Scholars, hosted "The Arts and Substance Use Disorders Grief Space" for students. Bottom: Dr. Steen took HaRT Scholars to visit Project Weber/RENEW, an overdose prevention center in Rhode Island.

MOSAIC OPIOID RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP

Mosaic is a unique public-private collaboration designed to support initiatives that are addressing the opioid overdose crisis in communities and populations that have historically been underserved and have experienced a high rate of opioid-related overdose deaths.

The Family Resilience grant program is one of our latest initiatives. This three-year grant awarded \$7.5 million to local organizations supporting children and families affected by the opioid crisis. The program funds family-centered services that strengthen stability, improve child well-being, and build community resilience.

We also launched the inaugural round of the Mosaic Municipal Matching grant program, matching municipal abatement funds in cities and towns using best practices to end the overdose crisis, conducting community outreach and needs assessments, and collaborating with others.

To learn more about Mosaic, visit: mosaic.rizema.org



2025 GRANT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

FAMILY RESILIENCE GRANT

106 applications received

\$7.5M awarded to 18 grantees

MUNICIPAL MATCHING GRANT ROUND ONE

75 applications received

\$1.485M awarded to 18 grantees



Left: Public health vending machine purchased with opioid abatement funds in Somerville. Right: Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner of Public Health and Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR MUNICIPALITIES

On July 1, 2025, Mosaic expanded to include the municipal training and technical assistance (TTA) program. The TTA program is about walking alongside municipalities to help them use their opioid abatement funds effectively to meet their community's needs. In the short time we have managed this program, less than a year, we have already supported over 100 communities.

To ensure that every municipality has access to a trusted local partner, Mosaic implemented an innovative "hub and spoke" model. This structure gives municipalities access to regional coordinators embedded within communities throughout the state. Our local team members possess a profound understanding of regional needs and share a unified commitment to drive municipal success. And the impact is clear: municipalities report more effective use of funds, stronger engagement with people with lived and living experience, and greater readiness to respond to community needs.

118 municipalities, intermunicipal groups, and counties have engaged with TTA

MOSAIC OPIOID RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER



In October 2025, we hosted an event to highlight the significant impact of settlement dollars on communities across Massachusetts and showcase the powerful work of Mosaic Opioid Recovery Partnership. Recognizing the ongoing challenges posed by the overdose crisis, the event centered around a narrative of hope, emphasizing the invaluable insights of those most affected. Attendees gathered to celebrate resilience and strength, fostering a sense of unity and empowerment.

“Putting the Pieces Together” fostered connections among community members, grant recipients, and government leaders during a time when people needed connection. The event highlighted the impact of settlement funding on community initiatives, showcased a public-private partnership, and encouraged engagement through discussions and workshops. Attendees left with “great ideas and a full heart,” feeling more hopeful and energized by the opportunity to learn from one another and celebrate the power of community-driven change.

Photos clockwise from top-left: RIZE staff; Event attendees; Event emcees Noel Sierra and Kenneth Washington, pictured with RIZE’s Chief Program Officer Jen Tracey; Tyshaun Perryman from Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Bureau of Substance Addiction Services.





GENERATING KNOWLEDGE

RIZE is committed to generating and sharing knowledge to enhance visibility, broaden the evidence base, and inform policies to address the overdose crisis. We focus not just on identifying gaps but also on uncovering opportunities and offering effective solutions.

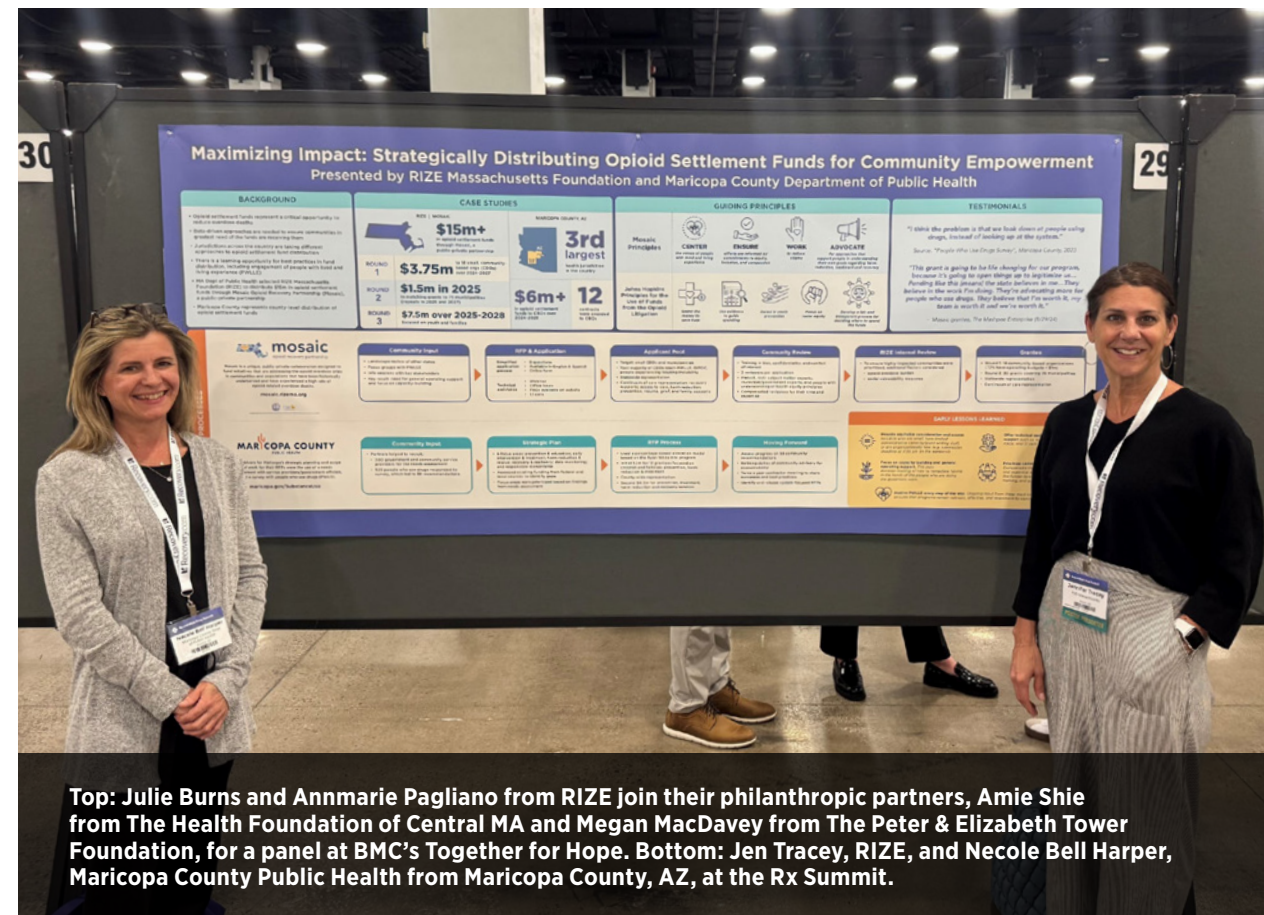


71 press mentions in 2025



RIZE's work was featured in **11 presentations** at **8 conferences**:

- American Public Health Association's 2025 Annual Meeting & Expo
- AMERSA: Building Stronger Communities through Addiction Care Innovation, Research, Education, and Advocacy
- Cambridge Health Alliance Academic Poster Session
- Community Care in Reach: Mobile Addiction Services Conference 2025
- Council on Social Work Education's Annual Meeting
- PEAK Grantmaking Conference: A Case Study in Distributing Funds Via Public-Private Partnerships
- Rx and Illicit Drug Summit; Maximizing Impact: Strategically Distributing Opioid Settlement Funds for Community Impact
- Together for Hope: Shaping the Future of Addiction Care



Top: Julie Burns and Annmarie Pagliano from RIZE join their philanthropic partners, Amie Shie from The Health Foundation of Central MA and Megan MacDavey from The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation, for a panel at BMC's Together for Hope. Bottom: Jen Tracey, RIZE, and Necole Bell Harper, Maricopa County Public Health from Maricopa County, AZ, at the Rx Summit.



BUILDING INCLUSIVE NETWORKS

RIZE is committed to promoting an ecosystem approach to ending the overdose crisis that enhances communication and collaboration among stakeholders, lifting up the voices of those with lived and living experience, and co-creating opportunities for change. In 2025, we engaged with over 1,400 people in health care, social services, government, business, and advocacy at convenings hosted or sponsored by RIZE.



1,413
people engaged
at events



19
RIZE events

TRAININGS

- ☀️ Changing the Conversation: Harm Reduction in Social Work Practice - HaRT CE 3-part webinar series with NASW Massachusetts and National Harm Reduction Coalition
- ☀️ Municipal Training and Technical Assistance Webinar: FY25 Opioid Abatement Expenditure Reports
- ☀️ Municipal Training and Technical Assistance Webinar: Partnering with Mosaic’s Technical Assistance Team
- ☀️ Municipal Training and Technical Assistance Webinar: Regional Collaboration Efforts Across Municipalities

TOPICAL EVENTS

- ☀️ Community Care in Reach: Mobile Addiction Services Conference with the Kraft Center for Community Health at Mass General Brigham
- ☀️ Mosaic: Putting the Pieces Together

NETWORKING

RIZE stays close to our community partners and the people driving this work every day by supporting networking opportunities. These connections help us better understand the evolving needs, challenges, and opportunities shaping overdose response across Massachusetts.

MASSACHUSETTS HARM REDUCTION WORKFORCE COALITION



The Massachusetts Harm Reduction Workforce Coalition (MAHRWC), established in 2024, is a statewide organization designed to strengthen, connect, and sustain the harm reduction workforce across Massachusetts through community, training, mutual support, and collective action.

As MAHRWC’s fiscal partner, RIZE provides financial and administrative support while respecting the group’s autonomy and self-determination, and supports the coalition’s efforts to dismantle systemic inequities and help build a future where compassion, dignity, and support replace stigma and neglect.

The first of its kind in Massachusetts, MAHRWC continues to grow its network of harm reduction workers, advocates, and partners committed to saving lives and advancing justice across the Commonwealth.

To learn more about MAHRWC, visit mahrwc.org.







THANK YOU

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