



# ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year  
2025

Higher Education  
Prevention Services

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services,  
Prevention Services Division

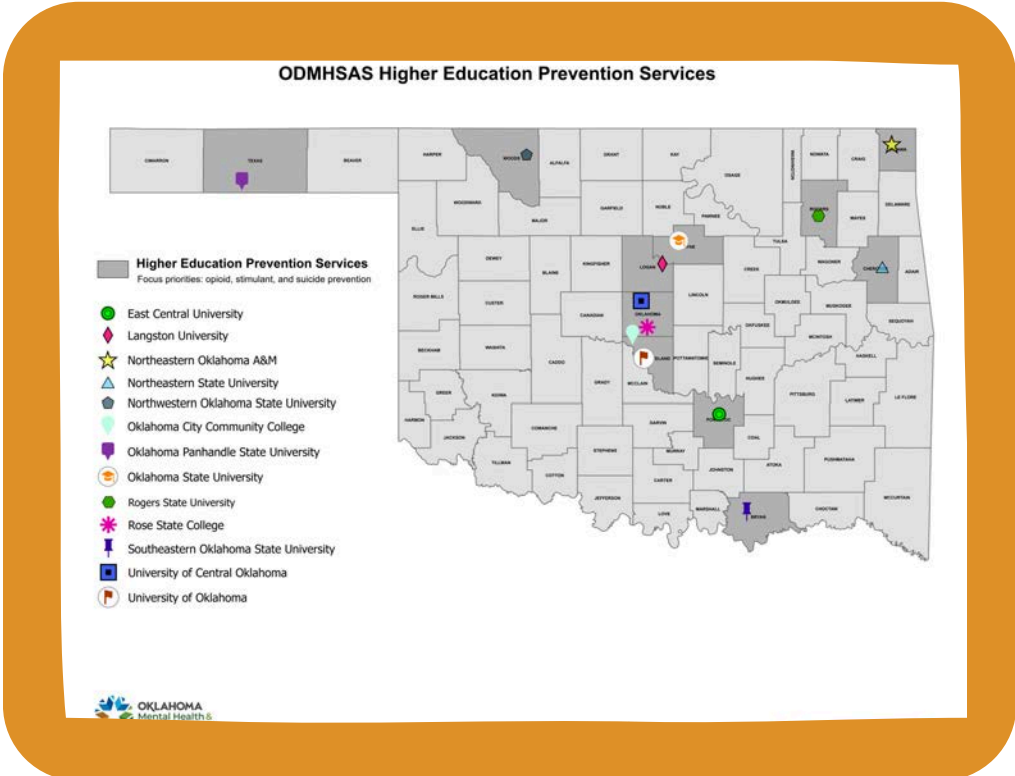
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Prevention Services End of Year Report 2025  
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This publication has been submitted in compliance with Section 3-114 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes.*



The Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences – Center for Rural Health (OSU-CRH) provided evaluation services for the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) Prevention Division during Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). As part of this role, OSU-CRH collected data, developed reports, and delivered evaluation-related training and technical assistance (TTA) to ODMHSAS staff and local subrecipients.



This report presents the outcomes of prevention efforts within the Higher Education Prevention Services (HEPS) sector and provides a snapshot of its work and impact across Oklahoma’s colleges and universities. In Fiscal Year 2025, the HEPS sector included 13 participating institutions of higher education. HEPS contracts are funded through the State Opioid Response (SOR) and State Suicide Prevention grants. As such, all activities and programming under this sector are required to address issues related to opioids and/or stimulants. Through campus-based prevention strategies, HEPS grantees work to reduce substance misuse as well as suicide prevention among college students, faculty and staff, promote safe and healthy behaviors, and foster supportive environments that reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors related to opioid and stimulant use.



The HEPS program is built on research-based approaches to preventing substance misuse and suicide. It follows a structured planning model that helps colleges and universities design effective strategies tailored to their campus communities.

Workplans were established at the outset of each HEPS provider's contract. The focus of these campus work plans includes building student, faculty and staff capacity, sharing educational information, and creating changes in campus policies and environments that support healthy choices. Based on these goals, each institution implements evidence-based programs or promising practices and strategies designed to reduce opioid and stimulant misuse using guidance from the national Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP).

## CSAP Strategies

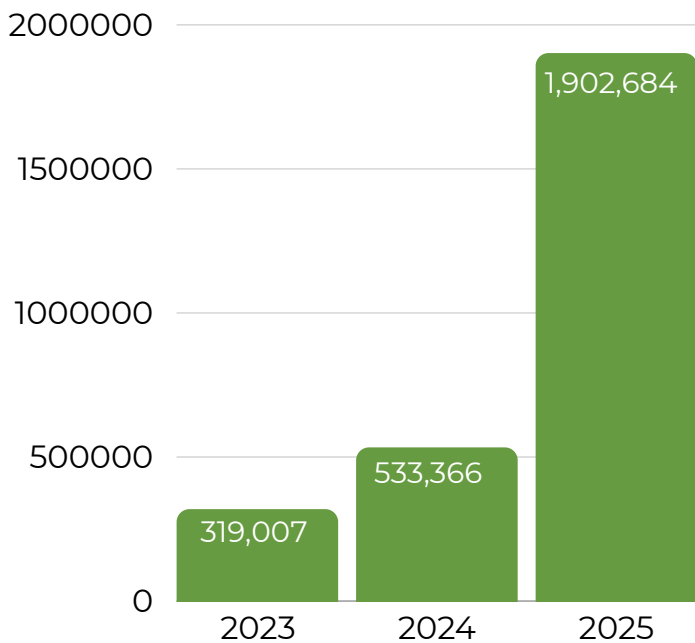
- Information Dissemination
- Community Based Process
- Education
- Environmental Systems Change



# INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

HEPS providers use Information Dissemination as a core strategy to increase awareness and understanding of substance use and misuse across the entire campus community—including students, faculty, and staff. This strategy also promotes available prevention resources and support services offered on campus. Information is shared through a variety of methods, such as flyers, posters, educational presentations, and social media campaigns. Messaging may be broad and designed to reach the general campus population, or it can be tailored to specific groups, depending on campus needs. Each institution determines how best to implement this strategy based on their unique campus culture, available resources, and the specific audiences they aim to reach. The goal is to ensure that accurate, engaging, and accessible information is consistently available throughout the campus environment.

**Number of Impressions through Media and Information Sharing by Fiscal Year**



*It is important to note these measures allow for the potential of more than one engagement with an individual, and can result in a number larger than the total student population of a university. Different strategies call for different kinds of engagement. As such, one person might be counted for viewing a poster as well as viewing a social media post.*

From FY 23 to FY 25, HEPS providers expanded their media reach **with a nearly 500% increase over this two-year period.**

Several factors contribute to this dramatic growth. Additional colleges and universities have received prevention funding under the HEPS sector over the past 2 years, expanding the program's overall capacity and reach. Additionally, as institutions progressed further into the grant cycle, they became more established in their prevention work. With stronger campus partnerships, increased visibility, and more refined strategies, these higher education institutions were able to implement broader and more effective media strategies. This upward trend in media impressions reflects not only increased activity, but also growing momentum and engagement across campuses as HEPS providers continue to build awareness and promote healthier campus environments.

# INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

HEPS providers use a mix of social media and non-social media strategies to share prevention messages across their campuses. Social media platforms help reach students, faculty and staff quickly and cost-effectively. Non-social media strategies include methods like flyers, posters, rack cards, tabling events, and digital ad boards and screens, placed in high-traffic areas such as student centers, residence halls, and academic buildings. Each institution chooses the most effective mix of strategies based on the needs of their campus community and the populations they aim to reach.

-  **1,848,820** media impressions through media and information sharing (non social media) in FY 25
-  **53,398** media impressions through social media in FY 25

The University of Central Oklahoma shared the following success story from an on-campus event where staff distributed resources and naloxone to students. One provider reflected:

“A student came up and spoke with us and said, ‘Wait, so if I keep medications that are prescribed and take them the next time I get hurt, or whenever I need pain meds, that can hurt me?’ He had grown up in a household where that was common practice and continued to talk about how he never realized it could be dangerous or that it could impair his ability to drive. He then went to call his parents to talk to them about it because he didn’t want any of his loved ones affected by choices that they didn’t know the full extent of.”

This moment illustrates the multi-layered impact of substance use prevention. At the individual level, a student experienced a shift in understanding about medication safety. At the provider level, staff were able to witness and document this transformation in real time. And at the family and community level, that knowledge was immediately extended beyond campus, sparking learning and safety conversations within the home. Stories like this demonstrate how brief educational interactions can create ripples of change, moving from awareness to action, and from individual insight to broader community transformation.



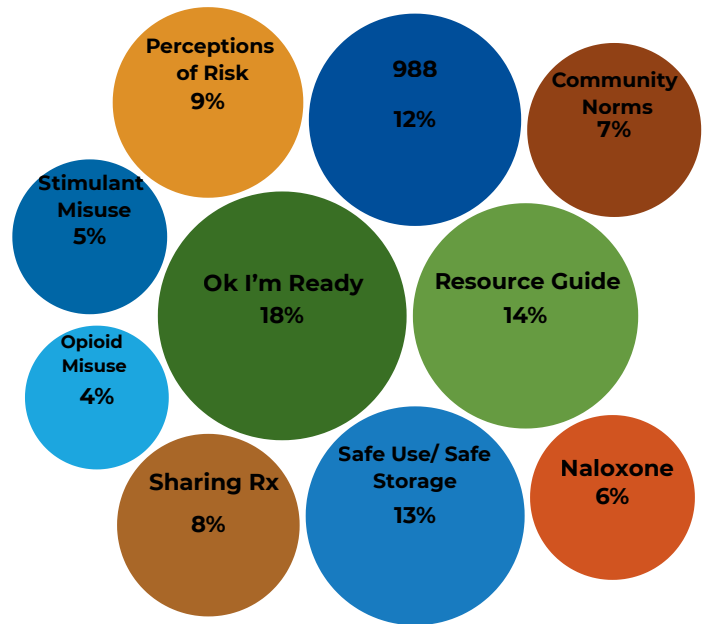
# INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The information and messaging shared by each HEPS coalition is guided by their specific goals and unique needs of their campus. The bubble chart below highlights the ten most frequently addressed content areas. Among these, OK I'm Ready was the most commonly disseminated topic, highlighting providers' emphasis on safe use, safe storage, safe disposal, and access to naloxone kits. The Resource Guide and other safe use or storage materials were also widely shared. These focus areas represent essential components of effective prevention efforts, supporting safer behaviors and healthier campus environments through education and engagement.

Southeastern University shared the following account describing their collaborative efforts to promote mental health and well-being through a campus-wide engagement event:

“In honor of an event Southeastern University does called Soothing September, the HEPS grant hosted a relaxation station along with Student Wellness Services. We checked in with students academically and talked about management strategies for stress and expectations as they are moving toward mid-terms. A mindfulness area was created in the student union with a meditation station... 35 lavender plants with the 988 suicide hotline number, 8 mindfulness workbooks, and 3 workbooks for managing perfectionism were distributed... Referrals to counseling, tutoring services, and other helpful programs were made as students self-identified difficulties with academics and expectations.”

## Top 10 Content Areas Disseminated By Frequency FY 25



**1,113,605 media impressions** with information about referral to treatment services, including how to access naloxone (an opioid overdose reversal medication), the 988 Mental Health Lifeline, and OK I'm Ready (a state initiative connecting individuals to mental health and substance use services).



# COMMUNITY BASED PROCESS

For HEPS providers, the Community-Based Process strategy supports the development of strong, coordinated prevention efforts by building partnerships and improving how campus stakeholders work together. This strategy helps universities strengthen internal structures, improve planning, and deliver more effective prevention services. A key component of this strategy is interagency meetings, which may include both interdepartmental collaboration (such as health services, student affairs, residence life, and campus security) and external or cross-campus partnerships (such as local coalitions, community organizations, or nearby healthcare providers). Other common activities include holding regular planning or coalition meetings and assessing the campus community's readiness to engage in and support prevention efforts.

Oklahoma State University described an ongoing collaboration that demonstrates the sustainability and capacity of the HEPS grant through intentional campus partnerships:

“On November 7th, grant staff provided 15 medication lockboxes to the OSU Library Assistant Director of Operations. This is an ongoing partnership/collaboration with the HEPS grant, OSU Department of Wellness, and the OSU Library. This success story reflects the capacity and sustainability of the HEPS grant on OSU's campus through connection and utilization of campus partners to further the mission of the grant.”



The HEPS coalitions held **212 meetings** in FY 25 averaging one coalition meeting per month.

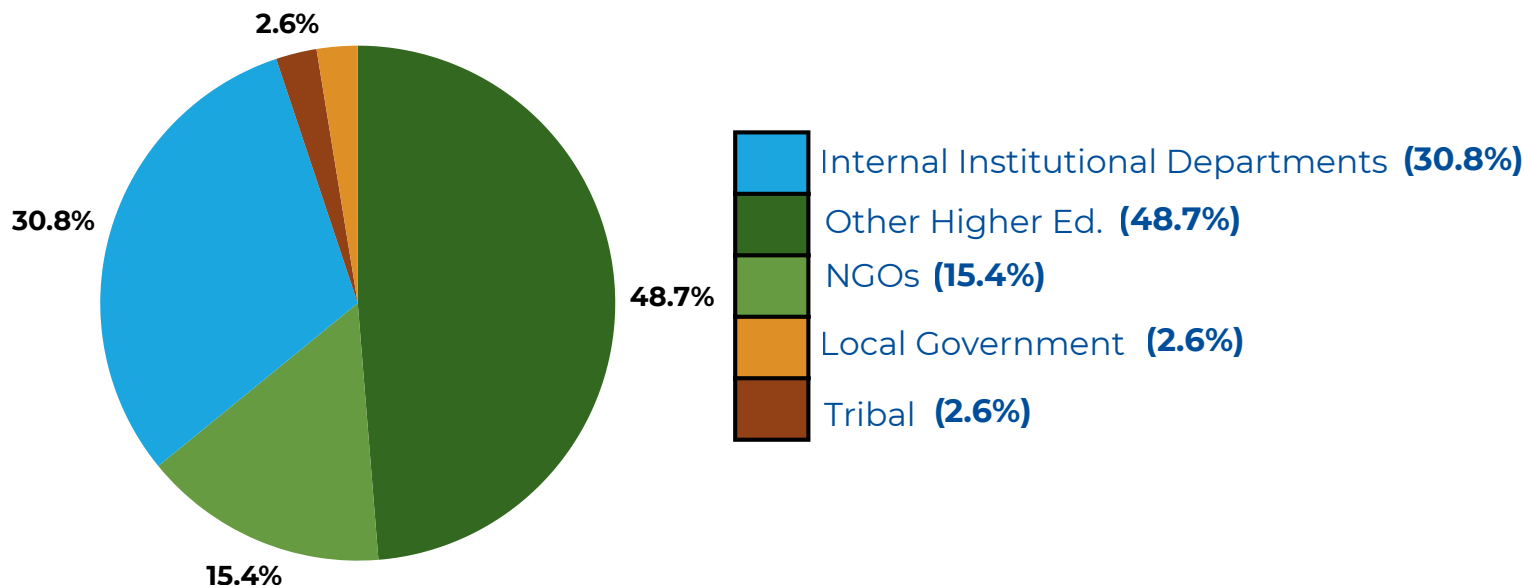


During FY 25, coalitions met with a total of **78 unique partner organizations** for inter-agency collaboration efforts and held **234 meetings** focused on strengthening these partnerships.

# COMMUNITY BASED PROCESS

Of the 78 organizations involved, HEPS coalitions worked closely with a diverse range of partners to strengthen local prevention efforts. These partners included Institutional departments, other higher education institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local businesses, tribal partners and community coalitions. This broad collaboration reflects a shared commitment to addressing substance use through coordinated, community-driven solutions.

## Types of HEPS Community Partners FY 25



The University of Oklahoma shared the following reflection, highlighting an emerging partnership focused on integrated mental health and substance misuse prevention within the OU School of Aviation:

“New partnership with OU School of Aviation and their push for wraparound mental health and substance misuse prevention. We worked with the school to create easy access to care and resources by being present for all safety meetings and inviting them to take part in our coalition. They have since become the most active and supportive of our mission.”

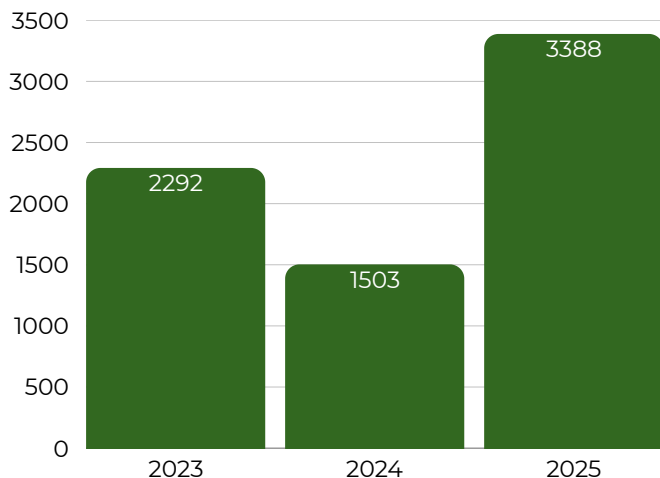
# EDUCATION

As part of the Education strategy, many coalitions deliver trainings and presentations to students, faculty, and staff at their higher education institutions. These sessions cover a range of prevention topics and are designed to engage participants through two-way communication, encouraging dialogue, questions, and ongoing interaction. This approach goes beyond simply sharing information; it creates opportunities for community members to actively participate in learning, strengthening their understanding and involvement in prevention efforts.

The University of Central Oklahoma described a recent collaboration focused on expanding naloxone education and recognition through micro-credentialing opportunities:

“This January, the HEPS Program Coordinator met with...LX Studios to create a naloxone training micro-credential for UCO students, staff, and faculty. Any person on campus who completes the training has the opportunity to take a quiz to receive a micro-credential that is good for two years that they can add to their resumes and CVs.”

**Reach by Trainings and Presentations by Fiscal Year**



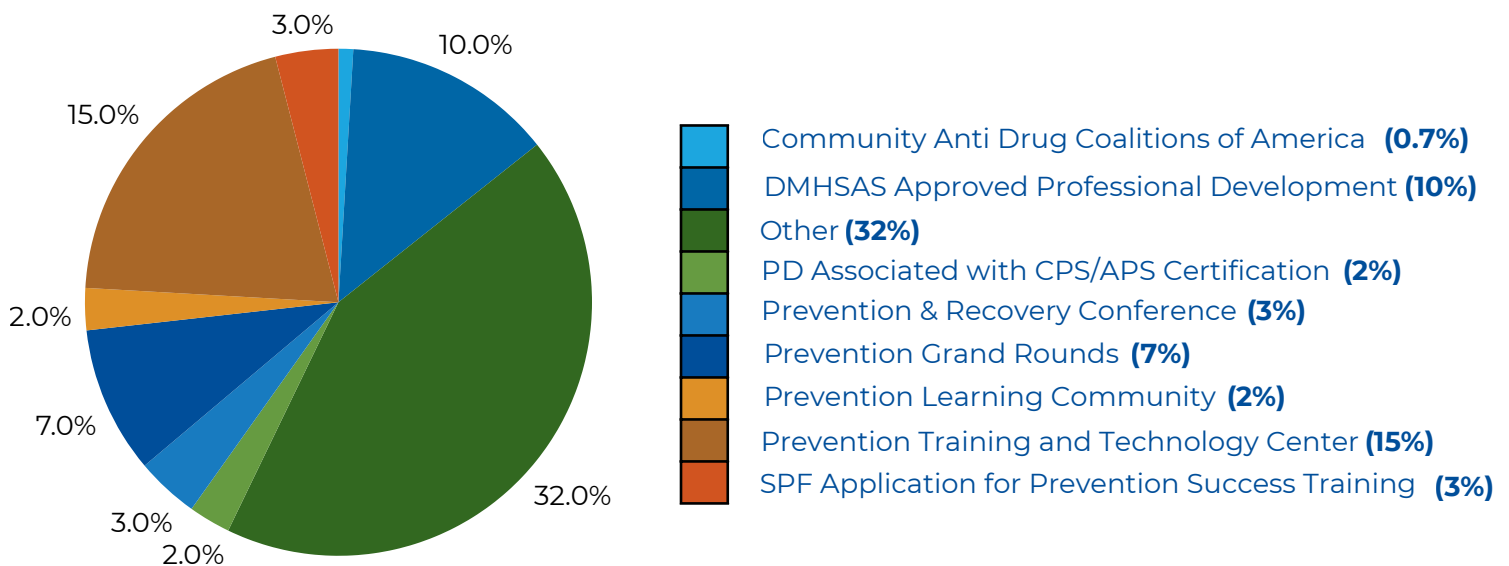
The reach of trainings and presentations also increased from FY 24 to FY 25, with **a total of 3,388 reached** in FY 25, representing a 125% increase from the previous year.

**55 trainings and presentations** conducted in delivering primary prevention programs in FY 25 which is an increase from 33 in FY 24

# EDUCATION

In addition to community outreach, HEPS coalitions use the Education strategy to support prevention workforce development, the professional growth of the HEPS providers. Through workshops, trainings, and other learning opportunities, providers strengthen their knowledge of prevention principles, build skills to lead and sustain effective initiatives, and deepen collaboration within the broader prevention community, ensuring members are well-equipped to serve their communities. To track this growth, HEPS coalitions report participation in professional development events such as Prevention Grand Rounds, sessions offered through the Prevention Training and Technology Center, trainings from the Momentum: Prevention, Recovery and Justice conference, and other ODMHSAS approved opportunities.

## Types of Workforce Development in FY 25





# ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS CHANGE

The Environmental/Systems Change strategy aims to create lasting impact by influencing the broader environments in which people live, work, and learn. This approach builds on individual-level change by addressing the systems and structures that shape everyday experiences. In higher education settings, systems-level change can be particularly challenging due to the complexity and bureaucracy often present in higher education institutions, where formal policy change can require extensive time, approvals, and consensus. Despite these barriers, HEPS coalitions have made meaningful progress by partnering with campus departments and organizations to adopt practices that improve student well-being, such as distributing lockboxes and offering suicide prevention trainings to make campus spaces safer. While formal policy adoption remains an important goal, it can be slow. Recognizing these challenges, providers are increasingly encouraged to pursue informal changes, like departmental procedures or practice shifts, which can build momentum and lay the groundwork for more formal, institutionalized policy change in the future.

Northeastern State University described a developing partnership aimed at increasing campus safety and medication security for students, faculty and staff through formal collaboration with campus health services:

“Working alongside the Assistant VP for Student Affairs to curate a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the NEO Health Clinic on campus to provide lock boxes to students who are prescribed medication.”



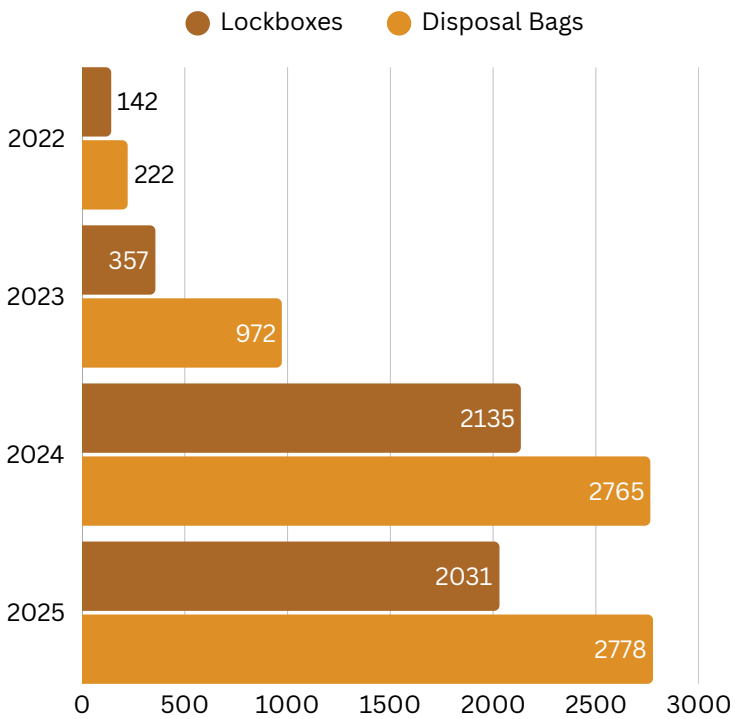
**32 unique agencies** engaged with regarding adoption or enhancement of organizational policies in FY 25, which is an increase from 29 in FY 24.



# ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS CHANGE

As part of this strategy, many HEPS coalitions worked to decrease the social availability of opioids and stimulants on campus to reduce how easily these substances can be accessed by students, faculty and staff and others in the campus community. To support this, coalitions distributed medication lockboxes to encourage safe storage of prescription medications in residence halls and campus housing. They also provided disposal bags to help students, staff, and campus health centers safely discard unused or expired medications. In some cases, coalitions partnered with campus safety or health departments to host medication take-back events, offering a safe and anonymous way to remove potentially dangerous substances from the campus environment. These efforts are critical in preventing misuse by reducing opportunities for unauthorized access particularly in shared living spaces and among students.

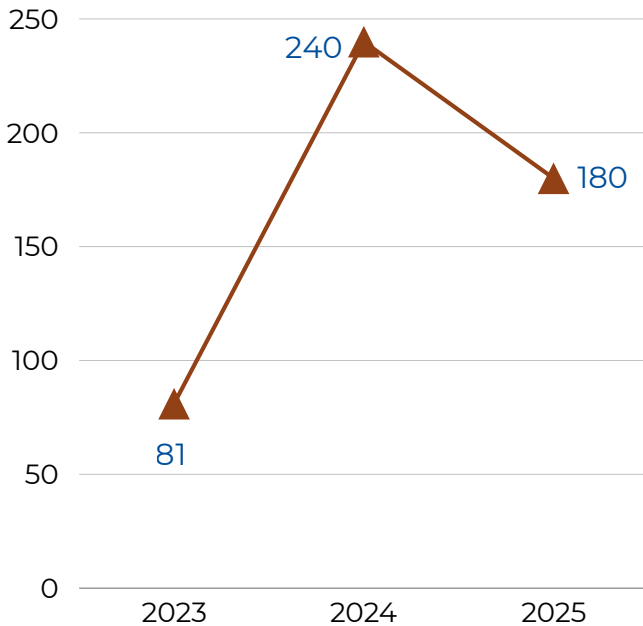
**Number of Lockboxes and Disposal Bags Distributed by Fiscal Year**



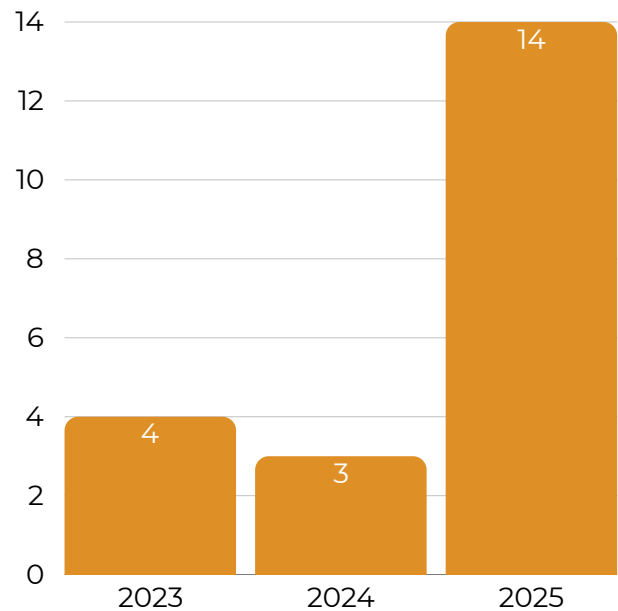
While distribution of medication lockboxes and disposal bags remained relatively consistent between FY 24 and FY 25, **the totals represent a significant increase compared to FY 22 and FY 23.** This sustained growth reflects the continued prioritization of safe storage and disposal practices across campuses and communities.

# ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS CHANGE

**Pounds of Medication Collected through Medication Take Back Events by Fiscal Year**



**Number of Take Back Events by Fiscal Year**



Take Back Events (TBEs) have increased from 3 in FY24 to 14 in FY25. Although the total pounds of medication collected decreased from 240 lbs in FY24 to 180 lbs in FY25, this is still a notable improvement from 81 lbs collected in FY23. TBEs play a critical role in the HEPS community’s efforts to prevent substance misuse by providing a safe, responsible way to dispose of unused medications.

Northeastern State University shared the following reflection on their active engagement during National Medication Take Back Day, demonstrating collaboration and community connection:

“In addition to these endeavors, April saw active participation in National Medication Take Back Day, where the Office of Opioid and Stimulant Prevention collaborated with various community partners to raise awareness about safe medication disposal and substance abuse prevention. Volunteering alongside Tahlequah B.E.S.T. Community Coalition, Cherokee County Health Services Council, Opioid918 Rural Communities Opioid Response Program, SENIORS 918, Cherokee Nation Behavioral Health, NSU FIT, Northeastern State University Police Department, and Keetoowah Police Department, the office played a pivotal role in organizing outreach efforts at the Northeastern Health Care System and Reasor's Grocery Store.”



# CONCLUSION

Throughout Fiscal Year 2025, ODMHSAS and its Higher Education Prevention Services (HEPS) subrecipients have significantly advanced their efforts to reduce substance use and misuse across Oklahoma's college campuses. Now in a more mature phase of the grant cycle, HEPS providers are reaching broader audiences, driving deeper engagement, and making measurable impacts in their communities.

FY 25 highlights reflect this growth. A 500% increase in media impressions demonstrates expanded awareness and visibility of prevention messaging. Coalitions maintained strong momentum, holding 234 interagency meetings with 78 unique partners, showcasing robust collaboration and cross-sector engagement. The year also saw a notable rise in trainings and presentations, fostering direct interaction with students, faculty, staff, and campus leaders while deepening the influence of prevention strategies through personal connection.

While data collection and reporting challenges remain, due to the complex and sensitive nature of prevention work, HEPS providers are increasingly equipped to navigate these barriers. Stigma and underreporting still affect visibility, but maturing coalitions are better positioned to build trust, normalize conversations, and capture more meaningful data over time.

Overall, HEPS coalitions are leveraging their strengthened relationships, local knowledge, and strategic insights to implement the CSAP strategies with greater depth and coordination. As the final year of the grant cycle approaches, providers are focused on sustainability, scaling effective practices, and advancing policy changes that will sustain progress long after the grant period ends.