



SOAR

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

**A year of
evolution**

FY 2022 - 2023



ANNUAL REPORT

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A year of evolution
August 2022 - July 2023

Prepared by Jessica Brager
and Kim Adams

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A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jessica Brager

In 2023, The SOAR Initiative embarked on an evolution under new leadership. We welcomed a significant milestone in our journey by hiring our first full-time Executive Director, a role I am deeply honored to hold. In addition, we brought in a talented and dedicated individual as our Director of Technology & Program Services. These appointments were critical steps toward furthering our mission and enhancing our ability to serve those who depend on us.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to our incredible staff and the recipients of our services. Embracing change of this magnitude didn't come without its fair share of challenges and hiccups. Your patience and unwavering commitment have been the pillars of our success, and for that, we are profoundly grateful.

This year, we have also witnessed significant shifts in Ohio's drug landscape and policies. Notably, the legalization of fentanyl drug test strips marks a pivotal moment in our state's approach to harm reduction. The Ohio Department of Health's initiative to provide these strips for free reflects a positive step forward in our collective efforts to save lives.



However, we cannot ignore the concerning shifts in the drug market, particularly the visible emergence of Xylazine and its devastating impact on our communities and overdose rates. These developments remind us of the ever-evolving nature of our work. As we adapt to these changes, our commitment to protecting lives remains resolute.

As we move forward, let us carry the spirit of resilience and innovation that has defined us over the years. Together, we will continue to rise to the challenges and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you for standing beside The SOAR Initiative, for believing in our mission, and for your unwavering support. We look forward to another year of making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

With gratitude and determination,

Jessica Brager

Jessica Brager
Executive Director
The SOAR Initiative



MISSION & VISION

MISSION

Build up powerful, healthy communities of people who use drugs by implementing innovative harm reduction strategies that advance connection through technology and advocating for policies that promote a safe supply.

VISION

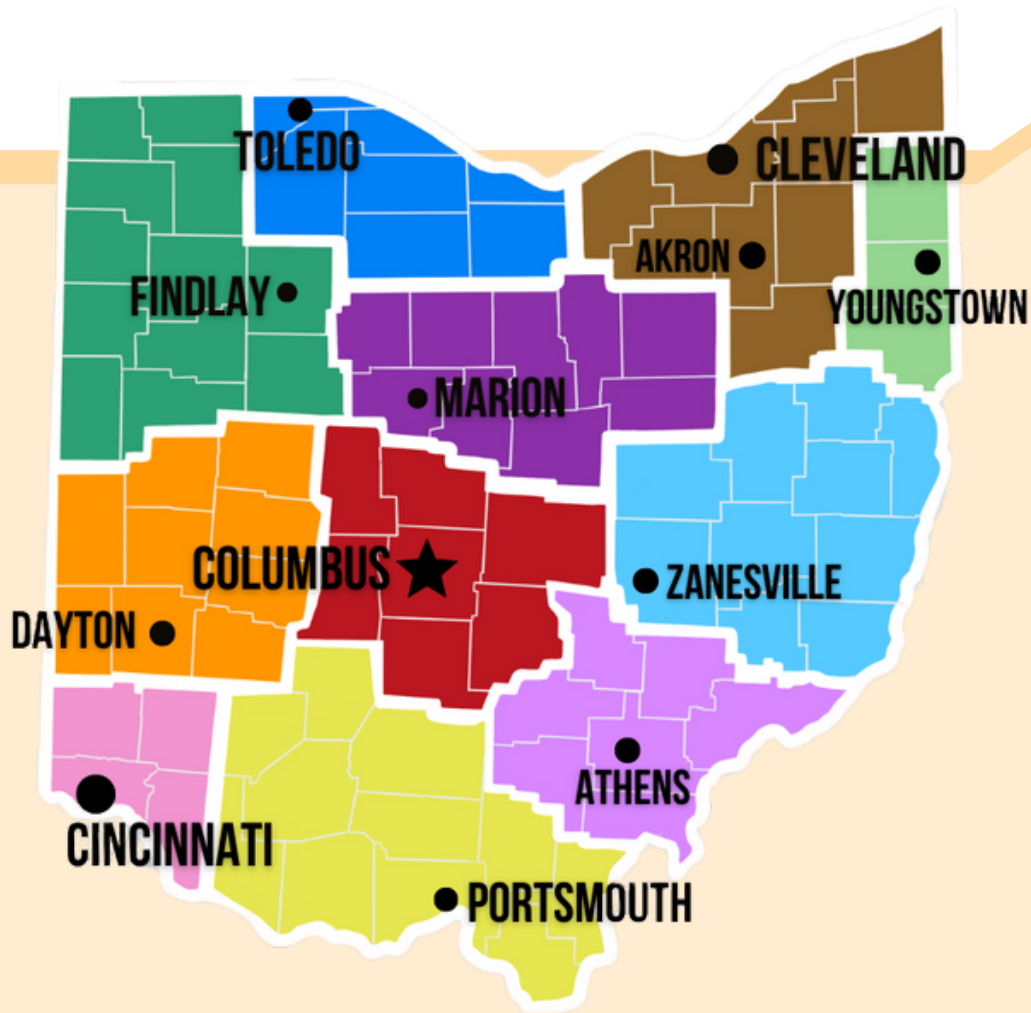
End the harmful, racist, and discriminatory War on Drugs and build a world where all people who use drugs can achieve health, safety, happiness, and bodily autonomy.

PROGRAM UPDATES

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DEADLY BATCH ALERTS



4,827

SUBSCRIBERS

▲ 83% FROM LAST YEAR

2,181 subscribers added from
August 2022 - July 2023

204

ALERTS SENT

▲ 179%

143

REPORTS SUBMITTED

▲ 110%

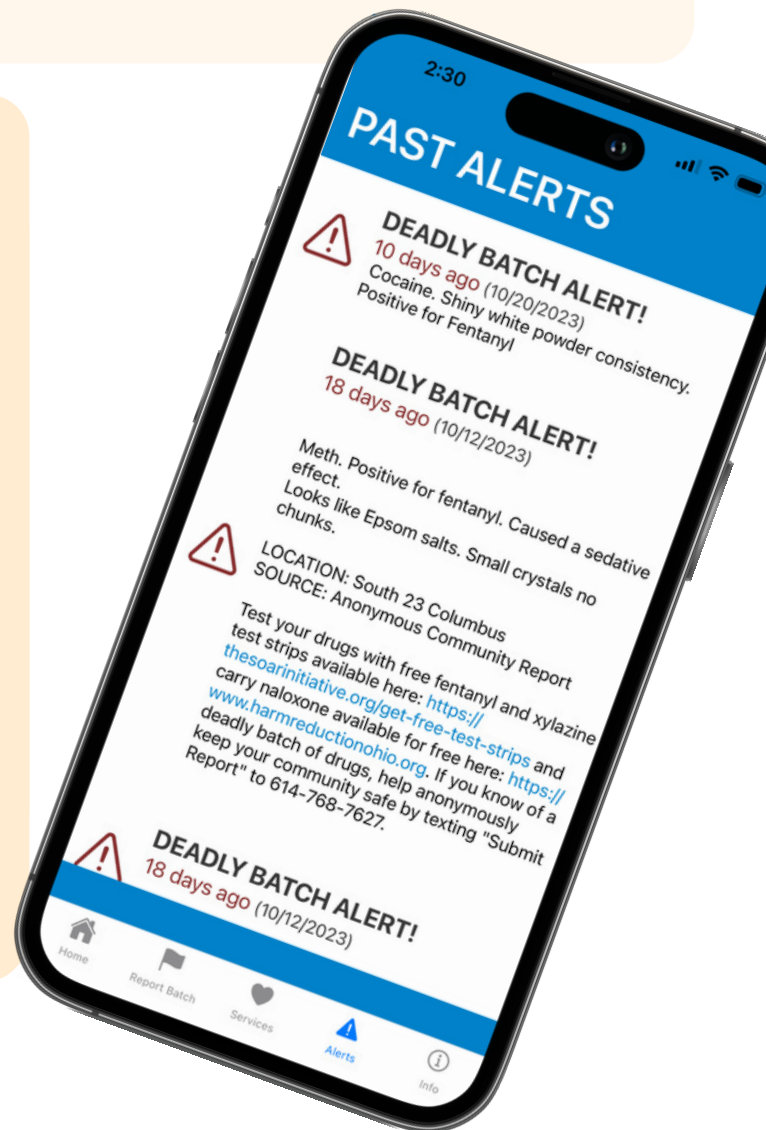
DEADLY BATCH ALERTS

REGION	SUBSCRIBERS
Central Ohio	2912
Northeast Ohio	618
Southwest Ohio	273
Mahoning Valley	161
Southern Ohio	139
West Central Ohio	205
Toledo	121
Northwest Ohio	153
Athens	62
Marion	126
East Central Ohio	57

The Deadly Batch Alert service has experienced a remarkable surge in subscribers, witnessing a phenomenal 50% increase over the past year. This significant growth is an exciting testament to the service's vital role in public safety.

The majority of our subscribers have shown a strong preference for receiving text message alerts, underscoring the urgency and effectiveness of our communication. We've expanded our scope to include overdose surge alerts, recognizing the evolving nature of this crisis.

Also, in response to emerging risks, we've recently implemented drug seizure alerts, a proactive measure aimed at warning users about potential overdose threats due to a lack of drug supply. These developments reflect our unwavering commitment to safeguarding the well-being of our subscribers and the community at large.



STRIP CLUB: HARM REDUCTION BY MAIL

In the past year, Strip Club has seen several exciting updates. In May 2023, we started offering Xylazine test strips in personal and group shipments. To keep up with the high Xylazine test strip request volume through group requests, we implemented a vetting process to ensure we send materials to the right people for the right reasons.

Strip Club migrated to Airtable to organize larger datasets needed to vet these requests. Airtable allows for creating automations that save time and minimize human error while processing requests. In addition, we can now more deeply analyze the needs of the Ohioans we serve to meet needs and quickly access information to apply for funding.

As the program has continually expanded, we created an email list for requesters who want program updates. Through this email list, we include flyers and educational materials so that more Ohioans can access educational materials about safe use. As of September of 2023, the email list had 425 subscribers.



45,422

INDIVIDUALS REACHED

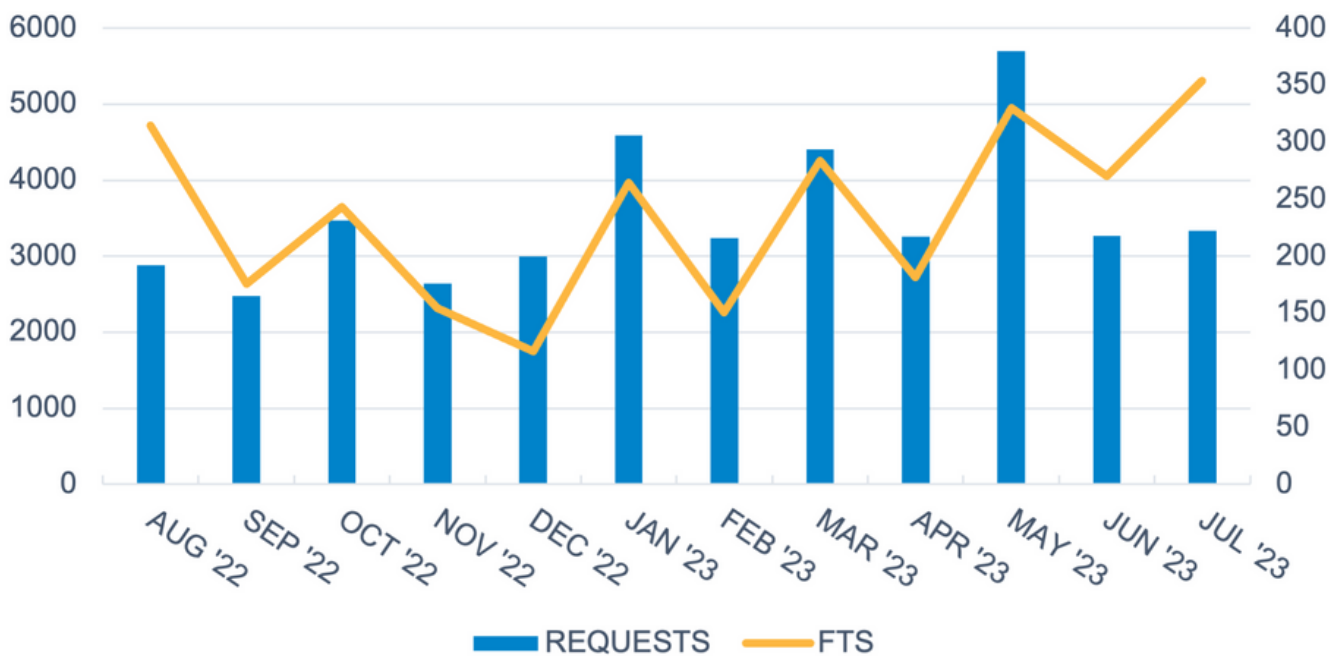
▲ 137.07%

30,119

FTS GIVEN OUT

▼ 16.81%

Orders and Test Strips by Month



Though our order volume and the number of individuals served have significantly increased since last year's report, the number of Fentanyl test strips (FTS) distributed has slightly declined. This decline is due to cutting back our FTS quantities offered in group shipments by half to keep up with the heavy influx of requests. However, by the close of this period, we returned to sending the full 100 FTS with each group shipment. Strip Club is a steadfast and consistent program that connects us with Ohioans across the state and puts free resources in the hands of those who need them most.

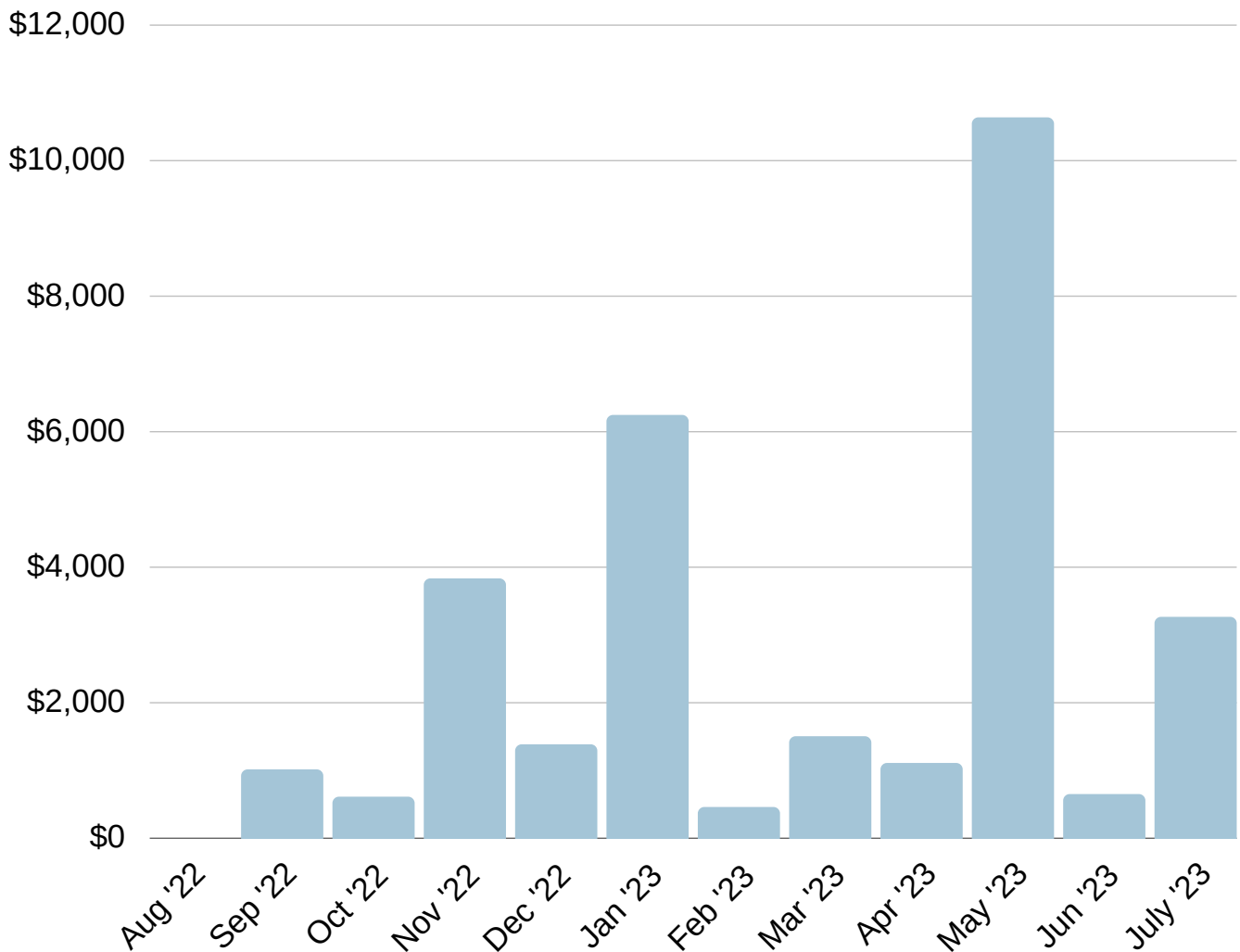
2,111

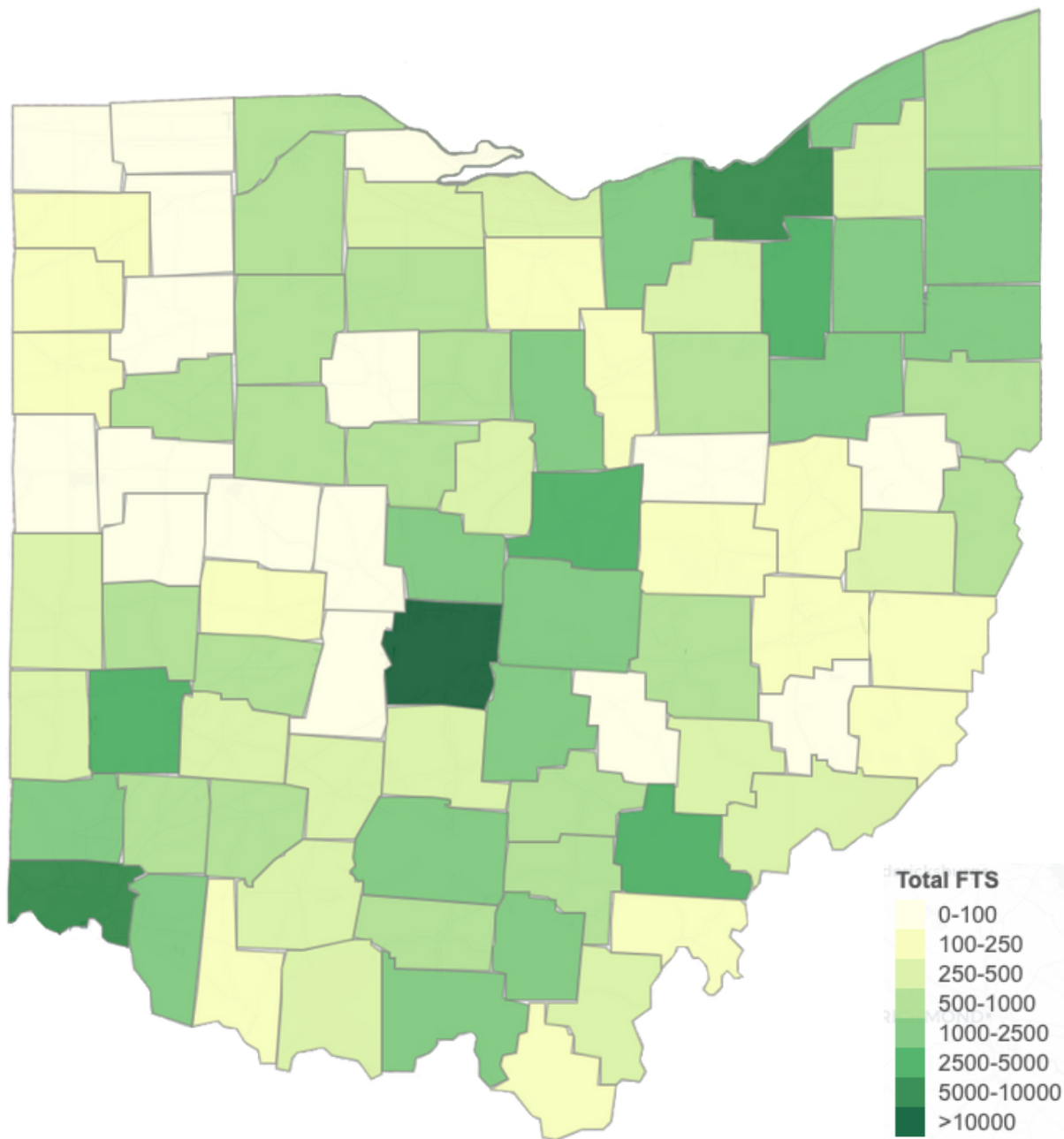
**INDIVIDUAL
SHIPMENTS**

300

**OUTREACH
SHIPMENTS**

Total Strip Club Spending by Month





FTS Distributed in ALL 88 OHIO COUNTIES

38.00% of all FTS distributed since the start of the program have reached *priority* counties. These counties do not have local syringe service programs were sent fewer than 5 personal shipments and 5 group shipments.



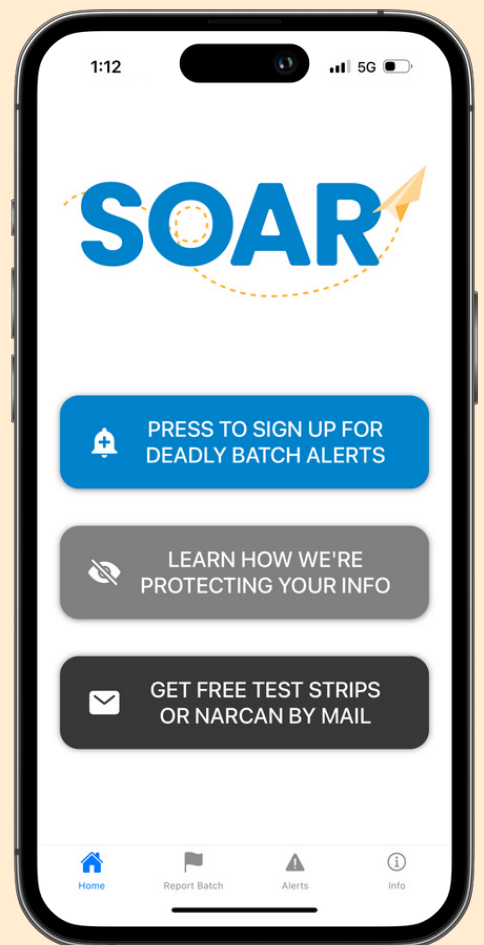
The SOAR App

The SOAR App has continued to be another means for individuals to reach a network of resources. It presents the user with recent Deadly Batch Alerts within their selected region, sends push notifications of new alerts, and allows users to submit their own alerts.

In the finished product of last year's 2.0 app version, users can now review how their data is being protected and used and can access various local resources via a map or list view specific to their selected region. In addition, the app offers a simplified interface for ease of navigation.

The app has continued to be a powerful, user-facing technology that links individuals with all of SOAR's resources in one place alongside other outside resources, such as ordering Narcan by mail - all in one place.

2,885
DOWNLOADS

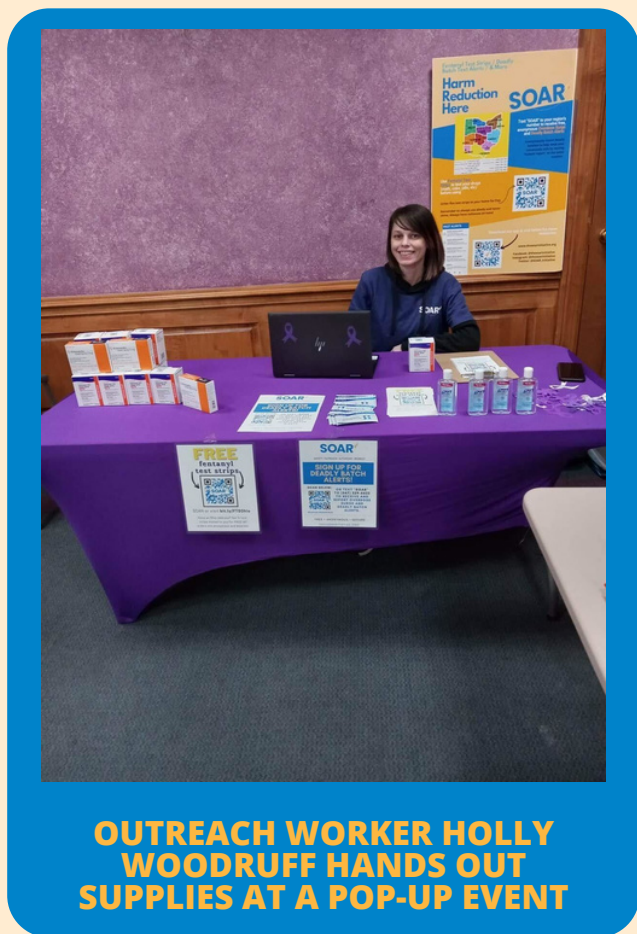


AND COUNTING!



OUTREACH NETWORK

Founded in May 2022, the SOAR Outreach Network exists to both promote SOAR's existing resources, including the Deadly Batch Alerts System and Strip Club and also support individuals engaging in harm reduction work across the state.



OUTREACH WORKER HOLLY WOODRUFF HANDS OUT SUPPLIES AT A POP-UP EVENT

8/1

8 part-time community outreach workers and 1 volunteer

8/11

8 out of 11 SOAR regions have an outreach worker dedicated to serving their community

2,285

Combined hours worked to date



OUTREACH NETWORK



Our devoted outreach workers have had an extraordinary year, going above and beyond in their efforts. They've been pivotal in organizing regular pop-up events within their communities and building essential connections and support networks. In June, they extended their outreach to PRIDE events across eight cities in Ohio, championing inclusivity and raising awareness. Their dedication also shone through in their collaboration with the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence, where they played a crucial role in creating training programs to assist survivors who are people who use drugs. Furthermore, their remarkable commitment was rewarded with grants to provide naloxoboxes in their communities, bolstering access to life-saving resources and advancing the fight against opioid-related crises. These individuals remain unwavering champions of change, positively impacting countless lives.



OUTREACH NETWORK



The SOAR Initiative's commitment to making a difference in Ohio was evident as we hosted a series of Overdose Awareness Day events spanning the last week of August and early September across various locations. These gatherings were designed to elevate awareness about overdose prevention and extend support to individuals grappling with substance use disorders.

During these events, The SOAR Initiative made a profound impact by distributing 550 naloxone kits, 727 Fentanyl Test Strips (FTS), 400 Xylazine Test Strips (XTS), approximately 300 condoms, and 5 HIV test kits. We also provided attendees with an array of safer sex kits, safer drug use kits, and hygiene kits.

In a remarkable display of community care, some events partnered to offer free food and haircuts, strengthening the sense of unity and support at these Overdose Awareness Day events. The primary goal of these initiatives was to champion overdose prevention, promote safe practices, and extend support to individuals and families grappling with substance use issues in Ohio.

FOA Rally4Recovery A Decade of Saving Families 23



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CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Bank accounts	\$116,011.92
TOTAL ASSETS	\$116,011.92

LIABILITIES

Credit cards	\$0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$0

EQUITY

\$116,011.92

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

INCOME

Government grants and contracts	\$197,002
Grants from other nonprofits	\$133,913
Interest	\$37
Other income	\$502
Individual donors	\$4341
TOTAL INCOME	\$335,795

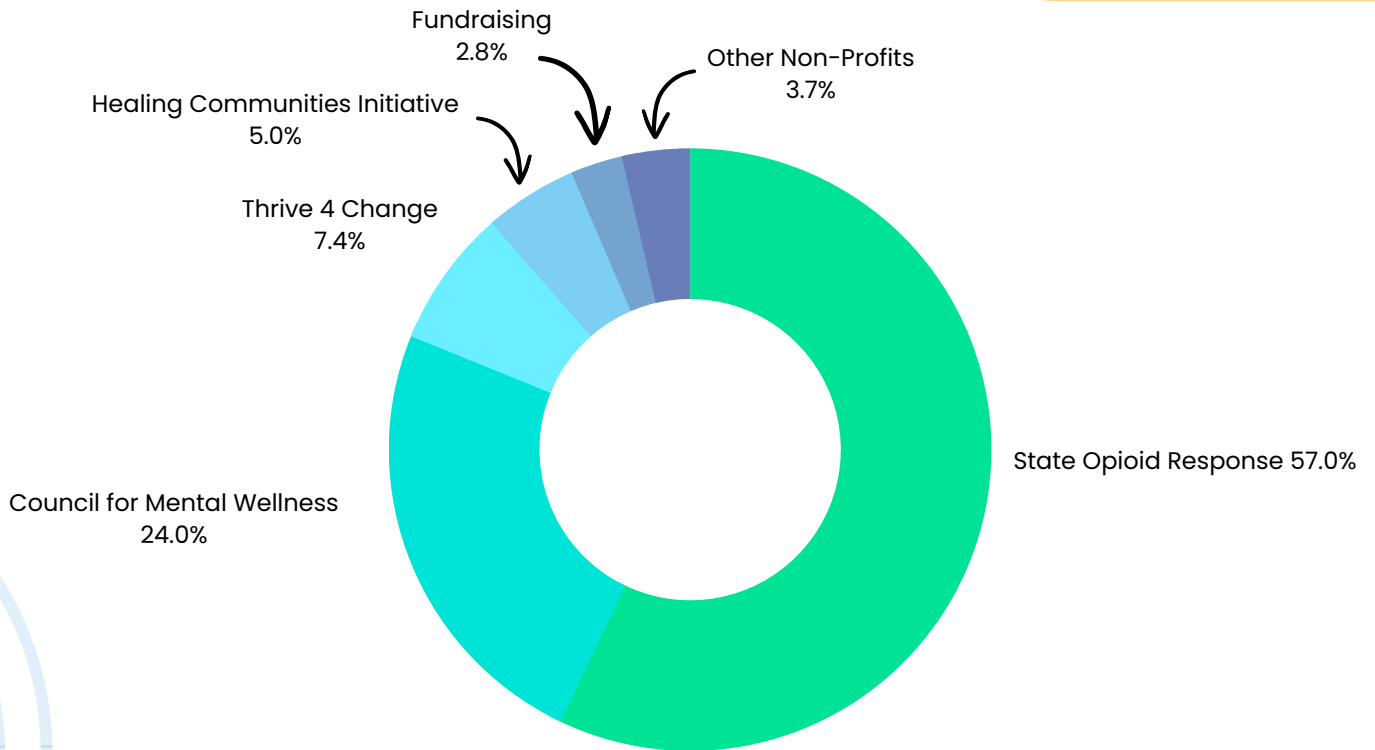
EXPENSES

Wages and contractor fees	\$148,404
Safe use supplies	\$65,068
Printing and other office expenses	\$5873
Rent and utilities	\$21,305
Shipping and postage	\$12,372
Software and computing equipment	\$12,704
Advertising and marketing	\$101
Conference travel	\$485
Vehicle expenses	\$1559
Insurance	\$250
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$268,121

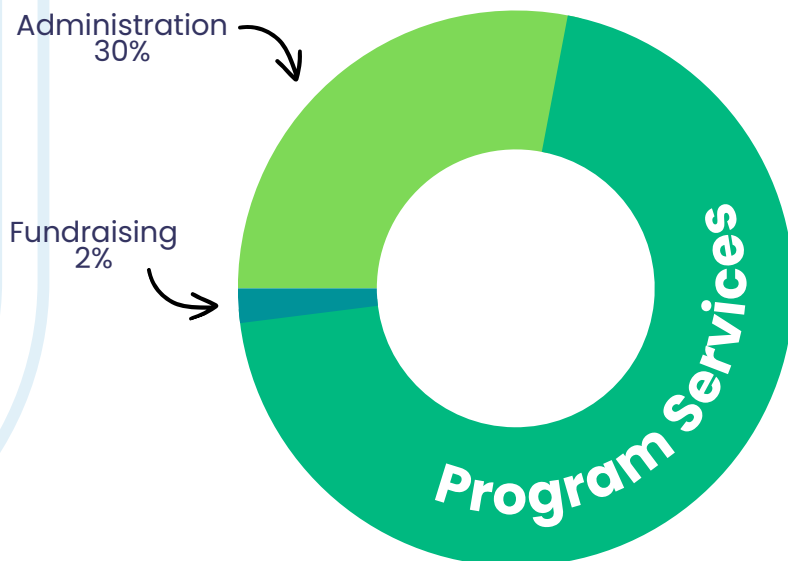
NET REVENUE

\$67,674

INCOME SOURCES



PAYROLL ALLOCATION



Program Services Breakdown

15% DEADLY BATCH ALERTS
63% STRIP CLUB
22% OUTREACH

Fundraising

Special thanks to

Dayton Poetry Slam The Verhoff Family
Zach Hannah Half Baked Brewery
Clintonville Roller Club Nationwide
 Children's Hospital

&

Davis, Alan, PhD
Associate Professor & Director, Center for Psychedelic
Drug Research and Education



This past year, we raised more money than ever before for SOAR! We are deeply grateful to all the generous souls who have supported The SOAR Initiative with their donations in 2022 and 2023. Your contributions have truly made a positive impact on our mission.



PARTNERS AND SUPPORT

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STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Zee Fishman



Zee is a queer trans nonbinary individual with a diverse background in Social Media marketing and content creation. Prior to working for SOAR, they were a social media intern at a Boston based non profit organization focused on social justice and working freelance for independent artists. They became passionate about using social media to increase awareness and education surrounding oppressive social issues and promote community led change. Moving forward, Zee wants to expand on our educational content surrounding substance use to include more comprehensive safe-use guides, promoting community engagement in overdose prevention, foster more representation from BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ voices, discussions on de-stigmatization for PWUD and sex workers, and more. Zee plans to pursue a career in community health education and public health, using social media and digital content to create educational materials.

Linda Smolak

Linda Smolak joined SOAR as a volunteer in April 2023. She learned about harm reduction over 15 years ago at a West Coast syringe exchange and outreach program. She has multiple family members in recovery from OUD. Linda previously volunteered at Harm Reduction Ohio. She shares the passion of everyone at SOAR: empowering people who use drugs to control their health and safety and fighting stigma against people who use drugs. She mainly helps with finances and grants at SOAR. Linda has 6 perfect grandchildren.



STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE

Jessica Brager
Executive Director

Zee Fishman
Social Media Coordinator

Kim Adams
Director of Technology & Program Services

Linda Smolak
Volunteer
Grant Support Specialist

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Jessica Mitsch
Director of Community Relations

Ashlee Schleter
Community Outreach Worker

Hannah Qin
Volunteer
OSU Community Outreach Worker

Jessica Collier
Community Outreach Worker

Sharona Bishop
Community Outreach Worker

Jamie Decker
Community Outreach Worker

Tonja Catron
Community Outreach Worker

Holly Woodruff
Community Outreach Worker

Abby Spears
Community Outreach Worker



EXECUTIVE BOARD

Larkin Cleland

*Former founding member of The SOAR Initiative and current board Secretary.
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

Dana Lavender

African American Male Wellness Agency

Varshita Chirumamilla

The Ohio State University College of Medicine

Brittany Carter

Equitas Health

Dennis Pales

University of Colorado School of Medicine

Pranav Padmanabhan

*Founding member and former Executive Director of The SOAR Initiative.
Professional Research Assistant at University of Colorado Anschutz Medical
Campus*



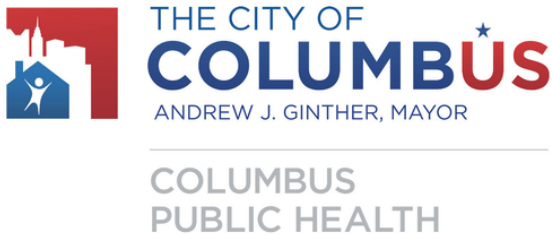
Thanks to our many

Community Partners



and

Fiscal Partners



Honoring

MARK VERHOFF



Mark Verhoff was SOAR's first outreach worker and was an instrumental part of SOAR's team. He was a fixture at Safe Point and the Reeb Center as SOAR's outreach liaison. He was an activist who eagerly hoped for an active citywide drug testing program. Mark passed away on July 11, 2023, and is deeply missed.