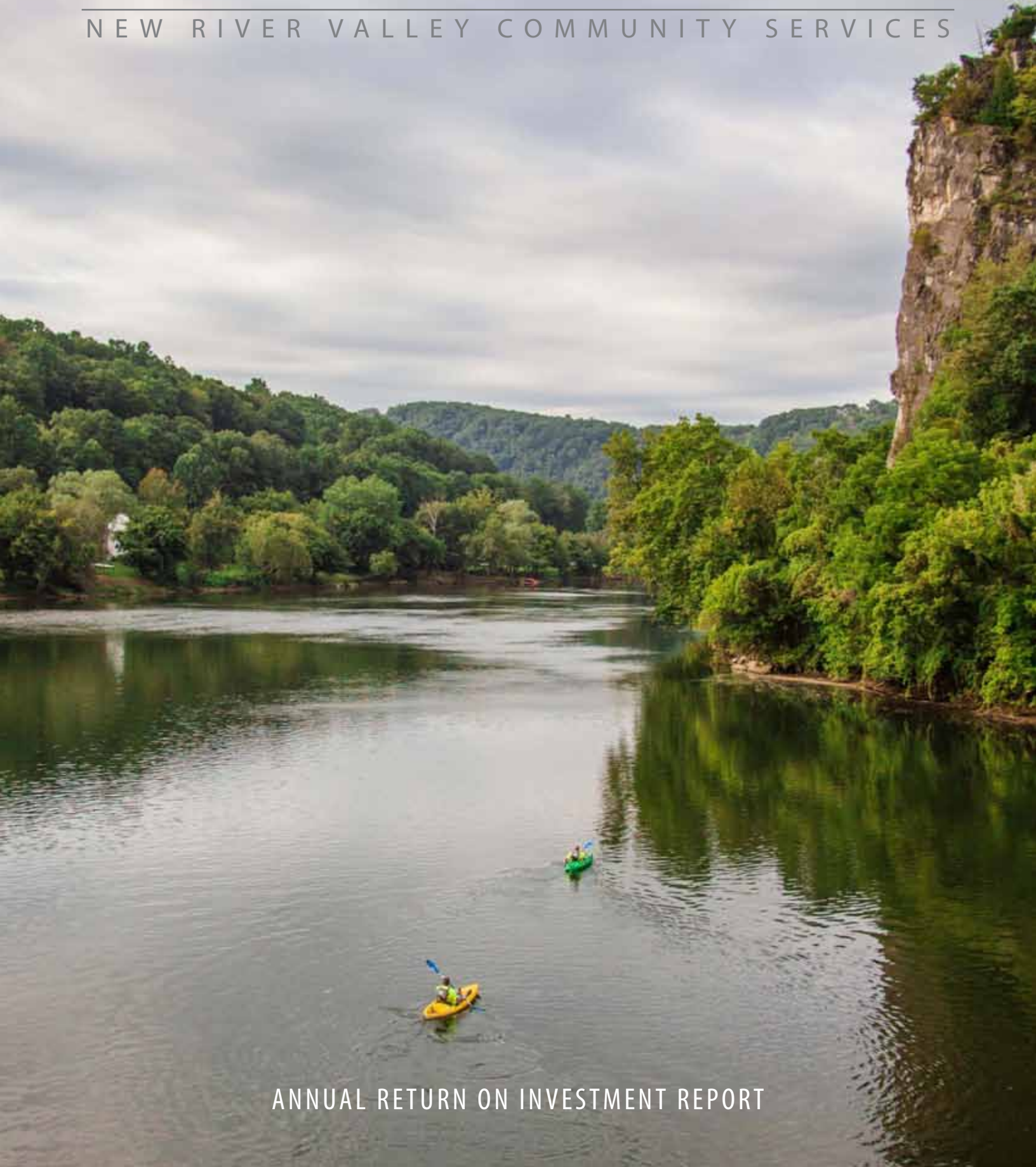


# N R V C S

NEW RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY SERVICES



ANNUAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT REPORT

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

---

If I have learned anything during my long career in behavioral health, the most important lesson could very well be to expect the unexpected.

While we appear to have turned the corner in our shared battle against COVID-19, the impact of the global pandemic will likely be felt for years. What we've experienced since early 2020 won't soon be forgotten - nor should it be. Aside from the staggering loss of life directly attributed to the pandemic itself, we saw record overdoses and a growing number of individuals struggling with mental health concerns - exacerbated by isolation and loneliness.

The New River Valley has not been immune to any of this, of course. In fact, as you'll read later in this report, our agency served more than 12,000 individuals during Fiscal Year 2022. That's more than any other 12-month period since NRVCS was first established in 1969.

That number is impressive - especially when one considers that we have managed this while experiencing an unprecedented workforce shortage. As of late November 2022, NRVCS had more than 100 vacant positions.

Although we are rather accustomed to responding to crisis in this field, there was nothing that could have prepared us for the ongoing struggle to hire and retain qualified professionals.

Our agency's management team and Board of Directors understand how critically important it is to proactively address this issue, including a thorough study of how our salaries and compensation plans compare with the rest of the market. Fortunately, our continued diligence to ensure the financial well-being of our organization will allow us to implement measures that will make our vacant positions more attractive to prospective job seekers.

We are also hopeful that budget proposals at the state level designed to address the workforce crisis will be supported by the General Assembly during their 2023 session.

I would be remiss, however, if I didn't take an opportunity to express my sincerest gratitude for the hundreds of dedicated staff who have continued to be there

for the individuals and families who turn to us for help. A number of these staff work extra shifts or add to their caseloads in order to help cover our staffing shortages. Words cannot describe how much I admire these caring professionals. They are true heroes.

It's this selfless effort - and the kind of success stories highlighted in this publication - that allow me to see beyond the challenges we may be currently faced with.

Even in times of great concern, I ultimately believe we will ride out the storm.

I have hope.

Speaking of hope, you'll see this word several times as you read through our annual report. That is very much by design.

Our agency's Community Wellness & Outreach team is using hope as the central theme of a new regional wellness campaign. The weight of the last few years has taken a toll and it's rather easy to focus on the negative. Our "Hope" campaign encourages us - or perhaps challenges us - to consider the different aspects of wellness in our lives (fun and recreation, family, physical health, career, friends, spiritual, personal development and finance) and work on those areas that we may be neglecting. Seeing improvements in those areas not only enhance our wellness, it gives us hope - something we could all use more of these days.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Pritchett". The signature is fluid and cursive.

James Pritchett, LCSW  
Executive Director



## ON THE COVER

*Kayakers enjoy the New River in the Pembroke area of Giles County.  
Photograph by Jennifer Wilsie*

---

A publication of New River Valley Community Services  
700 University City Boulevard | Blacksburg, VA 24060  
Business calls (540-961-8300)  
Referrals/First Appointments (540-961-8400)  
Crisis Services: Call 9-8-8

Visit us online at [nrvc.org](http://nrvc.org)

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube & LinkedIn

# stories of HOPE

*Editor's note: The subject of this story has requested that her real name not be used.*

Chronic back pain as a teenager eventually resulted in “Kelly” developing an addiction to pain medication. Her drug dependency progressed to the point that she was “using heavily” for several years before she discovered she was pregnant at age 26.

Now 31, Kelly says the news of her pregnancy and concern for the well-being of her unborn child became a true turning point in her life.

“I knew I couldn’t keep doing what I was doing, but I honestly didn’t know how I was going to quit,” recalls Kelly. “I was at the point where I was even contemplating having an abortion because I just didn’t know what to do...I couldn’t find help and I didn’t necessarily want to go to a rehab facility.”

She eventually connected with NRVCS and began to receive treatment for her substance use disorder “almost immediately.”

“It was such a relief...my life was basically hell at that point,” she says while holding back tears. “If I didn’t find

them [NRVCS], I wouldn’t have my son.”

Kelly, a resident of Pulaski County, points out that the start of her recovery journey was anything but easy. Detoxing from the opioids she had been misusing not only meant that Kelly was experiencing the full impact of her back pain and typical symptoms of pregnancy at the same time - she was also going through withdrawal.

“That was terrible,” she adds, “but basically my brain had to be rewired.”

Once the detox process was complete, Kelly began receiving medication-assisted treatment through NRVCS and was prescribed suboxone, a medication used to treat opioid use disorder.

“It’s [suboxone] been great,” says Kelly. “It’s just become part of my daily routine - like any other medication you might take.”

Since beginning recovery, Kelly has returned to school and obtained two associates degrees and eventually hopes to earn a third, with the goal of becoming a radiation therapist. Her son, now almost five, will begin school in the fall of 2023. While he has been diagnosed with autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Kelly says he’s high functioning and doing well.

“You lose a lot of friends when you stop using, but there’s so much I’ve been able to accomplish since I became sober,” Kelly adds. “I’ve got a house, a new car, a job...I’m very blessed and I realize that.”

When the Montgomery County Behavioral Health Docket recognized its first four graduates in December 2022, Austin “Jaret” Duncan of Christiansburg was among those honored. He says being involved with the program has equipped him with tools to better manage his mental and physical wellness.

“It’s really helped me,” says Duncan. “Life is pretty decent. I have a home and I’m going to school. So, it’s not bad.”

Duncan, 26, attributes his mental health challenges and behaviors to an early exposure to trauma - combined with multiple traumatic experiences as he transitioned into adulthood. His inability to manage his emotions eventually led to legal issues, which is how Duncan eventually became involved with the Behavioral Health Docket.

According to Molly Everett, a clinical program supervisor with NRVCS, participants enter pleas that require they be engaged in treatment as a system of jail-diversion and that they commit to the program for a full year.

Everett notes that during their time with the program, Duncan and the other graduates avoided negative involvement with law enforcement, made meaningful connections with others, obtained employment, re-enrolled in schooling, ended involvement with social services and acquired independent housing.

“Therapy has probably been the most helpful for me,” explains Duncan. “I go every Thursday...There’s not a lot of people I can talk to but that keeps me from holding everything down and getting angry.”

Duncan, who is currently enrolled with an online university, eventually hopes to transfer and study at a local college. When he isn’t working at his part-time job, he spends his spare time studying various languages and religions. He now attends church and has started to expand his social connections.



Austin “Jaret” Duncan (Photo - M. Wade/NRVCS)

**Continued on Page 8**



# Recovering & Grateful

Story by Mike Wade  
Photo by Glenn Mathews

**L**ike so many, Ferletta Martinez never imagined her life would be destroyed by addiction.

Fortunately, hers is a story with a happy ending.

A native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, Martinez and her mother moved to the New River Valley when she was in seventh grade.

“My substance use started really before I moved here,” says Martinez. “...I went to a school with an accelerated learning program...but I quickly realized I wasn’t learning like other kids...They found out later that I had a learning disability with reading and writing comprehension. So, I never really felt like a part of my peers.”

Instead, Martinez recalls that she began hanging around kids in her neighborhood that were involved in gangs and other risky behaviors, including drugs.

“They were drinking, smoking cigarettes, smoking marijuana...and so to fit in, I started using as well,” she adds. “It just escalated from there and I started using as a coping mechanism instead of using the other coping skills that would have been much better for me.”

“Even when we moved here - which was a big change of scenery and much different from Green Bay, Wisconsin - I still managed to find the same kind of people to hang around,” continues Martinez.

She says she quickly developed a high tolerance for alcohol - something she saw back then as a badge of honor - but she also began to find herself in more and more “scary situations.”

“I ended up being raped in high school and I internalized that a lot and thought it was my fault for drinking,” she adds, “but instead of getting help or telling someone that it had even happened, I just started drinking more.”

Martinez eventually became pregnant her senior year in high school (the same as her mother) and that caused her to temporarily stop using substances. She became an honor roll student, graduated, and started her own cleaning business right out of high school.

Despite the fact that her business was doing well, Martinez was having difficulty finding healthy relationships and became a victim of domestic abuse. At the same time, the nature of her work - combined with back problems that developed after the birth of her first child - eventually led her to experiment with opioids.

“It helped,” she recalls. “It gave me a lot of energy and it took the pain away, so I continued to use because it helped - until it didn’t help and it became a necessity.”

“I thought there was nothing wrong because I kept my job, I was the cheerleading coach of my daughter’s team, my kids had clothes, my kids had food,” she continues. “So, in my mind everything is fine and nobody knows I have this problem.”

“But really I wasn’t there for my kids,” Martinez adds. “I

“I used to hear people ask, ‘What’s stronger than a mother’s love?’, and at one point I would have said, ‘Nothing’...but now I know. I know that addiction is even stronger than the love of a mother.”

was always looking for more [opioids] so I was always on the run. As soon as I knew I could get some more - because I didn’t want to get sick - I was running out the door to get more.”

Her addiction issues would soon go beyond pills and expanded to include both meth and heroin. During this time, Martinez also switched careers and became a dental assistant.

“I wanted something that was more stable and reliable,” she explains. Ironically, as she began to achieve that stability in her professional life, the rest of Martinez’s world was falling apart. She describes the “quick downward spiral” that happened once she was introduced to meth - causing her to lose her house, her job, her new car, and most importantly, her children.

“I used to hear people ask, ‘What’s stronger than a mother’s love?’, and at one point I would have said, ‘Nothing’,” she continues, “but now I know. I know that addiction is even stronger than the love of a mother.”

With her substance use taking full control of her life, Martinez says she ultimately left her children with her mother. It would be years before she would reconnect with her family.

Multiple arrests and stints in jail eventually led her to a point that she pondered taking her own life.

“I just felt trapped and had nowhere to go,” she says. “That just sounded like a good way out for me because I just couldn’t see any other way.”

A desperate phone call to her mother helped Martinez finally get connected to detox and treatment, including residential treatment at New Life (a program of NRVCS). She was eventually able to participate in the Pulaski County Adult Drug Court Treatment Program, becoming a successful graduate - despite being pregnant with her third child and also contracting COVID.

“It’s an amazing program that taught me so much,” she adds. “I don’t know that I would have been able to do it without them.”

Now a Certified Peer Support Specialist employed by NRVCS, Martinez has come full circle and can now pay it forward - helping other Drug Court participants on their journeys of recovery.

“I’m able to give back to the programs that gave so much to me,” she adds. “So, it’s really meaningful.”



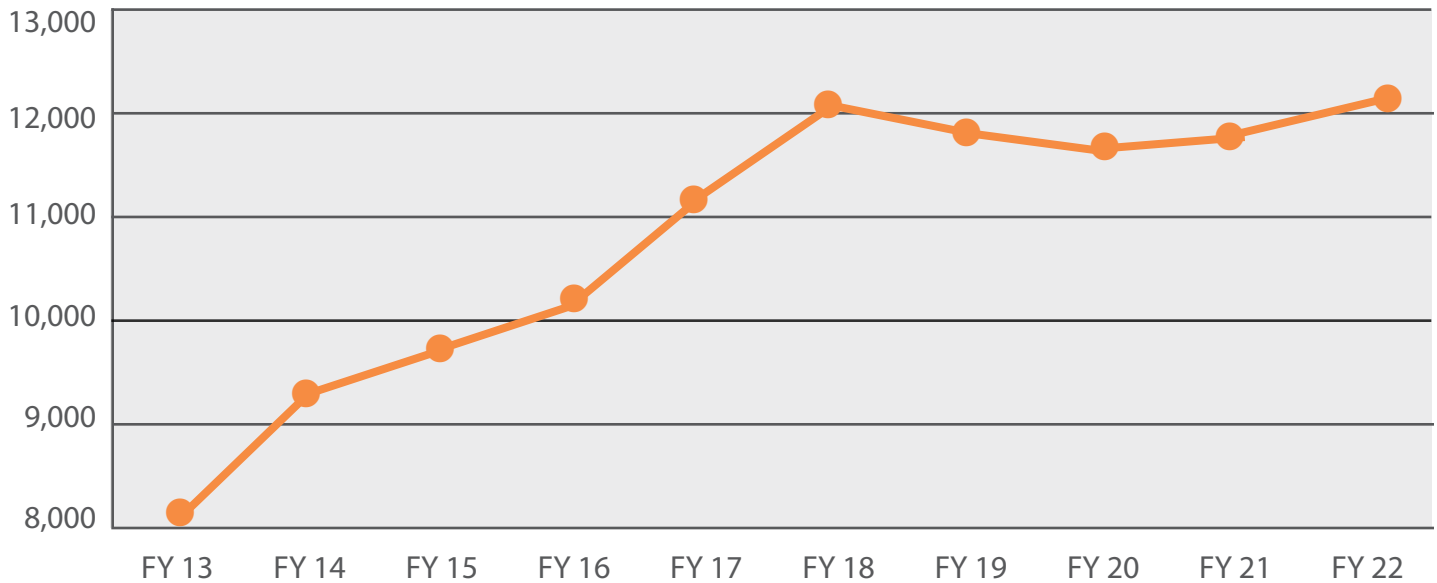
# ANNUAL Return On Investment (ROI) Report

FISCAL YEAR 2022

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
RESIDENTS SERVED  
IN FISCAL YEAR 2022

# 12,133

Our overall service numbers  
**increased 2.87%**  
from the previous year.



## People & Services | FY 2022

### Total Unduplicated Number of Individuals Served: Fiscal Year 2022

	Mental Health Disorders	Substance Use Disorders	Developmental Disabilities	Minors (under age 21)	Adults (21 and over)
Floyd County	475	54	78	351	346
Giles County	855	134	83	550	678
Montgomery County	2,879	336	268	1,963	2,440
Pulaski County	2,084	335	138	1,059	1,838
City of Radford	927	118	53	535	797
Other (outside NRV)	520	45	75	455	1,121
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7,740</b>	<b>1,022</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>4,913</b>	<b>7,220</b>

# STEWARDSHIP of FUNDING & ECONOMIC IMPACT

## FY 2022 REVENUE & EXPENSES

### REVENUE

Federal Funds	\$5,359,318
State Funds	\$15,601,240
Local Funds	\$634,350
Fees	\$36,445,394
Other Funds	\$3,990,446
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$62,030,748</b>

### EXPENSES

Personnel	\$38,947,476
Operations	\$16,012,559
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$54,960,035</b>

<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$7,070,713</b>
--------------------------	--------------------

For every dollar of direct local funding provided to NRVCS in Fiscal Year 2022, the agency generated **\$96.79** from other sources.

NRVCS continues to be one of the New River Valley's largest employers. As of June 30, 2022, the agency employed **821** full- and part-time staff and had paid over **\$38.9** million in compensation and benefits.

Using standard methods of economic impact analysis, it is estimated that NRVCS may have supported an additional **473** jobs in the community, as well as over **\$13.8** million in additional labor income, resulting in a ripple effect of additional economic output of more than **\$26.4** million in Fiscal Year 2022.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Using the IMPLAN economic modeling system's estimation and analysis.

Estimated total impact of NRVCS on the local economy<sup>1</sup>

**= \$81,395,812**

## NRVCS STAFF: WHERE WE LIVE

The majority of our **821** employees also live and pay taxes in the very communities we serve.

Floyd County	Giles County	Montgomery County	Pulaski County	City of Radford	Outside of the NRV
27	68	286	160	166	114

Once he completes college, Duncan is considering a career in mental health but he hasn't ruled out the possibility of working in veterinary care or the legal system. During his time with the Behavioral Health Docket, Duncan has also been able to find help and resources to lose weight - a goal that he set for himself.

"I'm very optimistic about the future," Duncan adds. "The staff have been excellent and they are very supportive."

His advice to others who might be struggling? Get connected to others and find things that bring you joy.

"I think it comes down to finding someone who's willing to listen - that wants to do their job," he continues. "There is hope but you have to find a religion or hobby to turn to so that your brain isn't thinking or over thinking about disaster."

---

Jacob, a 46-year-old resident of Radford, has lived with serious mental illness for much of his adult life. Diagnosed with schizophrenia, he receives services through NRVCS' Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) program.

Living with a mental health disorder has been a learning

experience for Jacob, but he says he's reached a point of stability that allows him to enjoy a better quality of life.

"I don't really know how my mental health issues first developed but I definitely understand it better these days," notes Jacob. "It took some time but my medications have been adjusted to where I feel like a complete citizen again." "You have to approach it like you do any other health condition," he adds. "I'm wiser, too. I've learned how to better read my surroundings and it's just something you have to be a mature adult about."

He says a major benefit of his improved mental health is having a stronger relationship with his teenage son.

"I'm in a much better place these days," he says. "I'm cleaner, healthier and more stable - not that I was a bad guy before - I guess I just grew up a little slower and in my own way."

Jacob, who writes poetry, also enjoys being outdoors and doing landscaping work for his family's business.

"It keeps my mind working and I have the coordination and mental ability to do it," remarks Jacob. "I also like everything about being in nature and being Zen. It's not meditation but it's my own way of managing my mental health."

## FEEDBACK

Comments from some of the individuals who have found help through NRVCS over the past year

"They are a genuine lifeline for me. I couldn't get to the hospital or to my medical checkups without that support...Every single person I've dealt with over the years has been helpful and cheerful. It's nice to see a smiling face from time-to-time."

- Floyd County resident and long-time client of NRVCS

"I just wanted you to know what an impact you truly made on my life...After years of having the symptoms and seeing different therapists, you were the one who diagnosed me with borderline personality disorder and I was finally able to get on the right track. I am so appreciative for the services NRVCS provided me..."

- Individual who utilized crisis services

"I would like to thank the staff at NRVCS as a whole, for expediting a serious medication issue for me on short notice...I would like to commend the Crisis

Center for its patience, inclusion and welcomeness. Every member was professional and seem to be content with their jobs...In the end, the professionals resolved the situation to the highest standards."

- Individual who utilized crisis services

"I sadly struggled with suicidal thoughts and did attempt...I ended up going to this center twice and it made a huge difference...The rooms they give you are amazing! Truly an amazing center where you are given the right amount of privacy while still being monitored for your safety. They also have a great program for payment if you don't have the means to pay the full amount. I cannot stress enough how important this experience was for me - it saved my life and put me on the right track!"

- Individual who utilized the New Horizons crisis stabilization program



# NRVCS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & INNOVATIONS

Included below is a sample of the ongoing work our agency staff and programs are doing to enhance the lives of New River Valley residents:

- The recently launched regional Permanent Supportive Housing initiative has four individuals active in the program and in new housing.
- Staff with the agency's Project LINK program (Special Deliveries) completed evidence-based practice training over the summer to increase successful outcomes for the women they serve.
- The Case Management Program is expanding to include a Veteran's Treatment Court in Pulaski County. Much like the partnerships that have created the agency's Drug Treatment Courts, this project is a collaboration between the agency and several stakeholders to meet the needs of our veteran population within the New River Valley.
- Early Intervention is growing and expanding. Thanks to additional funding from Radford University, the program will be able to serve more children.
- The NRVCS outpatient team has expanded to meet the community's growing demand for services. A new outpatient position will be based out of the Court Services Unit, working with juveniles who are on probation.
- The Kids Program for Assertive Community Treatment (KPACT) will be incorporating peer-based services with the addition of a full-time Family Support Partner position.
- NRVCS' Transportation Department is working hard to improve efficiency of service and utilization of the agency's vehicles.



**UNDER CONSTRUCTION:** Work is underway inside NRVCS' Radford Center to establish a new home for the New Horizons crisis stabilization program, which is currently located in Fairlawn. The new site is located adjacent to the Crisis Center and will also allow for increased service capacity. (Photo - R. Burton/NRVCS)



**CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH DAY:** In May 2022, the Radford Youth Adult Partnership (RYAP) hosted an event to recognize Children's Mental Health Day, as well as Resilience Week. School officials, local providers, parents and students had an open and transparent dialogue about the mental and emotional challenges facing young people and how those issues - combined with a high prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences - contribute to growing concerns with conduct and behavior. (Photo - M. Wade/NRVCS)

# NRVCS medical staff helping clients overcome Hep C

By Mike Wade / NRVCS  
mwade@nrvc.org

**RADFORD** - It's been a number of years since New River Valley Community Services (NRVCS) began expanding its medical services to take an integrated approach to care - addressing both the mental and physical health of clients (patients).

A primary consideration to this shift toward more comprehensive medical treatment was the growing number of individuals who were living with conditions often associated with substance use disorder, including hepatitis C.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), transmission of Hepatitis C, a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV), is bloodborne and "can happen through sharing needles, syringes, or other drug-injection equipment."

While hepatitis C can be a short-term illness for some, the infection is chronic, or long-term, for the majority of those infected with HCV. Left untreated, hepatitis C can cause cirrhosis, liver cancer and even death.

Nationally, the CDC reports that there were more than 107,000 reported new cases of chronic hepatitis C in the U.S. during 2020. According to data from the Virginia Department of Health, the reported hepatitis C rate among adults (18 and above) that same year in three of the five jurisdictions served by NRVCS far exceeded the state rate. (See table on right)

While there currently is not a vaccine to prevent hepatitis C, a treatment was first introduced in 2013 and has proven to be effective for many, including a number of residents in the New River Valley.

Jerusalem Walker, a Nurse Practitioner with NRVCS' Integrated Health Team, is one of two providers who have been trained and certified to assist clients with hepatitis C treatment. Walker says the results for those who adhere to treatment guidelines have been very positive.

"Hepatitis C is kind of like a sleeping giant for a lot of people," notes Walker. "You can have it for many years - sometimes up to 30 years - without any kind of side effects."

As of January 2023, NRVCS has offered hepatitis C treatment to 24 clients, with two other individuals being referred to treatment through external providers (hepatitis C specialists). Of the 24 who have been offered treatment through NRVCS, Walker reports that 16 have completed treatment. Seven of those clients have undergone follow-up testing that shows they have been cured of hepatitis C.

"We do have a few clients who are overdue for testing, and we hope to add those outcomes to our data soon," adds Walker. "...the pharmaceutical industry has made huge strides in the treatment protocols. It [treatment medication] used to be difficult to tolerate and the treatment success rate was much lower."

Today, Walker says typical treatment lasts between 8 - 12 weeks, although that can take longer if an individual's liver damage is more advanced. The treatment consists of taking oral medication daily.

Walker acknowledges that while the out-of-pocket cost of treatment is significant (over \$10,000 for a month's supply), the

## Hepatitis C rates in the New River Valley

Reported rates in adults (18 and above) per 100,000

Floyd County	205.9
Giles County	252.2
Montgomery County	31.7
Pulaski County	281.7
City of Radford	46.4
State	81.3

Source: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/opioid-data/hepatitis-c-hcv/>

individuals served by NRVCS have not had to pay for the medication, thanks to the efforts of Walker's co-worker, Shannon Raner, a Registered Nurse with the agency.

"I have to give a shout out to Shannon, who worked on curating a grant program for this," says Walker. "Even for our clients with insurance, they are still looking at co-pays in the neighborhood of \$900 per month. So, being able to help cover that cost with these grants is huge and has definitely made it possible for more of our clients to access treatment."

She goes on to say that treatment cost is currently covered at 100% for clients who receive Medicaid.

Aside from improved liver function, Walker says clients can begin seeing results even before they complete hepatitis C treatment, including better sleep, more energy, and mitigation of depression and anxiety.

"It's wonderful," Walker says. "It's one of the favorite parts of my job."

## Upcoming community health fairs in the New River Valley

### Save the dates!

NRVCS and other healthcare providers will be participating in health fairs in the following communities:

### Pulaski County

Wednesday, March 15 from 1 - 4 PM  
Central Gym, Downtown Pulaski

### Giles County

Saturday, March 18 from 9 AM - 2 PM  
Giles High School, Pearisburg

*Both events will offer health screenings, testing and education, presentations, door prizes & much more!*

# Join the NRVCS team

[nrvcs.org/employment](http://nrvcs.org/employment)



## Rewarding career opportunities in behavioral health

Meaningful work | Supportive environment | Excellent benefits



Current available positions include the following:

- Direct Service Professional (Community Living)
- Accounting Specialist (Payee Services)
- Revenue Cycle Billing Specialist
- Medication Aide - Night Shift (Community Support Services)

*mental health disorders  
substance use disorders  
developmental disabilities  
community wellness & outreach*



[www.nrvcs.org](http://www.nrvcs.org)  
Follow us on  
Facebook, Twitter,  
LinkedIn & YouTube

HOPE

*live with it*

[nrvc.org/hope](http://nrvc.org/hope)

