Lake County
ADAMHS Board

FY 2026
Annual REPORT



PREPARED BY
KIM FRASER AND
THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

440-350-3117
Info@LakeADAMHS.org
www.HelpThatWorks.us



About Lake County ADAMHS Board

Lake County

Population - U.S. Census

- 2020 - 232,603 (+1.1%)
- 2010 - 230,041

Population - Estimates

- 2024-2025 - 232,217 (-0.2%) decrease

We are established by Ohio statute, and the Lake ADAMHS Board plans, monitors, evaluates, and funds services for Lake County residents with mental illness and/or substance use disorders. These services are delivered through a network of providers.

Network Service Providers :

- BRIDGES: Mental Health Consumer Empowerment
- Catholic Charities
- Cleveland Rape Crisis Center
- Crossroads Health
- Extended Housing
- Family Pride of Northeast Ohio
- Fine Arts Association
- Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers
- Lifeline, Inc. and 2-1-1
- NAMI Lake County (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
- Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare / Community Services Network
- Signature Health, Inc.
- Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance
- University Hospitals
- Windsor-Laurelwood Center for Behavioral Medicine
- WomenSafe



Statement From Kim

Executive Director

FY2026 challenged behavioral health systems across Ohio with rising costs, workforce shortages, and increasing demand for services. Yet it was also a year of growth, innovation, and partnership for Lake ADAMHS. Together with our providers, schools, first responders, and community partners, we strengthened access to care, expanded recovery supports, and laid the foundation for the future through strategic planning and system improvements.

We completed Lake County's first comprehensive Fatality Report, providing valuable insights into local overdose trends and helping guide future treatment and recovery efforts.

The Board also began development of a new Strategic Plan, creating a roadmap that will help align community needs, system priorities, and available resources for years to come.

The Board continued to invest in the full continuum of care. Additional residential treatment capacity was made available to meet growing demand, while crisis services, counseling, recovery supports, prevention programming, and care management remained essential components of our system. We also secured new grant funding to expand recovery housing opportunities, support community awareness initiatives, and strengthen prevention efforts throughout Lake County.

Beyond services, FY2026 underscored the power of partnerships. Schools, providers, local governments, first responders, hospitals, businesses, and community organizations worked together to address complex behavioral health challenges and create opportunities for recovery and wellness.

As we look ahead, we recognize that financial pressures, workforce shortages, and evolving community needs will require thoughtful planning and responsible stewardship. The Board remains committed to maximizing every public dollar, maintaining low administrative costs, supporting evidence-based services, and investing in strategies that improve outcomes for those we serve.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, thank you to our providers, community partners, advocates, and residents for your continued dedication to behavioral health. Together, we are building a stronger, healthier, and more resilient Lake County.

FY 2026 at a Glance

2026

- 🏠 Recovery Housing Grant: $160,039
- 🎭 Community Members at Celebrity Art Auction: 300+
- 💉 Naloxone Kits Distributed: 1,293
- 👥 Peer Supporters Trained: 35
- 🏫 Schools Reached: 15
- 🎮 Students Reached Through ThinkFast: 11,238
- 🏥 Residential Treatment Beds Supported: 112
- 📊 First 10-Year Fatality Report Completed



DERICK

Meet Derick

Recovery is a journey, and mine was not a straight path. I experienced many relapses. There were times when I would stop using drugs and promise myself that I was going to change, only to find myself struggling again. When things became overwhelming, I often found myself being transported to the ER (University Hospitals TriPoint Medical Center Emergency). Later, I spent time at Windsor-Laurelwood for detox services, but the turning point came when I started residential treatment at Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers.

The structured support and counseling I received there changed my life. It taught me the skills I needed to build a foundation for recovery, and many of those lessons still guide me today. I am proud to say that I have now been in recovery for 13 years.

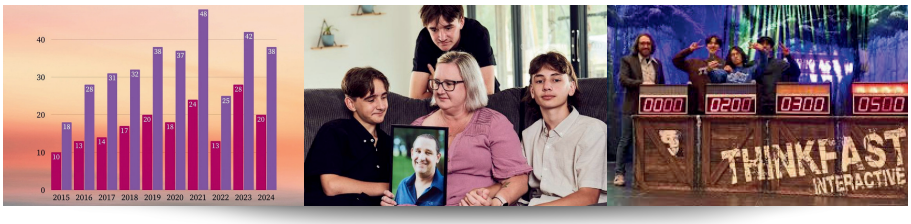
Today, I lead a food service operation and actively hire individuals in recovery. Because of my own experiences, I know that people in recovery can be dedicated, focused, and hardworking employees when given the opportunity. I strive to provide a supportive workplace where they can grow, succeed, and rebuild their lives. I am grateful for the network of services supported by the Lake County ADAMHS Board. "Thirteen years ago, I found hope. Today, I have the privilege of helping others find theirs."

Continued Focus on Eliminating Deaths

This year, we strengthened our commitment to preventing overdose and suicide through strategic partnerships, data-informed planning, and innovative prevention initiatives designed to address both current and emerging community needs.

- ***New* Fatality Report:** One of the year's most significant accomplishments was the completion of Lake County's first-ever 10-Year Fatality Report. This comprehensive review examined overdose and suicide deaths over the past decade, identified emerging trends, and highlighted areas of concern for the future. The findings are helping to guide strategic planning, inform prevention efforts, and direct future investments and priorities across the behavioral health system.
- ***New* Support Team:** The Board also played a leadership role in developing Lake County's first LOSS/DOSS (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors and Drug Overdose Survivors Support) Team by partnering with our elected Coroner. This coordinated response initiative provides immediate outreach and support to individuals and families affected by the loss of a loved one to overdose or suicide. Through the involvement of certified peer supporters and community partners, families are connected to resources, grief support, and services during one of the most difficult times in their lives.
- ***New* Awareness Efforts:** In partnership with Women United, the Board helped raise awareness about the growing issue of online sextortion and its connection to youth mental health challenges and suicide prevention. Additionally, prevention partnerships reached every middle school in Lake County, including 12 public and 3 private schools, through the ThinkFast Interactive program. Using a high-energy game-show format, ThinkFast engages students in meaningful conversations about substance use prevention, decision-making, and healthy coping skills, helping young people make informed choices before problems develop.

Together, these efforts reflect our ongoing dedication to reducing risk factors, strengthening protective factors, and saving lives throughout Lake County.





Sworn In

Joanne Zeroske was sworn into the Lake County ADAMHS Board, bringing more than 30 years of healthcare leadership experience. Her expertise and commitment to community well-being will help strengthen behavioral health services and supports throughout Lake County.

Fatality Report

Lake County completed its first-ever 10-year Fatality Report, examining suicide and overdose trends from 2015-2024. The report combines data, community impact stories, and prevention strategies to guide future action, strengthen accountability, and support efforts to save lives.

Women United



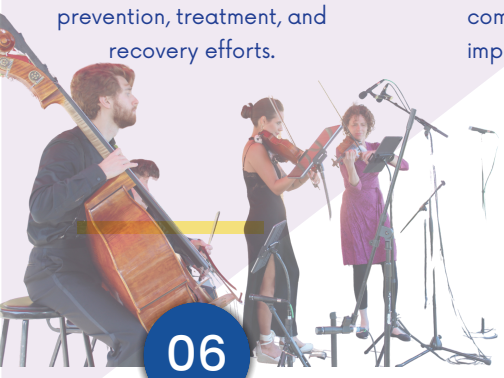
Women United of United Way of Lake County and the Lake County ADAMHS Board hosted a community event on protecting children from online threats. Tim Woods and Tamia Woods shared their family's story following the loss of their son, James, to online exploitation. The program provides tools to prevent harm to youth.

AUGUST | **SEPTEMBER** | **APRIL**

AUGUST

Recovery Concert

The inaugural Concert of Hope brought the community together to honor lives lost to overdose, celebrate recovery, and promote hope. Through music, art, and community connections, the event raised awareness and strengthened support for prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.



AUGUST

Hometown Hero

The Lake County ADAMHS Board honored 16 behavioral health professionals as 2025 Hometown Heroes. Recognized before a Lake County Captains game, these individuals were celebrated for their compassion, dedication, and impact on mental health and recovery services.



SEPT

Suicide Prevention

For Suicide Prevention Awareness Day, members of the Suicide Prevention Coalition visited the Wickliffe Senior Center to speak with older adults about mental health, suicide warning signs, and local resources. The event reflects the Coalition's ongoing efforts to bring hope, and education.

APRIL

CAP 2026

The Lake County ADAMHS Board's Community Assessment and Plan (CAP) results showed progress in overdose prevention, peer support, and access to care. Over three years, 1,293 naloxone kits were distributed, 35 peer supporters were trained, and child safety outcomes improved across Lake County

Joint Training

MAY

The Lake County ADAMHS Board and Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board partnered to host their second annual joint training, providing staff with practical engagement strategies while maximizing resources, reducing costs, and strengthening regional collaboration.

ThinkFast

JUNE

Through a partnership with ThinkFast Interactive, thousands of Lake County students participated in engaging, game-show style prevention programs focused on mental health, substance use, trusted adults, and help-seeking. The initiative promotes healthy decision-making and resilience among youth.

Families of Promise

JUNE

Dolly Ratcliffe credits Families of Promise with helping her family overcome grief, incarceration, and financial hardship during her youth. The program connected her family to resources, support, and guidance, helping them heal and build resilience. Today, Dolly is pursuing a professional acting career.



APRIL

Housing Grant

The Lake County ADAMHS Board secured $160,039 in state funding to provide recovery housing rental assistance for up to 21 residents. The grant helps reduce housing barriers and supports long-term recovery and stability for individuals overcoming substance use disorders.

MAY

MH Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Day campaign launched its "More Good Days, Together" campaign, distributing coffee sleeves and drink coasters throughout Lake County to encourage conversations about mental health, reduce stigma, and connect residents with local support services.



JUNE

Celebrity Art Auction

More than 300 community members attended the Friends of Lake ADAMHS Celebrity Art Auction, helping make it one of the organization's highest-grossing events. The fundraiser increased awareness of mental health and recovery while supporting local behavioral health initiatives.

JUNE

Thank You

After eight years, Matt Sabo has termed off the Board. Matt played a key role in advancing first responder initiatives, providing valuable insight into the unique mental health challenges faced by police, fire, and EMS personnel. We thank Matt for his commitment, expertise, and lasting contributions to behavioral health and first responder wellness.



System Updates

FY2026 brought several important leadership transitions across Lake County's behavioral health system. At BRIDGES: Mental Health Consumer Empowerment, Carol Casey became the Executive Director, after the passing of Damir Pavicic. BRIDGES also hired Jonathan Clemente as Operations Manager, bringing more than eight years of peer support experience to help strengthen recovery-focused services.

At Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers, longtime President and CEO Melanie Blasko retired after nearly two decades of leadership, during which the organization significantly expanded treatment, recovery housing, prevention, and support services. Succeeding her is Michelle Bertman, who transitioned from her role as Director of Catholic Charities of Lake and Geauga Counties to lead the organization into its next chapter.

Lastly, Shari Thompson, was named interim Director of Catholic Charities, ensuring continued stability and their community-focus during this time of transition.

Together, these transitions reflect the strength of our provider network and its ongoing commitment to meeting the evolving behavioral health needs of Lake County residents.

Meet Ed



Ed was able to overcome significant challenges with mood, anger, and relationships. Through the support, education, and skills gained at BRIDGES, he learned how to better manage emotions, control his temper, and navigate mood swings. Today, he shared: "There is always a chance to make positive changes in your life. Leave your negative emotions behind and find yourself." His story highlights the lasting impact that peer support, education, and empowerment can have on an individual's recovery journey.

Expanded Work of the Board



The Board continued to enhance its leadership role by investing in staff development, expanding data and evaluation capabilities, and preparing for long-term system improvement.

✅ **Expanded prevention expertise through staff certification and school partnerships**
Sandra Tenkku, pursued Prevention Certification to expand internal expertise and leadership of the school-based prevention and education.

✅ **Enhanced data analysis to identify service gaps and guide investments**
The Board increased its capacity to analyze community trends, identify service gaps, and better understand emerging behavioral health trends, service utilization patterns, and gaps in care.

✅ **Initiated strategic planning to align future funding with community needs**
The Board initiated a comprehensive strategic planning process that will establish a roadmap for future priorities and investments.

✅ **Modernized RFP and evaluation processes to increase accountability and outcomes**
The Strategic Planning work includes modernizing the request for proposal and program evaluation process.







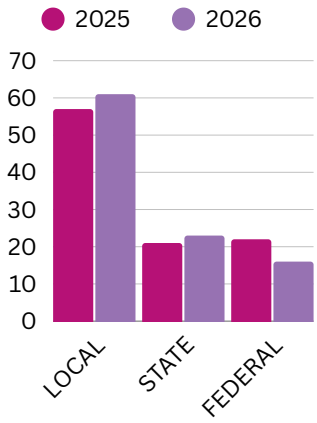
External Factors Affecting Behavioral Health

State and federal policy changes created additional uncertainty for publicly funded services. In Ohio, the elimination of replacement levies and ongoing efforts to limit property tax growth may constrain the long-term ability of local governments and public agencies to generate revenue needed to sustain community services. Public discussions surrounding broader property tax reform, including proposals to significantly reduce or eliminate property taxes, further highlight the evolving fiscal environment facing local systems of care.

At the federal level, proposed Medicaid changes may affect access to behavioral health services and create additional pressures on providers and local systems, including: new work and community engagement requirements for some Medicaid recipients, more frequent eligibility reviews that may increase coverage disruptions, stricter eligibility and exemption requirements for some individuals with behavioral health conditions, increased financial strain on providers resulting from potential coverage losses and reduced reimbursement.

Together, these developments underscore the importance of strategic planning, fiscal stewardship, and maintaining a responsive behavioral health continuum.

Financial Report

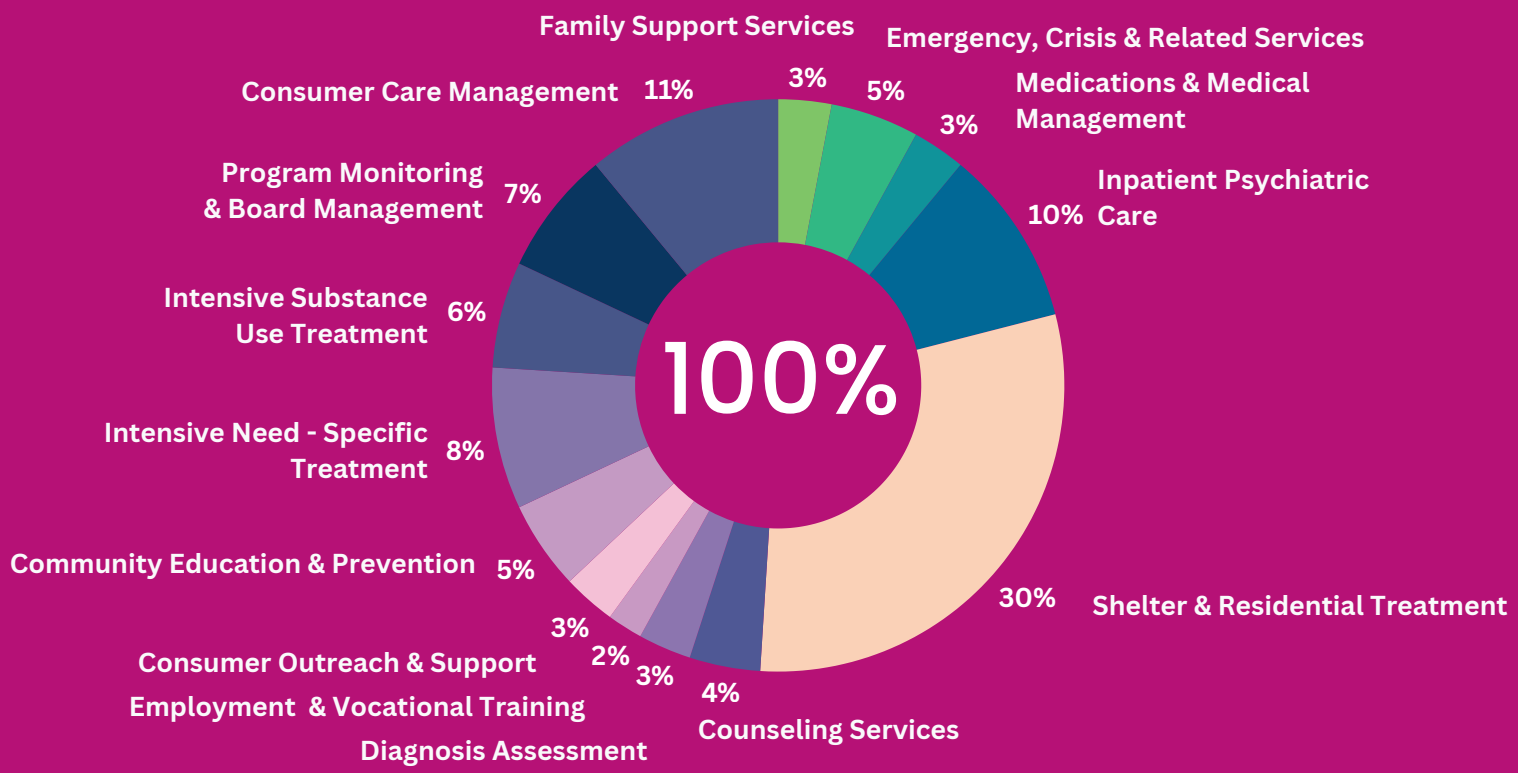


The Lake ADAMHS FY2026 budget reflects a continued commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship amid rising service costs, workforce shortages, and uncertainty surrounding future state and local funding. During the year, the Board saw a decrease in Federal funding following the completion of a one-time residential treatment capital project.

Additional residential beds were available and filled to meet the demand. The Board also saw the first reduction in collections due to the property tax rollback and owner occupancy credit. State funding was streamlined and a small reduction was realized.

Expenditures remained concentrated in core treatment and recovery services, including Inpatient Psychiatric Care, increased capacity in Residential Treatment, Crisis Services, and Counseling. The Board also invested in long-term system improvements through strategic planning, data analysis, and modernization of its Request for Proposal (RFP) process to better evaluate service outcomes and align funding with community needs. While provider workforce challenges continue to impact service delivery throughout the behavioral health system, the Board remains committed to maintaining access to care while operating with low administrative costs and maximizing the value of public resources.

FY 2026 Expenses Chart: Percent of every dollar invested





FINANCIAL HEADWINDS VS BOARD RESPONSE

FINANCIAL HEADWINDS	BOARD RESPONSE
Federal Funding Decline	Secured Alternative Grants
Property Tax Rollback	Maximized Existing Resources
Workforce Shortages	Maintained Access to Care
State System Changes	Strategic Planning & Modernized RFP
Increased Demand	Added Residential Capacity

FY 2026 Executive Committee

All board members are Lake County residents who serve with passion and without compensation.



Pam Kurt
Chair



Nicole Parker
Vice-Chair



Mike Hatton
Treasurer



Jeffrey Taylor
Secretary

Roberta Kalb
Past Chair



Board Members

Carl Dondorfer
Kristin Hess
Stacy Kramer
Philip Orley
Marty Phillips III
Matt Sabo
Beverly Schilero
Frances Webb
William Wilson
Joanne Zeroske

