

Expungement Event

October 17th, 2020

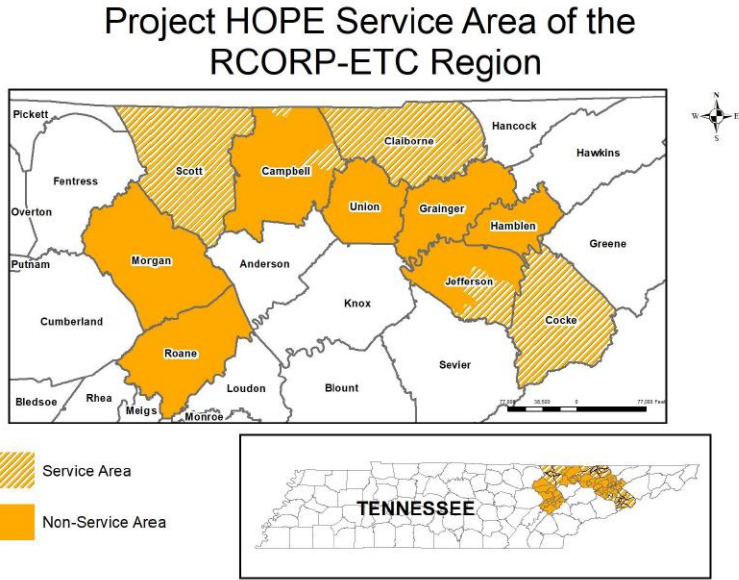
Expungement Event

On October 17th, 2020 Project HOPE (Healing Opioid Use Disorder Through Prevention and Expertise) hosted an expungement event in collaboration with the College of Law Department at The University of Tennessee. The purpose of this event was to expunge criminal records or waive court costs for community members who have records in Jefferson or Cocke counties. The 8-hour event included a Narcan training and distribution from *Choice Health Network*, job information training from *American Job Center*, drug prevention and treatment from *Rescue 180*, eligibility and assistance from *TennCare*, and child support and job information from *Tennessee Child Support Employment & Parenting Program*. In addition, fact sheets on the following topics were distributed to attendees: substance use disorder digital stories, drug take back information, TennCare eligibility, Tennessee opioid epidemic, prescription drug misuse, broadband resources, social support and opioid use disorder, and mental health.

Attendees

Project HOPE service area includes 5 counties in East Tennessee: Scott, Claiborne, Cocke, Jefferson, and Campbell (see Figure 1). The consortium is co-led by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and has almost 100 members. Invitations for the expungement event were emailed to all consortium members, posted on social media sites, and distributed through community partners. Registration was limited to 160 individuals who had criminal records or court costs in Jefferson or Cocke counties, of which 77 persons attended. Over 60 volunteers supported this event.

Figure1. Project HOPE region and service area



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Evaluation of Training

Seven of seventy-seven attendees completed the evaluation survey.

Attendees indicated how helpful the 6 resources were at the event, possible answers ranged from *not at all helpful (1)* to *extremely helpful (5)*.

Four attendees reported visiting one or more of the six available resources. The overall helpfulness of the resources was regarded highly among attendees, as the mean rankings for each service was a 4 or higher, indicating the resource was *very helpful* or *extremely helpful* (Table 1).

Table 1. Resource helpfulness.

Resource	Helpful	
	<i>n</i>	M (SD)
American Job Center	4	4.25 (1.5)
Choice Health Network	3	4.67 (0.6)
Rescue 180, Anti-drug Coalition	2	4.5 (0.7)
TennCare	2	4.0 (1.4)
Department of Motor Vehicles	2	4.5 (0.7)
Tennessee Child Support Employment & Parenting Program	3	4.7 (0.6)

Suggestions from Attendees

To improve expungement events, attendees recommended whether the offered resources should be included in future events. Five attendees unanimously indicated that the American Job Center, Choice Health Network, Rescue 180, Anti-drug Coalition, and TennCare services should be present at future events. Most attendees reported that the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Tennessee Child Support Employment & Parenting Program should be included in future events.

Special Considerations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, special precautions were utilized for the expungement event to reduce risk, including: 1) screening for COVID-19 symptoms before entrance; 2) limiting attendance to 160 persons who pre-registered for the event and required signatures from Judges; and 3) pre-screening and collecting community members' files prior to the event. Due to these cautionary measures, evaluation efforts were limited, as community members did not have the opportunity to wait in the Fellowship Hall, where most additional services were located. To address for this challenge to the sharing of resources, program volunteers approached community members at entry and exit locations to provide evaluations, factsheets and flyers, Naloxone, and resource information. Despite the small number of evaluations completed, more than 500 factsheets and flyers and 70 containers of Naloxone were distributed at the expungement event.