



Dear Surry County Residents with Lived Experience,

Ready to make a real difference in your community? The Director's Council of Lived Experience (COLE) is looking for people just like you! If you have navigated recovery, reentry, or other life challenges, your unique experiences are invaluable and can help shape programs that serve our community.

COLE, sponsored by the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery, is a new group forming in September 2025. We are seeking 6-10 dedicated individuals to share their voice and ideas to help make recovery and justice support services more effective, relevant, and accessible for everyone. We will also provide specialized education and training to support you in efforts to share your story, advocate for our community and grow.

As a member of COLE, you'll be able to:

- Share your ideas and experiences to guide our community's work.
- Help inform programs and policies.
- Connect with other community members and work together to improve services.
- Grow as a community member and community leader.

We believe your story and insight can make a huge difference for others. To get started, simply fill out a short interest form online via the link or QR Code below.

We can't wait to hear from you and welcome you to this important work!

Have questions? Contact me personally via cell/text at 336-374-9134 or via email at edwardsj@co.surry.nc.us.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

C. Jamie Edwards

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Director

Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery

Interested? Complete the Below Confidential Form Direct Link/QR Code

<https://www.surrycountycares.com/post/scosar-director-s-council-of-lived-experience-cole>



Council of Lived Experience (COLE) Recruitment

Your Voice Matters!

Join the Surry County Council Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR) Director's Council of Lived Experience, also known as COLE!

Have you lived through recovery, reentry, or other life challenges — and want to help shape the programs that serve our community?

We're looking for 6 – 10 people with lived experience to join COLE. This group will provide recommendations to the SCOSAR Director and other community agencies for making local services more effective, relevant, and accessible for those who need them most.

Who We're Looking For

- People who have experienced recovery from substance use, behavioral health, incarceration or similar challenges.
- People willing to share ideas and feedback in a respectful group setting.
- People who want to make a difference in our community.

What You'll Do

- Attend monthly meetings.
- Share your experiences and ideas.
- Help inform programs and policies.
- Discuss how helping systems succeed and failed during your own journey.
- Work with staff and other community members to improve services.

What You'll Get

- A voice in shaping programs that matter.
- Food and refreshments at meetings.
- This is a unpaid advisory opportunity.

When Do We Start?

September 2025 — share your interest today.

What to Expect from the Council

Welcome to the Council of Lived Experience (COLE)!

We are so glad you've chosen to express interest in sharing your voice and help shape the programs that serve our community.

Our Mission

To make sure the experiences and ideas of people who have lived through recovery, reentry, and other life experiences help guide our communities work.

Your Expected Role

- Share your ideas and experiences — they matter!
- Grow and gain new skills that can be used in formal and informal settings
- Work with other members to give feedback on programs and policies.
- Bring a respectful, open attitude to discussions.
- Protect the privacy of what's shared in meetings.

Meeting Details

- When: The first meeting will be held in early September 2025.
- Where: SCOSAR Office in Dobson, NC.
- What to Expect: We'll have a short agenda, agenda assignments, and time for open discussion.
- Food: We provide snacks or a light meal.

Support for Members

- Transportation help is available — just let us know in advance.
- If you have questions or need help understanding something, reach out anytime.

We believe your story and insight can help make a difference for others. Thank you for joining us in this important work!

While we want to hear from as many people as possible, this will be a working group and we only have the capacity to serve 6 – 10 individuals at the current time. It is expected that membership will rotate each year to include as many people as possible over the long term.

Council Agenda Plan

The following topics and goals can be expected that we work on together during the first Council Meetings.

Meeting 1 – Welcome & Building the Foundation

Goal: Get to know each other, build trust, and explain the council's purpose.

Meeting 2 – Understanding Our Community Needs

Goal: Identify top community needs from members' perspectives.

Meeting 3 – From Ideas to Action

Goal: Explore solutions for top needs identified in Meeting 2.

Meeting 4 – Moving Beyond

Goals: We Keep Working on Topics Important to the Council!

Council of Lived Experience (COLE) Charter

Purpose

The Council of Lived Experience (COLE) exists to ensure that the voices, insights, and experiences of people directly impacted by addiction, incarceration, behavioral health, or other life challenges shape the direction of Surry County. COLE is an independent Council of Surry County Residents that is sponsored by the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery and serves as an advisory group to the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery Program Director.

Mission

To advise, guide, and provide feedback that helps create services that are relevant, effective, and accessible for our community.

Membership

- Comprised of 6–10 members with lived experience relevant to the council's mission.
- Members will reflect diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
- Term length: One year, with the option to renew.

Expectations

- Attend and actively participate in scheduled meetings.
- Share perspectives honestly and respectfully.
- Maintain confidentiality on sensitive matters.
- Work collaboratively with other members and council staff.

Authority

The Council serves in an advisory role to the SCOSAR Director.

Meetings

Meetings will be held monthly with agendas provided in advance and minutes shared afterward.

Charter Acknowledgement

Member Name: _____ Date: _____

Member Signature: _____