

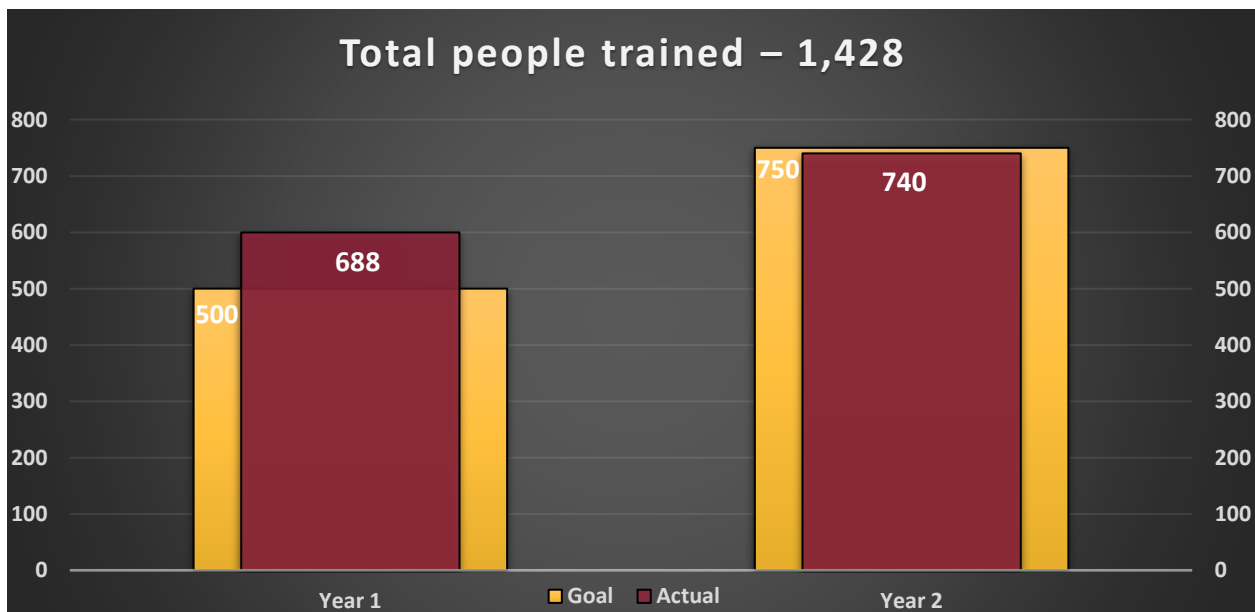


**Report on the current state of the University of Louisiana at Monroe Harm Reduction Education and Referral for Opioid Overdose Reversal (ULM H.E.R.O.) Program and its Progress**

*The following is a summary on the progress of the ULM H.E.R.O. program as it currently stands at the end of the second quarter of the second fiscal year of activity (January – March 2024). This information is intended for the members of the program’s Community Advisory Board (CAB) to refer to and to disseminate to others they believe may have an interest in the activity of this program. We greatly appreciate each members’ participation on the board and their engagement with us to help reach our goals and to serve our community.*

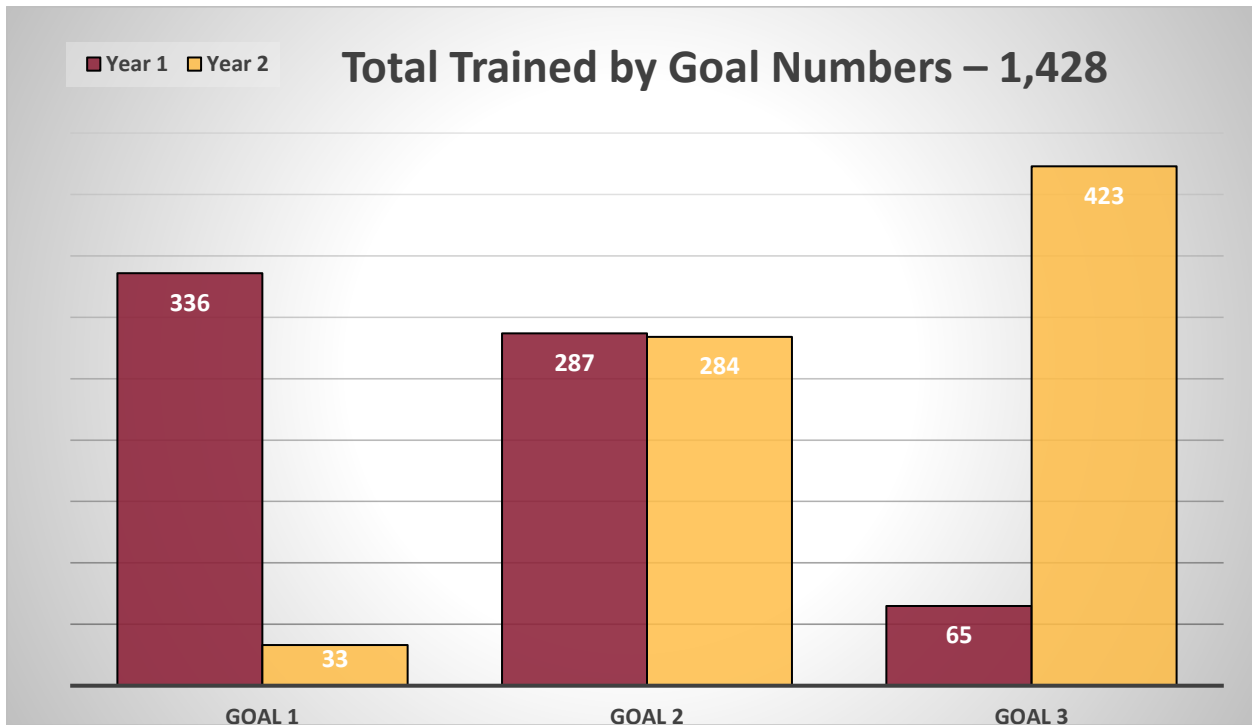
**Overall Totals**

In the second quarter of our second year, the program was able to progress further towards meeting our overall goals, as the graphic below shows. We are currently meeting our yearly goal, being only 10 individuals away from crossing our 750 threshold which we set for ourselves to meet in year 2. After our next event, we will again be expected to surpass our overall goal this year, keeping with the trend set in our first year. As the graphic below shows, we have trained 1, 428 individuals as of our last event in March.



**Breakdown by Goals**

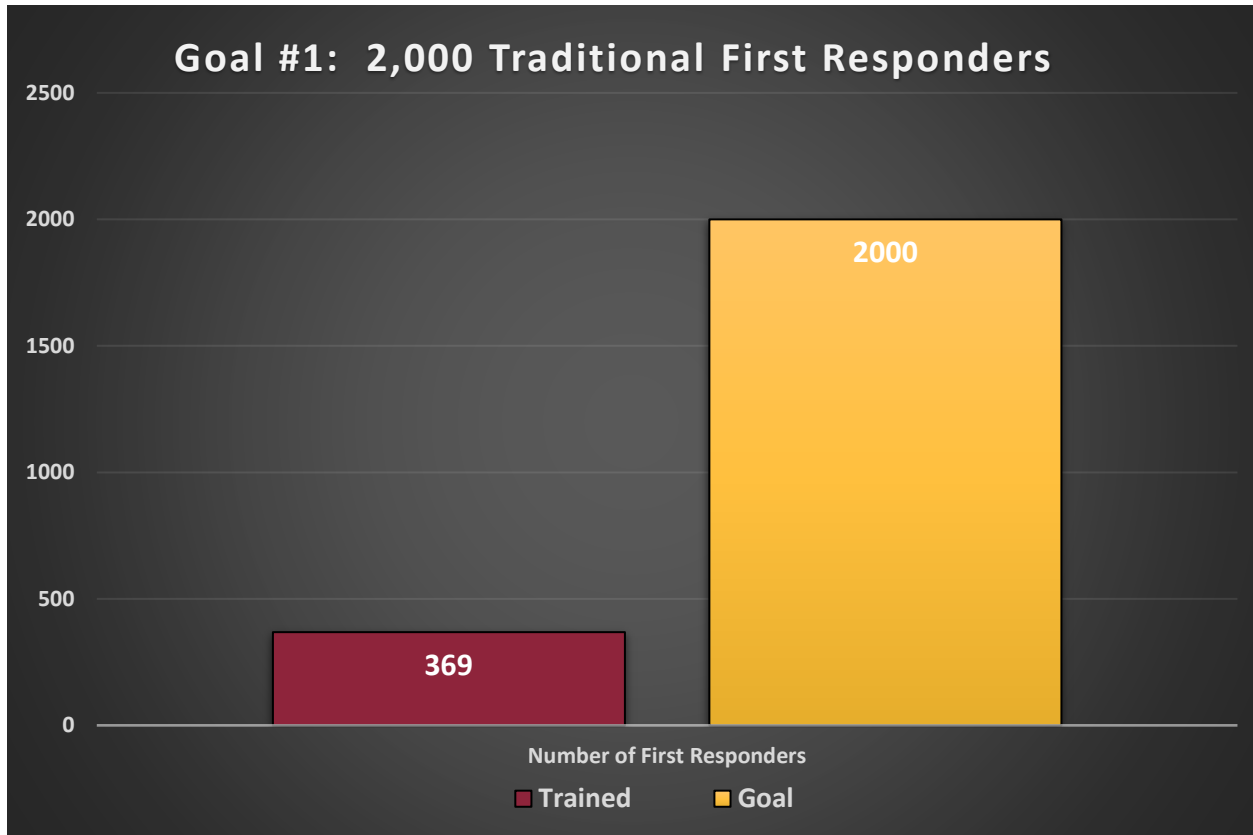
Breaking down our progress so far by our three main goals, we see the specific areas which we have improved, and the areas in which we will be focusing on for the remainder of the year. This quarter, we saw continued growth in our numbers for goals 2 and 3 (Community events and Student sessions, respectively). We did not have any goal 1 (traditional first responders) events this quarter. Our overall total for goal 2 now stands at 571 individuals trained, and goal 3 stands at 488. Goal 1 remains at 369, as it was last quarter.



As for goal 2, we have continued our outreach efforts in the communities in our catchment, and have trained roughly the same number of individuals at our community events as we had last year, which is the most consistent success we have had so far. For our students, while we only held one, “pilot” education session in our first year, in our second, this continues to be the most successful goal by far. With the great success we have had with this goal, we will continue outreach to other medical schools within our catchment, such as the LSU medical school in New Orleans. Overall, we have found individuals in both goal 2 and 3 to be relatively open to our education, and have been receptive to what we offer overall. However, goal 1 continues to be the area in which we have faced the greatest challenges in finding receptive audiences, and as such, will be the focus of our efforts going forward.

**Goal #1: Traditional First Responders**

As mentioned, our primary focus going forward will be to increase our outreach to traditional first responder organizations. From the beginning, our target has been to reach 2,000 first responders for the entirety of the grant. At this point in the grant period, we have not quite reached a quarter of that number as the figure below shows.

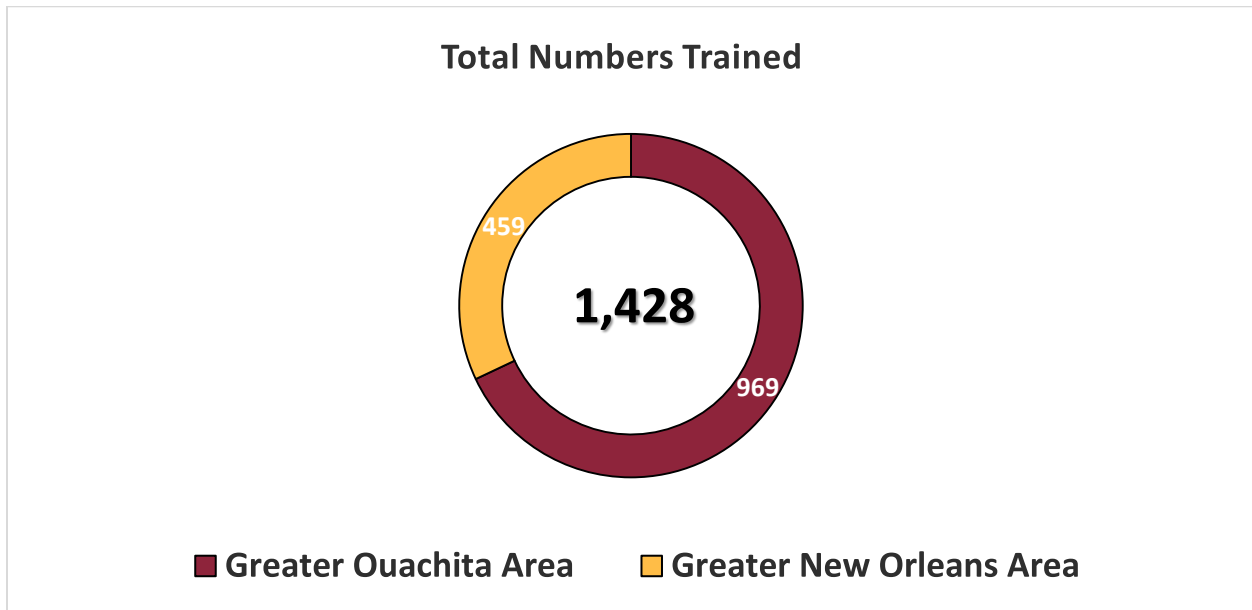


We currently stand at 369 trained so far, with the majority of those having been trained in our first year. Obstacles to our progression this year which we have faced include the holiday season, which was a slow period across all three goals, as well as the need to hire a new outreach coordinator (after our previous one left in January) to follow up on the notably difficult-to-reach population that first responders tend to be. Having recently hired a new coordinator, we expect to be able to re-double our efforts in pursuing this goal.

**Breakdown by Location**

We have continued our outreach efforts in the parishes of our original catchment, as well as the parishes in our recently expanded catchment. As a reminder, the parishes in our catchment now include the greater Orleans area (which includes Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist parishes); the greater Ouachita area (which includes Ouachita parish, the cities of Monroe, West Monroe, the areas of Bawcomville, Brownsville, Calhoun, Claiborne, Lakeshore, and Swartz); and the expanded catchment, which includes the remaining parishes of Union, Morehouse, Richland, Caldwell, Jackson, Lincoln, Livingston, Ascension, and Lafourche.

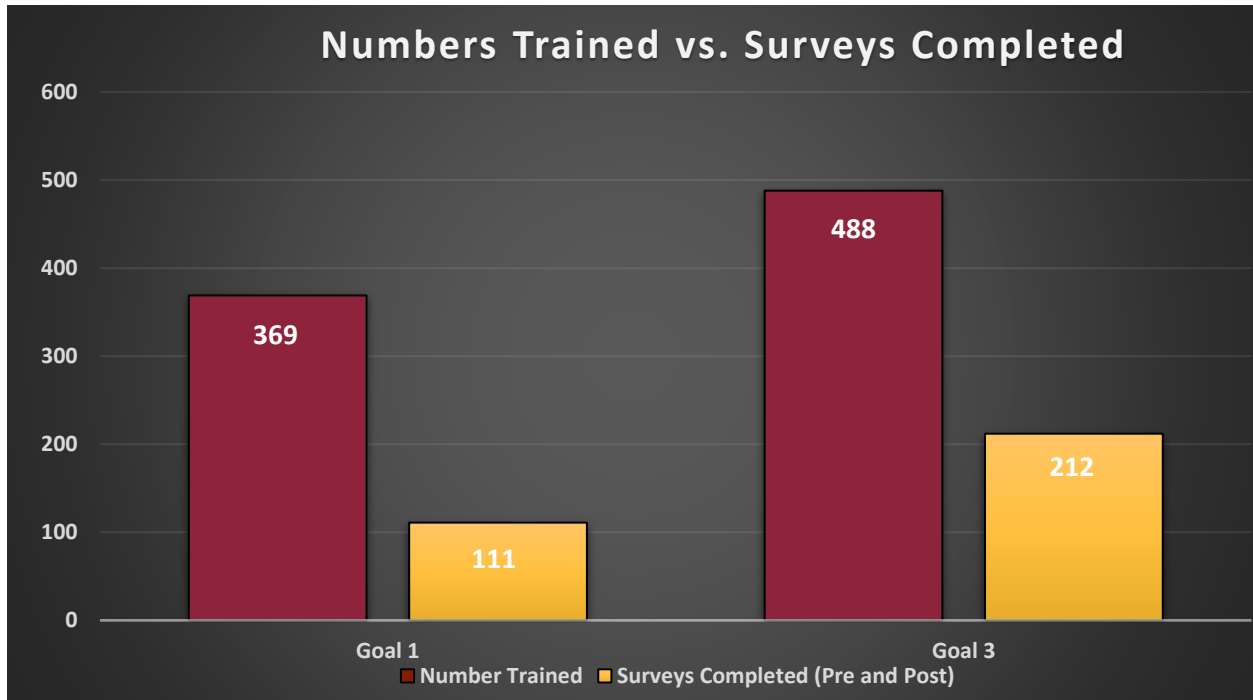
While we have yet to hold an event in any of our expanded catchment parishes, we are planning events in the expansion in the coming months, and growing our outreach efforts in these areas as well. As for our current numbers, we have trained 459 individuals in the greater Orleans area, and 969 in the greater Ouachita area.



**Survey Responses and Discrepancies**

An important part of our program continues to be receiving completed responses from both pre- and post- training surveys, which we distribute to everyone present at our goal 1 and goal 3 sessions. This information is important, because by analyzing these responses, we can see the impact that our education sessions are having on audiences, and our findings may be published as evidence that our program is having its intended effect. This is also important, as these findings can bring more attention to the importance of harm reduction programs.

The completion rate for pre- and post- training surveys has remained mostly the same through the end of this quarter. As there were no goal 1 events this quarter, we still only have the previous quarter's rate of completion to assess, which remains at 30%. While this is low, we hope the newly redesigned surveys will increase likelihood of completion, and in the following weeks we will be able to determine if the redesign had the intended effect. For goal 3, the rate of completion also remains at 43%, meaning that the two student sessions this quarter were in line with previous events, and were not different enough from previous sessions to change the overall completion rate. The figure below shows this discrepancy in numbers trained compared to surveys completed.



### **Summary of Activities for Year 2, Quarter 2**

As for the activities for this quarter, our main focus was finding a replacement for our previous outreach coordinator, who left her position at the beginning of January. During the few months in which we had no coordinator, our team was able to make a few contacts and set up a few training sessions which were confirmed for the coming months. However, as we had no dedicated coordinator consistently reaching out and setting up events, our overall progress for this quarter was somewhat slow. Finally, in March, we managed to successfully hire a replacement coordinator, and by March 20th, have once again been able to continue our outreach efforts full-time.

During this quarter, we held only three events in total. Two of these were student sessions for ULM health science students, which were held on the main campus of ULM in Monroe. The third event we attended was the St. Bernard Crawfish Festival. In the coming weeks, however, we have scheduled trainings which were set up during the aforementioned period when we were between coordinators, many of which are trainings for goal 1.

### **Ongoing Challenges**

To summarize our ongoing challenges which have remained through the second quarter of the year, we have taken steps to address said challenges, and are waiting opportunities to address them. First, we have faced a challenge with increasing our reach to first responder organizations, as previously mentioned. Our efforts going forward will be mostly focused on reaching the 2,000 first responder threshold by the end of the grant, which we would count as a major measure of the program's overall success. While we will focus on ways to achieve this goal for the duration of the year, we remain open to new approaches and ways to better market our program to cater to their needs.

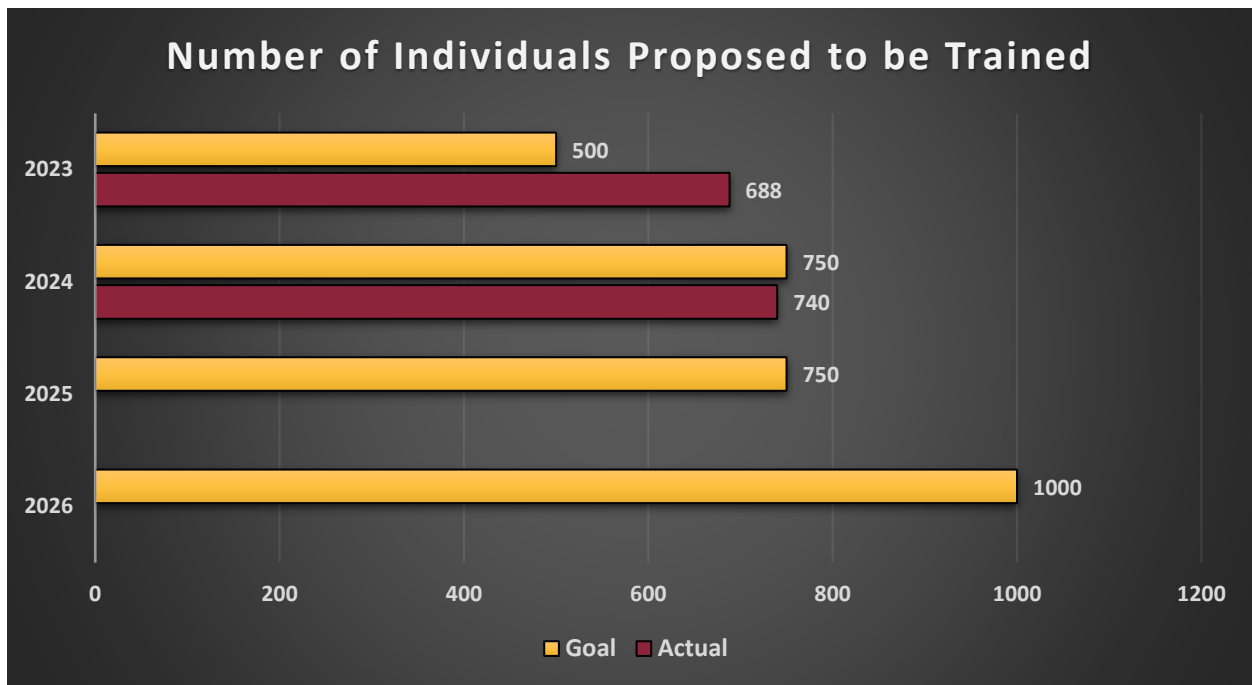
Second, as a part of this first challenge, we have faced a marketing issue in past outreach efforts. Specifically, we have had trouble differentiating ourselves from other organizations which focus exclusively on opioid overdose training. Of course, most first responders have this type of training already, and if they are under the assumption that this is all that we offer, they are likely to reject our outreach. As a result, we are looking into ways that we can advertise ourselves as a more holistic type of harm reduction educational program, and not one that merely focuses on naloxone and opioid overdose training.

Finally, an increase in our survey response rates continues to be among our main issues which we are always trying to improve, especially among first responders. Once again, this information is both important as feedback for ourselves to better understand how we can improve our approach to training, as well as data which we can publish in academic journals which can point to empirical evidence of the program's success.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, while this quarter has been slow, we have still made progress towards meeting our overall yearly total, as well as increasing our goal 2 and 3 totals. We have gathered useful data on our students who participated in our training sessions this quarter and have seen promising improvements in both knowledge and positive attitudes towards harm reduction approaches.

We were able to promptly replace our outreach coordinator with a new one who has already begun outreach efforts and is ready to help us move towards achieving our goals. And while we still face various challenges which we have previously identified, we have also identified ways to address these challenges, and are always looking for ways to implement more. As the figure below shows, we have met our target for the year, and can now continue the rest of the year focusing on improving our numbers in areas which we are currently lacking, namely goal 1.



We would like to thank you again for your continued interest in the success of our program and any and all feedback which you may provide.