



CODINGTON COUNTY

# RESTART Newsletter

JANUARY 2026



Welcome to the first edition of the Codington County RESTART Newsletter, a quarterly update highlighting our community's collective efforts to help individuals overcome addiction, rebuild stability, and reduce recidivism. RESTART is a team-based program that connects participants with comprehensive treatment, supervision, and support as they work toward sustained recovery and a healthy, productive future.

In each quarterly issue, we'll share success stories, program milestones, and resources that demonstrate the power of collaboration in building safer, stronger communities across Codington County. Please scan or click the QR code here to check out some of our current content!



## JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM

A review of the 2025 referral data shows promising trends in how diversion is used to keep youth out of the courtroom. Last year, a total of **252** situations were referred to diversion. While some youth were diverted multiple times, each situation was counted only once, regardless of the number of charges.

In **77%**  
of referred  
situations, the  
youth did not need  
to appear in court.

Approximately **77%** of these situations resulted in the youth receiving diversion without needing to appear in court. This indicates that diversion is functioning as intended and effectively reducing the number of young people entering the formal court process.

The remaining **58** situations involved youth who appeared in court first. In nearly all cases, there were clear reasons for this pathway, such as conditions of release, more serious charges, unsuccessful prior diversion attempts, or requests for counsel. Some cases included multiple diversion attempts before court involvement became necessary.

Overall, the data suggests that diversion is being applied appropriately and is effectively supporting the goal of keeping most youth out of court whenever possible.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

# CODINGTON COUNTY TREATMENT COURT



On January 21, 2026, the Codington County Treatment Court held its most recent graduation ceremony, celebrating the achievements of **four graduates**. These individuals participated in the Treatment Court Program for a duration of **574 to 966 days**. During their time in the program, they collectively completed **762 negative drug tests**, became fully employed, and **paid off nearly \$3,000** in court fines and fees. These graduates received an average of **268 hours of treatment** for chemical dependency and mental health challenges, along with completing **100 hours of volunteer time** to our community. Their efforts contributed to numerous nonprofits and treatment court partners in Watertown, SD, fostering a sense of goodwill in the community.



*Congrats, Graduates!*

Another recent graduation ceremony, held last October, honored **three individuals** who participated in the Treatment Court program for **475 to 755 days**. During their time in the program, they collectively completed **516 negative drug tests**, became fully employed, and **paid off over \$1,500** in court fines and fees. Additionally, each graduate received approximately **200 hours of treatment** for chemical dependency and mental health issues, along with completing **100 hours of volunteer community service**.

## CORA LOWRY



OUTSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER

## TREVOR BARTHEL



OUTSTANDING LAW ENFORCEMENT REPRESENTATIVE

## TIFFANY BARTHEL



OUTSTANDING TREATMENT COURT COORDINATOR

On November 5-6, 2025, the Codington County Treatment Court team traveled to Pierre for the South Dakota Rise Conference, which offered valuable training opportunities alongside other treatment teams from across the state. A highlight of the conference was the Albert Einstein Awards ceremony, which honors exceptional team members in South Dakota's treatment courts by selecting one winner from each of nine disciplines. This year, several members of the Codington team were recognized with Albert Einstein Awards for their outstanding contributions to the treatment court. Cora Lowry from the Human Services Agency received the award for Outstanding Mental Health Provider. Trevor Barthel was honored as the Outstanding Law Enforcement Representative. Tiffany Barthel received the Albert Award for Outstanding Treatment Court Coordinator. Our community is fortunate to have such a dedicated and impressive team of individuals who tirelessly work to assist in the rehabilitation of treatment court participants.

# BROTHERS & SISTERS BEHIND BARS



Brothers & Sisters Behind Bars works to ensure that people returning from incarceration have the connection, stability, and safe transportation they need to pursue recovery without isolation, homelessness, or the environments that contributed to their addiction, including substance use disorder, opioid use disorder, and alcoholism.



## CONNECTION

BSBB provides consistent, relationship-centered daily walk-in support for individuals reentering the community, offering essential resources, connection, and encouragement. In 2025, these walk-ins totaled **1,693**, with **April** being the busiest month at **205 visits**.

Through its sober social events, BSBB creates safe, community-building opportunities that promote healthy relationships and recovery. In 2025, these events saw a total of **1,950** engagements. Recovery Fest, in August, had **250 attendees**. Other events include Family Christmas Pictures, Zoo Day, and multiple Recovery Smoothie Days.

BSBB also provides structured phone support to help individuals stay connected and accountable during reentry, supplying **17 phones** and **83 phone cards** to support communication with supervision and services. This support is offered only when required by parole or probation.



## SOBER HOUSING

BSBB was able to provide **34** opportunities for people to live in a sober environment that encouraged recovery and required that residents remain compliant with court requirements. In total, **2,157 nights** of housing were provided.



1,467

TOTAL RIDES  
PROVIDED

## TRANSPORTATION

BSBB coordinated **1,353 community transit rides**, helping participants access essential appointments and maintain consistency in their recovery and reentry plans.

When community transit options were unavailable, BSBB staff provided an additional **114 rides** to ensure individuals could still reach supervision, work, and treatment commitments.

# HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY



**HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY**

Helping People Achieve

On November 19, 2025, Watertown achieved a significant milestone in youth prevention when the City Council passed the THC Age Restriction Emergency Ordinance. This ordinance closed a loophole that previously allowed individuals under 21 to legally purchase THC-infused consumable products. Over the past year, Watertown Healthy Youth has been actively educating the community about deceptive marketing tactics used for alcohol, vape, and THC products through initiatives like the Sweet Deception display and the [What Could Be in a Teen's Backpack?](#) ad campaign.

In Fall 2025, the Human Service Agency partnered with the Watertown Police Department and the City to review THC-related laws and ordinances. Research revealed that under the 2018 Farm Bill, hemp-derived THC consumables were not subject to age restrictions or regulations like alcohol. We believe these efforts have also helped with the introduction of the 2026 state legislative bill (SB 45).

## NATIONAL IMPAIRED DRIVING PREVENTION MONTH

December was National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, and Watertown Healthy Youth took this opportunity to promote responsible hosting, safe rides, and planning ahead during the holiday season. To make prevention information easily accessible to residents, the coalition refreshed and shared a community [safe rides resource page](#).

In collaboration with the Watertown Police Department and the Codington County Sheriff's Office, Watertown Healthy Youth distributed 51 prevention "goodie" bags to businesses throughout the city and county. These included liquor stores, bars, restaurants, convenience stores, and local vape/smoke shops. Each bag contained safe ride message coasters, drink-size magnets, restroom posters, compliance resources, keychains, and digital calendars displaying the legal drinking age. Additionally, the coalition partnered with the NE Prevention Resource Center to host a mocktail recipe contest. The winning alcohol-free recipes were shared at an open house, showcasing fun and safe alternatives for holiday celebrations.



To support upcoming initiatives, we encourage stakeholders to monitor and advocate for [legislative bills](#) related to substances. Two bills have been introduced: Senate Bill 45, which revises current law to include delta-9 products regulated for individuals under the age of 21, and Senate Bill 61, which aims to ban hemp-derived intoxicants that are not for medical purposes.

# FACE IT TOGETHER

Peer support continues to play a critical role in recovery and successful reentry. This quarter, peer coaching served **89** members, with **49** currently active and engaged. Services are delivered flexibly through in-person meetings, phone calls, and Zoom to reduce barriers and maintain consistent support. Several members began peer coaching through the Department of Corrections while incarcerated, which has supported continuity of care.

**89**  
MEMBERS RECEIVED PEER COACHING THIS QUARTER



One member participated in peer coaching for **five months** while incarcerated, reentered the community in mid-October into Brothers and Sisters Behind Bars sober living, and continued consistent engagement with peer support. She secured employment in November and is preparing to move into her own apartment at the end of January, demonstrating the impact of early engagement, stable support, and goal-focused coaching.

Looking ahead, there are opportunities to expand virtual peer coaching to include individuals at the Codington County Detention Center.



# ADULT DIVERSION PROGRAM

Launched on July 1, 2025, the Adult Diversion Program is a collaborative effort between the Third Circuit Court and the Codington County State’s Attorney’s Office, led by Judges Means, Elshere, and Schumacher, and State’s Attorney Alison Bakken. The program offers eligible adults a structured, accountable alternative to the traditional court process, supporting both individual responsibility and community safety.

**90%**  
COMPLETION RATE

**20**  
AVERAGE PARTICIPANT AGE

From July 1 through December 31, 2025, **83 individuals** were referred to the program, with **90% successfully completing diversion** and resolving their cases without a court appearance, helping reduce strain on court resources while maintaining public confidence in the justice system.

Participants completed **196 total hours of community service**, reinforcing accountability, community restoration, and a shared commitment to safe, healthy neighborhoods. The most common referrals involved underage alcohol consumption.

With an **average participant age of 20**, the program emphasizes early intervention, prevention, and rehabilitation—contributing to safer outcomes for the community.



If you have questions or information to contribute to future editions, please contact **Angie Collignon** at [acollignon@codington.org](mailto:acollignon@codington.org).