



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Executive Summary: Innovation of Acu-Wellness in a Correctional Setting (HARP)

The Heroin Addiction Recovery Program (HARP) at the Chesterfield County Jail has implemented a groundbreaking intervention known as Acu-Wellness—an innovative, non-pharmaceutical addition to substance use recovery in a correctional setting. This trauma-competent practice utilizes the five-needle NADA (National Acupuncture Detoxification Association) protocol to support participants' mental, emotional, and physical recovery in a safe, sustainable, and evidence-based way.

Acu-Wellness offers a holistic alternative to traditional treatment approaches that often rely solely on medication and talk therapy. Instead, this technique promotes deep relaxation, improves sleep, reduces anxiety, and helps regulate emotions—all without the use of drugs. It is especially impactful in addressing the high levels of unresolved trauma commonly found among justice-involved individuals.

The program is **cost-effective and accessible**, as it can be conducted in group settings by trained staff. Once implemented, the ongoing financial burden is minimal, making it a sustainable option for correctional institutions. Importantly, research supports the use of the NADA protocol for **reducing cravings and withdrawal symptoms**, enhancing participants' ability to remain emotionally stable throughout their recovery journey. Inmates report significant improvements in managing anxiety, depression, and agitation, contributing to a calmer and more cooperative correctional environment.

Beyond symptom relief, Acu-Wellness cultivates **self-regulation and resilience**—key traits for successful reintegration and long-term recovery.

By integrating Acu-Wellness into HARP, the Chesterfield County Jail is leading the way in correctional innovation, emphasizing healing over punishment and offering a compassionate, science-based solution to substance use and trauma recovery.

VACO Application for the HARP Acu-Wellness Program

Problem Statement and Challenges:

The NADA 5 Needle Protocol addresses the high levels of stress, trauma, and addiction recovery challenges faced by individuals in the HARP Program and the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office. Incarcerated individuals often struggle with substance use disorders, anxiety, PTSD, and emotional dysregulation, while Sheriff's Office staff and first responders experience significant occupational stress, burnout, and secondary trauma.

By integrating the NADA Protocol into the HARP Acu-Wellness program, the Sheriff's Office acknowledges the importance of offering multiple pathways to recovery and mental well-being. Acupuncture provides a non-verbal, non-pharmacological tool that promotes relaxation, emotional balance, and physical well-being. For inmates, it supports addiction recovery, stress reduction, and improved sleep, complementing other therapeutic interventions. For law enforcement and first responders, it offers a proactive approach to managing the cumulative effects of job-related stress, helping to prevent burnout and improve resilience.

This holistic approach reinforces the idea that recovery and mental health are not one-size-fits-all. By providing access to alternative healing methods like acupuncture, the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office demonstrates a commitment to comprehensive well-being, benefiting both those in custody and those who serve the community.

HARP Acu-wellness Program Development and Execution

Program Development

The HARP (Helping Addicts Recover Progressively) Acuwellness Program was developed as an innovative approach to substance use recovery and mental health support within the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office. Recognizing the importance of emotional and physiological regulation in mental health, the program was designed to integrate acupuncture-based wellness techniques into existing recovery frameworks.

The initiative began with a collaboration between the Sheriff's Department's Behavioral and Mental Health Division and the Chesterfield Community Services Board (CSB). Both entities identified the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) five-needle acu-detox protocol as an effective tool for supporting individuals in recovery. The program was built on the understanding that regulation is key to mental health and that multiple pathways can support individuals in achieving stability and wellness.

Key Steps and Timelines

1. Initial Planning & Collaboration (Q1 2023)

- Chesterfield Sheriff's Office Behavioral and Mental Health Division and Chesterfield CSB established a partnership to explore alternative wellness strategies.
- Research was conducted on acupuncture detoxification methods, with NADA emerging as the preferred training provider.

2. Training and Certification (Q2 2023 - Q3 2023)

- Members from both the Sheriff's Department and Chesterfield CSB participated in NADA training to become certified in the five-needle acu-detox protocol.
- Three staff members from the Sheriff's Office Behavioral and Mental Health Division received additional training in the acuwellness protocol to specialize in program implementation.

3. Program Integration (Q4 2023 - Q1 2024)

- Acuwellness sessions were introduced within the HARP recovery program, providing participants with access to acupuncture-based detoxification and regulation techniques.
- Sheriff's Office staff were also offered the opportunity to participate, promoting overall well-being and stress management within the department.

4. Implementation & Ongoing Evaluation (Q2 2024 - Present)

- Regular acuwellness sessions were incorporated into the HARP treatment schedule, with ongoing data collection to assess efficacy.
- Feedback loops were established, allowing participants and facilitators to refine the program for maximum impact.

Stakeholders Involved

- **Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office Behavioral and Mental Health Division:** Led the implementation of the Acu-wellness program within the HARP initiative.
- **Chesterfield Community Services Board (CSB):** Partnered in training and program support.
- **National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA):** Provided specialized training and certification.

- **HARP Program Participants:** Individuals in recovery benefiting directly from the intervention.
- **Sheriff's Office Staff:** Provided access to Acu-wellness techniques for stress reduction and wellness support.

Benefits of Acu-wellness

- **Supports Emotional and Physical Regulation:** Acupuncture promotes balance in the nervous system, reducing anxiety and stress.
- **Enhances Recovery Outcomes:** Helps mitigate withdrawal symptoms and cravings, supporting long-term sobriety.
- **Improves Sleep and Mood:** Participants report better sleep quality and enhanced emotional resilience.
- **Accessible and Cost-Effective:** Offers a non-pharmaceutical, low-cost intervention that is easy to integrate into existing treatment models.
- **Promotes Overall Well-Being:** Encourages self-care and holistic healing for both program participants and staff.

The HARP Acuwellness Program represents a progressive approach to substance use recovery, leveraging the power of alternative wellness practices to foster resilience and healing.

Program Outcomes and Community Impact

The Acu-Wellness program has demonstrated significant benefits for participants, with **99% reporting a decrease in stress and an increase in relaxation**. This measurable impact highlights the program's effectiveness in promoting emotional and physical well-being.

Participants have shared powerful testimonials about their experiences:

- *"During Acu-Wellness, I am able to deeply relax, forget everything, and sleep soundly that night."*
- *"I feel like I am floating and lose track of time."*
- *"I felt very grounded and in my body."*
- *"I feel an overall sense of peacefulness."*
- *"My body felt so heavy and relaxed in the best kind of way."*
- *"I felt completely relaxed and in tune with my body. I could feel the calmness throughout my body."*
- *"It was an amazing experience I've never felt before. Beyond AMAZING!"*

By reducing stress and enhancing relaxation, the Acu-Wellness program provides a vital resource for the community, improving mental well-being and overall quality of life.

Members of the Sheriff's Department Behavioral and Mental Health team, along with members of the Chesterfield CSB, received training from NADA in the five-needle acu-detox protocol. One staff member was trained through a slot funded by the Chesterfield CSB COSSUP grant, while two others completed training at a cost of \$500 each. The total cost for supplies, including acupuncture needles, acupuncture beads, medical supplies, and storage organizers, was \$350.

Innovation of Acu-Wellness in a Correctional Setting (HARP)

Implementing Acu-Wellness within a correctional setting, particularly in the **Heroin Addiction Recovery Program (HARP)**, is innovative for several key reasons:

1. **Holistic, Non-Pharmaceutical Approach** – Traditional addiction recovery in correctional facilities often relies on counseling and medication-assisted treatment. Acu-Wellness introduces a **drug-free**, evidence-based method to reduce stress, improve sleep, and support emotional regulation.
2. **Trauma-Informed Care** – Many individuals in correctional settings have a history of trauma, which can contribute to substance use and emotional distress. The **five-needle NADA protocol** used in Acu-Wellness is recognized for its ability to promote deep relaxation, regulate the nervous system, and help individuals process trauma in a safe, non-verbal way.
3. **Accessibility and Cost-Effectiveness** – Acu-Wellness can be administered in group settings, making it **cost-effective** compared to one-on-one therapy. Once staff are trained, the ongoing cost of acupuncture supplies is minimal, allowing **sustainable implementation** within a correctional facility.
4. **Reduces Withdrawal and Cravings** – Research on the NADA protocol has shown it can **reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings**, making it an effective tool in substance use recovery programs like HARP. Participants experience **fewer urges to use substances and greater emotional stability** during recovery.
5. **Improves Mental and Emotional Well-Being** – The stressful and restrictive environment of incarceration often exacerbates anxiety, depression, and agitation. Participants in Acu-Wellness report feeling **calmer, more present, and better able to manage their emotions**, which can lead to **fewer behavioral incidents** and a more positive correctional environment.
6. **Empowers Self-Regulation and Resilience** – By experiencing a state of deep relaxation, participants **develop a sense of control over their stress responses**, which is crucial for

long-term recovery and reintegration into society. This **supports rehabilitation** rather than just punishment.

7. **Community and Peer Support** – Acu-Wellness sessions foster **a sense of community among participants**, reducing isolation and encouraging **peer-to-peer healing**, which is essential in a correctional setting where trust and connection are often limited.

By integrating Acu-Wellness into HARP, the program is **pioneering an innovative, trauma-informed, and cost-effective intervention** that enhances recovery, reduces recidivism, and promotes long-term healing for justice-involved individuals.







Odyssey

[od-uh-see]

noun

A long, transformative journey marked by struggle, perseverance, and self-discovery. It is a process of overcoming obstacles, setbacks, and moments of reckoning, leading to growth, renewal, and a deeper understanding of oneself and the world. The journey is often fraught with challenges, fears, and uncertainties, but it is also a path of discovery and personal transformation.