

THE PEARL PROGRAM

Peer Empowered Addiction Recovery Living

Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Housing Program for Pregnant and Postpartum Women

A program of Piedmont Regional Community Services



There is substantial demand for substance use treatment and recovery supports for pregnant and postpartum women in the West Piedmont region, where mothers can maintain custody of their children. Lack of access to safe and stable housing is a very common, key barrier to overcoming a substance use disorder (SUD).

The PEARL program includes a 6-12 month residential stay in safe, supportive recovery housing, access to counseling, case management, office-based opioid treatment (OBOT), and pregnant and postpartum-specific care coordination. Mothers involved in this program also receive assistance to secure longer-term housing, healthcare, employment, and quality childcare.

The overarching goal is to help mothers with substance use disorder (SUD) to stabilize and thrive through access to safe housing, comprehensive treatment, and wrap-around supports.



Grace House. The rehabilitated property in Rocky Mount, VA can house up to 3 families, as well as a live-in residential program manager. Mothers and their children (aged 1 year and below) enjoy private living pods and shared, communal kitchen and laundry areas. The property is within walking distance to several amenities, including the public library, the Franklin Center and VA Career Works, Franklin Memorial hospital, the Franklin County Perinatal Education Center, and local churches.



Treatment providers with expertise in addiction medicine for pregnant and postpartum women coordinate specialized treatment services for each resident. Services include consultations for OBOT; neonatal withdrawal counseling, education, and pain management; prenatal counseling visits; medication assisted treatment (MAT); group therapy; telehealth; and peer supports. Referrals will be provided to pediatric and other services as the mother and child(ren) transition.



A dedicated transportation specialist can assist recovery residents in attending medical appointments, childcare activities, self-help groups, and provide access to other amenities.



Wrap Around Supports. Women in the program have access to case management and wrap around supports to address other challenges they may be facing. Supports will help to improve clients' income and employment through workforce development programs, increased consumption of healthy foods through WIC, SNAP, and nutrition education programs, and ability to identify, afford, and apply for quality childcare.



"I never thought I would be a mother, let alone sober. Early recovery from a substance use disorder is a confusing and painful experience for most individuals; pregnancy compounds it. **Programs that support moms who suffer from substance use disorder at this critical stage by providing housing, treatment and community resources are absolutely essential.** Having such basic supports at a vulnerable time for women and their new babies makes the difference between succeeding in recovery, and relapse, and I have personally experienced this."

Sarah Walker, Peer Recovery Specialist @ Piedmont



"As a mother and a professional, I can speak to the importance of stable housing and reliable support both during pregnancy and after the baby is born. Having Grace House will provide a supportive environment with staff that understands the excitement of pregnancy and early parenting, as well as the anxiety, fear, and exhaustion. **Stable housing is needed in our community to help not only the baby and the mother, but also to strengthen the health and bond of the family.**"

Monica Flora, Treatment/Recovery Coordinator @ Piedmont



"I was 18 years old when I found out I was pregnant with my oldest daughter. Prior to finding out, I had been using opiates daily for two years in order to cope with the loss of my sister. Not only was I pregnant at a young age, I had no support system, I had dropped out of school; I didn't have a license or a job. This is why **I think our community desperately needs this house, so we can connect mothers who face these same challenges with resources, like treatment for addiction and mental health, and supports for employment.**"

Tiffany Pickard, Peer Recovery Specialist @ Piedmont



"Often times in EMS we see that **once the negative atmosphere is changed, it often leads to positive changes with positive outcomes.** The same can occur with recovery housing as it will provide a stronger foundation for positive changes leading to positive results."

Jonathan Smith, EMT/Firefighter; Executive Director of Putting A Dent in Mental Health; Training Coordinator @ Piedmont