



Center for African American Recovery Development

RCO Toolkit

Resource 3.6

Culturally Responsive Recovery Program Guide



Culturally Responsive Recovery Program Guide

Overview

This guide helps RCOs build and implement programs that center Black cultural realities and lived experience across every stage of recovery. It includes planning prompts, sample program ideas, and tips for adapting content to reflect your unique community.

◆ Core Program Areas

Use these examples to inspire program development:

Program Area	Description	Who It Serves
Peer Recovery Coaching	Peer support led by trained individuals with shared lived experience, including racial trauma and systems navigation.	People in early recovery or transition
Sankofa Healing Circles	Intergenerational support groups rooted in African spiritual or cultural values.	Elders, families, and young adults
Reentry & Legal Support	Programs tailored to those returning from incarceration—housing help, expungement clinics, etc.	Formerly incarcerated individuals
Recovery + Workforce Programs	Career training, entrepreneurship, resume support, and wraparound services.	People seeking financial stability
Faith & Community Integration	Programs that connect with churches, mosques, or spiritual spaces in the community.	Spiritually grounded community members

◆ Program Design Checklist

Before launching or adapting a recovery program, use this checklist to ensure cultural fit and operational readiness:

- Is the program responsive to community needs you've already heard?
 - Does it reflect cultural values, language, or traditions from your community?
 - Have you included people with lived experience in the planning process?
 - Are materials trauma-informed and accessible?
 - Is the setting welcoming, safe, and stigma-free for Black participants?
 - Are you offering multiple entry points (in-person, digital, youth-specific, elder-specific)?
 - Does your team reflect the population being served?
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◆ Implementation Tips

- **Co-Create With Community:** Don't design in isolation. Use listening sessions and feedback forms.
 - **Start Small:** Pilot one program with 5–10 people, gather feedback, then scale.
 - **Honor All Pathways:** Offer options that include harm reduction, abstinence-based models, and everything in between.
 - **Sustain With Partnerships:** Consider co-hosting with local orgs, barbershops, or faith leaders.
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Need Support?

Want help designing programs grounded in Black culture, history, and lived experience?

CAARD offers coaching, co-design services, and implementation support.

Reach out to our team to explore custom technical assistance.