



2026 ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2026: JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026



MISSION

Northeastern Center helps individuals achieve emotional and mental wholeness through accessible, affordable and quality behavioral health services.

VISION

As the premier provider of behavioral health services, Northeastern Center is the trusted partner empowering individuals to find hope, recovery and a path forward.

SHARED VALUES

Always and everywhere, Northeastern Center's first response is CPR: **Compassion, Partnership** and **Respect**.



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Celebration, gratitude and looking forward

Our annual report is a time for celebration, gratitude and looking forward. We celebrate our successes with appreciation for the responsibility and trust of those we serve and our community partners.

In Fiscal Year 2026, we partnered with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA) to build a new location for our Stepping Stone residential facility. This building expanded capacity, providing a new and modern environment for recovery. Additionally, ongoing collaboration with Clubhouse International continued to strengthen New Hope Clubhouse as a top Clubhouse in Indiana.

Justice system, education, healthcare and other community partners remain strong and essential at both the local and state levels. Working together is the only way we can achieve our mission to help individuals in their recovery through accessible, affordable and quality services.

Mostly, we continue to have gratitude for the individuals who choose Northeastern Center for their care. On Page 7, you'll read that we served 4,608 total clients in Fiscal Year 2026. The actual number of individuals receiving services at Northeastern Center was closer to 6,000 when considering our crisis and transportation services. (The data for those clients isn't tracked in the same way, making them difficult to quantify.)

We are appreciative as we recognize there are other options for behavioral healthcare providers. Your trust, confidence and testimonies reflect the professionalism of our staff and serve as an invitation to others who need behavioral health services but encounter obstacles to act. Client satisfaction and positive outcomes are further reflected in the annual DMHA surveys, where Northeastern Center again performed above state averages for a Community Mental Health Center (CMHC). Of the 14 domains (seven for youth clients and seven for adults), Northeastern Center scored higher in every category, with an overall average of 85%, compared to the CMHC average of 80%.

The success of our clients and organization only occurs through an intentional focus on improvement. That focus is embodied by our staff. It is their dedication, empathy and professionalism that sets Northeastern Center apart as the premier provider of behavioral health services. Their work happens behind the scenes at times, but it is noticed and impactful.

Looking forward, Fiscal Year 2027 promises to be a year of change and new opportunities in the form of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) implementation, the Rural Health Transformation Program and community engagements.

As we look ahead to our 50th anniversary, there is a profound understanding that navigating the changing landscape of behavioral health treatment is rooted within Northeastern Center's core and shared values of Compassion, Partnership and Respect.



Steve Howell

Steve Howell, MS, LMHC, LCAC
Chief Executive Officer

Message from the Chief Clinical Officer

At the center of every process: People

Behavioral health care continues to evolve. It is a system that requires standards, consistency, accountability and professional expertise, while also recognizing that effective care must be individualized to the needs, goals, strengths and circumstances of each person we serve.

At times, those responsibilities seem to compete with one another. We need processes that promote quality and accountability without the process itself becoming more important than the care. Navigating those tensions is part of what makes behavioral health care both challenging and meaningful.

Our continued transformation as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) represents an important opportunity. CCBHC is more than a new certification, funding model or set of requirements. It allows us to focus our resources and attention on what matters most: Getting people the right care, at the right time, based on what they need.

That doesn't mean things like assessment, treatment planning, documentation, measurement or accountability are unimportant. They all have a purpose. Our challenge is to ensure those processes support excellent care, rather than become the focus of care.

As we move into the next year, I am excited about what our teams have envisioned and what we could build together. Transformation will not eliminate every challenge. Behavioral health care will continue to face workforce pressures, increasing demand, administrative requirements, complex clinical needs and limited resources. Our responsibility is to continue improving despite those challenges.

That requires us to see opportunities rather than simply accept the limitations of the existing system. It requires us to listen to the people we serve, learn from one another, use our professional expertise, evaluate our outcomes, strengthen our partnerships, and be willing to change when something can be done better.

Northeastern Center has long been an advocate for behavioral health in our communities, and we will continue to be. We will advocate for systems that make sense, partnerships that remove barriers and services that respond to what people actually need.

Most importantly, we will continue to remember why the system exists in the first place.

To help people.

That purpose should remain at the center of every process we improve, every partnership we build, and every decision we make.

Dottie Fuentes
Dottie Fuentes, MBA, MS, LMHC
Chief Clinical Officer





Stepping Stone moves into newly built home

In December, Northeastern Center opened a special gift just in time for the holidays: The newly constructed Stepping Stone location on Dagny Drive in Kendallville.

Stepping Stone is one of Northeastern Center's four residential homes, designed to support adults with mental health conditions and substance use disorders that significantly impact their daily lives. As a transitional home, Stepping Stone is specifically for residents on the path toward independent living. This means residents have typically "graduated" from another home and need minimal support as they prepare to live on their own.

Located at 130 Dagny Drive in Kendallville, the new one-story, 2,800-square-foot building has eight bedrooms, allowing Stepping Stone to increase its capacity by one resident. Additionally, the building is accessible for those with mobility needs, improving the program's ability to serve residents as compared to its former two-story location.

Construction of the new location was largely supported by a \$441,459 grant from the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration Division of Mental Health and Addiction.



Steve Howell, Northeastern Center CEO, and Sarah Sailors, director, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Mental Health and Addiction.



Zoe Frantz, president and CEO, Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers.

Building Info

- Single story
- 2,800 square feet
- 8 bedrooms, increasing capacity by one resident
- 2.5 bathrooms
- Parking for staff and residents
- Fully accessible for those with mobility needs
- Kitchen
- Common room
- Laundry room
- Staff office
- Front and back patios



Steve Howell, CEO, Northeastern Center, and Kayla Heath, residential team lead.





Welcome home: Shown at the ceremonial ribbon cutting for Northeastern Center's new Stepping Stone building are, from left, Sarah Sailors, director, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration Division of Mental Health and Addiction; Zoe Frantz, president and CEO, Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers; Katie Pfister, Northeastern Center Board of Directors; Ian Mullen, Northeastern Center Board of Directors; Steve Howell, CEO, Northeastern Center; Kayla Heath, residential team leader, Northeastern Center; Adam Rebber, associate residential director, Northeastern Center; Seth Gibson, chief operating officer, Northeastern Center; Julia Renno, chief financial officer, Northeastern Center; Tami Brigle, marketing director, Northeastern Center; and Dottie Fuentes, chief clinical officer, Northeastern Center.

New partnership makes lab services more convenient and accessible

Partnering with Gravity Diagnostics, Northeastern Center added onsite lab services at all outpatient offices in late 2025, making it easier for clients to access tests needed for their comprehensive behavioral health care.

Lab tests help Northeastern Center medical providers monitor clients' overall well-being and make decisions about treatment. Medical staff collect blood, urine and nasal swab samples, which are then sent to Gravity Diagnostics' lab for testing.

The new service has resulted in:

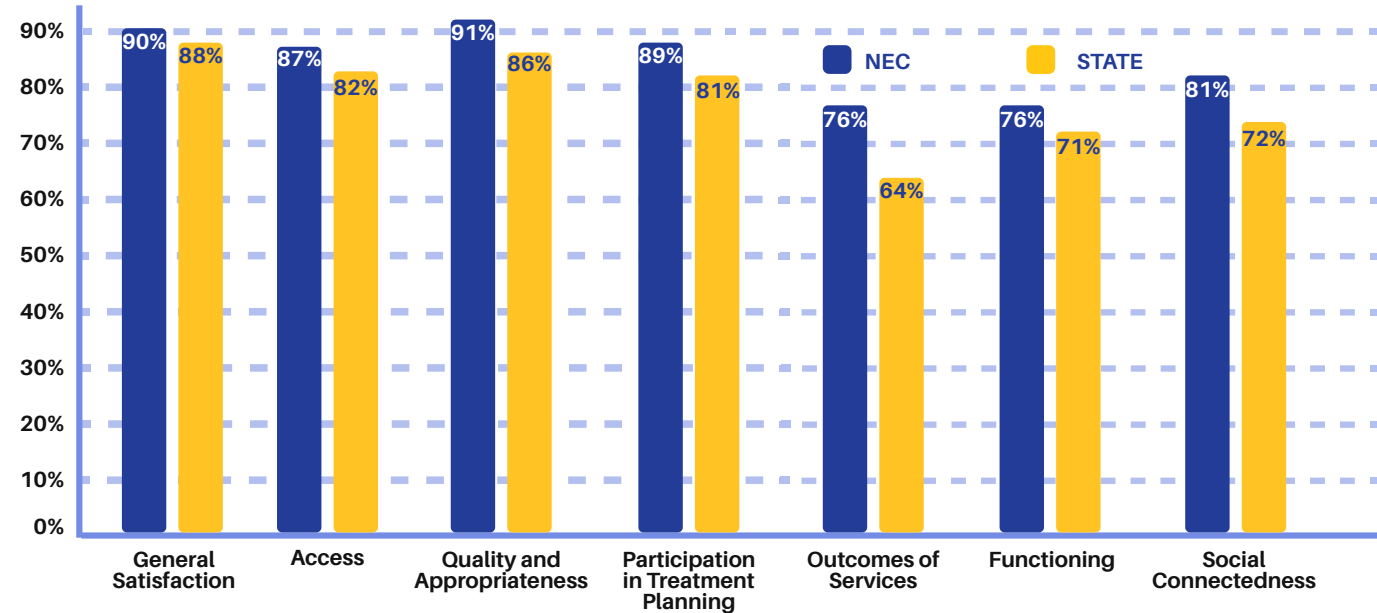
- Increased follow-through and compliance rates, especially for clients who may have difficulty traveling to another location due to transportation barriers.
- Improved care coordination thanks to timely lab results, usually within 24 hours, which allow for quicker clinical action.
- An improved client experience, as Northeastern Center staff can create a more therapeutic and trauma-informed experience for clients.



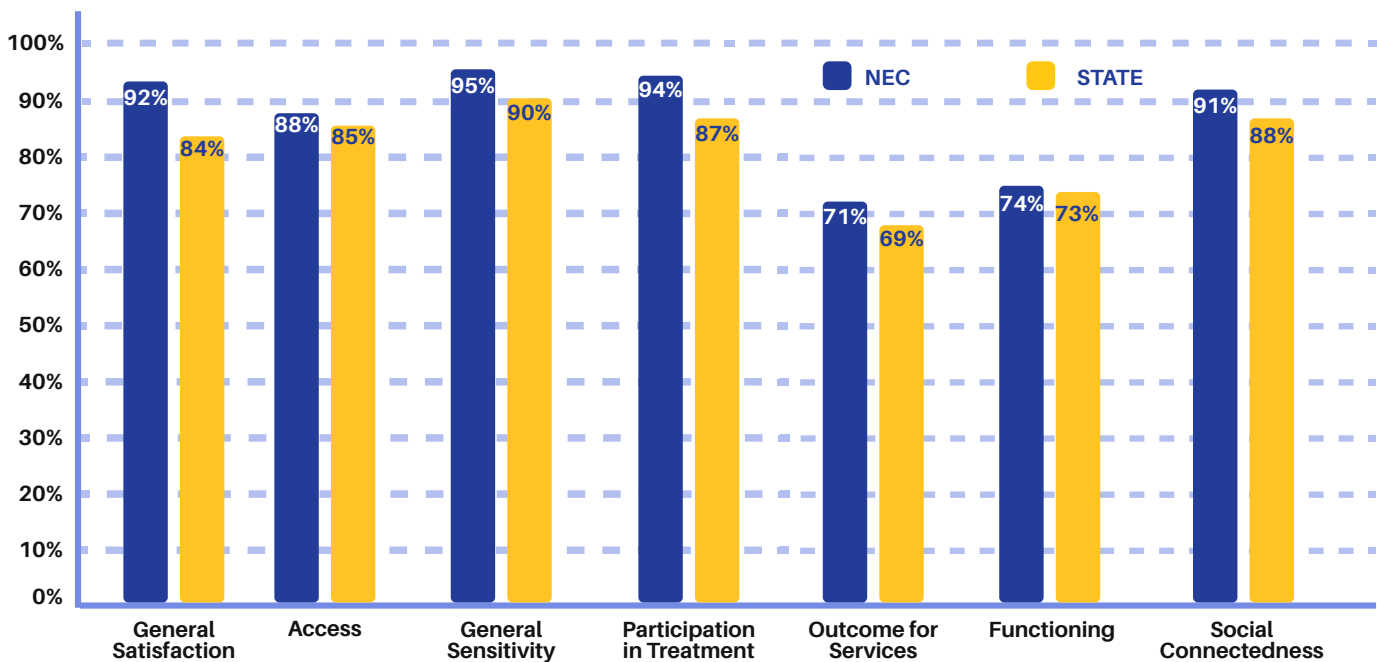
Once again, NEC scores above state average on client experience surveys

Northeastern Center has again outperformed average scores for client-reported outcomes and experiences among Community Mental Health Centers in Indiana. State-conducted survey results published by Intecare and the Division of Mental Health and Addiction show that Northeastern Center’s results were higher than the state average in all categories. Results for the most recent survey are below. Note that the Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program survey is given to adults who receive services, and the Youth Services Survey for Families is given to parents or guardians of youth receiving services.

Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program



Youth Services Survey for Families



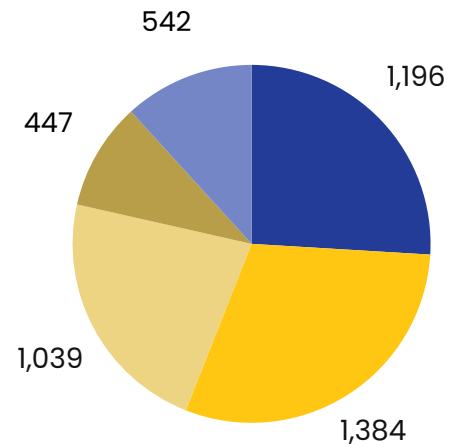
Client Service Snapshot: FY2026

CLIENTS SERVED BY DIAGNOSIS

Substance Use Disorder 2,347	Bipolar 670
Anxiety 2,064	Conduct Disorder 262
Depressive Disorder 2,012	Mood Disorder 93
Trauma/Stress Disorder 1,389	Intermittent Explosive Disorder 84
Neurodevelopmental Disorder 1,051	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder 71

Note: Clients may have more than one diagnosis; list does not include other/null diagnoses.

CLIENTS SERVED BY COUNTY OF RESIDENCE



- DeKalb - 1,196
- Noble - 1,384
- Steuben - 1,039
- LaGrange - 447
- Other - 542



TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED

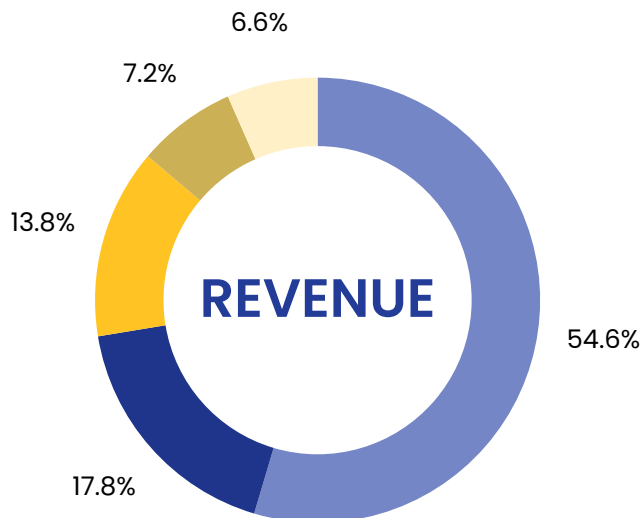
4,608



320

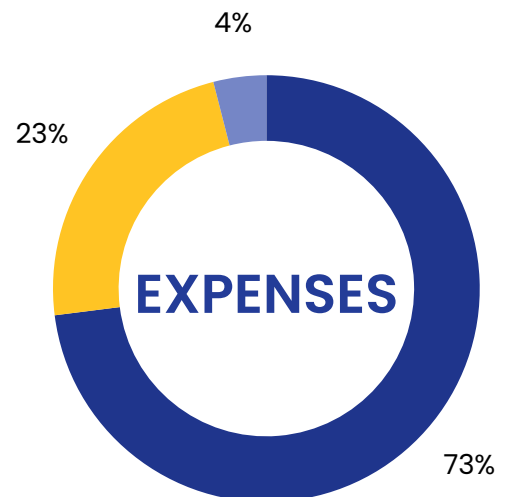
TOTAL INPATIENT ADMISSIONS

Financial Overview: FY2026



TOTAL REVENUE: \$21,304,641

- Client Service Revenue - 54.6%
- State Funds - 17.8%
- Other Income - 13.8%
- County Funds - 7.2%
- Reserves - 6.6%



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$21,304,641

- Employee Wages and Benefits - 73%
- Operating Costs, Facilities and Maintenance - 23%
- Purchased Services - 4%



Past and Present Board Members

Since its inception in 1977, the Northeastern Center has relied on its board of directors for guidance, direction and advice. We would like to highlight all board members, past and present, who have served throughout the years. Thank you for your dedication and service to the agency and its mission.

Current Members

*Rebecca Calhoun
Sarah Dreibelbis
Ruth Beer
Jackie Delagrang
Jenny Landez
Kelly Graden
Max Franklin
Katie Pfister
ClaraMary Winebrenner
Ian Mullen

Joined

2009
2009
2018
2019
2021
2021
2023
2023
2023
2025

Ronald Showalter, 1977
Pam Spohr, 1977
Gordon Sweet, 1977
Ernest Talmage, 1977
*David Wilson, 1977
Hope Wilson, 1977
Kathryn Woodcox, 1977
Ernest Young, 1977
Jack Stanner, 1977 – 1982
James Herzer, 1977 – 1989
Chester Lung, 1978
Shirley Ruegsegger, 1978
Burkett Smith, 1978
Elsie Willard, 1978
Errol Benne, 1979
Patti Sheppard, 1979
Helen Smatt, 1980
Stephen White, 1980
Earnest Young, 1981
Ed Benbow, 1982
Maurice Davis, 1989
Diana Dollarhite, 1989
Robert Ebey, 1989
Richard Sager, 1989
*Kenneth Sanger, 1989
James Stull, 1989
Bradley Ulick, 1989
Karen VanVlerah, 1989
Josephine Joest, 1989 – 2011
Clark Hobby, 1990
Paula Peeper, 1990
William Hubartt, 1990 – 2008

Linda Elztroth, 1993 – 1994
Ken Sager, 1993 – 1995
Todd Moore, 1994 – 1999
Ron Fennel, 1995 – 2001
*Gary Whitcomb, 1996 – 1999
Jerry Wellman, 1997 – 1999
Jeanette Birchman, 1997 – 2001
Joe Ostrowski, 1997 – 2010
*Roger McDonald, 1997 – 2018
Dolores Pfenning, 1998 – 2001
Ada Bontrager, 1998 – 2010
*Carl Zimmerman, 2001 – 2011
John Cox, 2001 – 2021
Nicole Cavanaugh, 2002 – 2004
Margarita White, 2003 – 2008
Charles Butler, 2005 – 2005
Randy Meyers, 2005 – 2006
Sherri Davis, 2005 – 2007
Marty Miller, 2006 – 2008
Jill Taylor, 2006 – 2009
Ben Smaltz, 2007 – 2009
Janet Stork, 2008 – 2008
David Schmidt, 2008 – 2015
Fred Brown, 2009 – 2011
Janet Knapp, 2010 – 2016
Erica Bailer Biernat, 2011
Carlos Olivares, 2011– 2013
Mark Pankop, 2013 – 2019
Eva Merkel, 2013 – 2021
Ann Benson, 2014 – 2019
Connie Kerrigan, 2016 – 2020
Alexandrea Kresse, 2017 – 2018

Floyd Prisock, 2017 – 2019
Wendy Lane-Ginder, 2017 – 2020
Denise Lemmon, 2019 – 2021
Al Wleklinski, 2019 – 2021
Kathy Armstrong, 2019 – 2022
Todd Troy, 2020 – 2022
Doug Harp, 2021 – 2023
Kara Howard, 2021 – 2024
Lori White, 2021 – 2024
Debi Lytle, 2022
Joe Heins, 2023 – 2025

Past Members

Ron Bowman, 1977
*Renwood Bruning, 1977
*Riley Case, 1977
William Cassady, 1977
Howard Fought, 1977
Norman Gerig, 1977
Terry Graefnitz, 1977
Joseph Greenlee, 1977
Amos Hostettler, 1977
Edgar Hower, 1977
Kay Luce, 1977
Jane Ludington, 1977
Jan Lung, 1977
James McKibbon, 1977
Norwin Niles, 1977
James Norris, 1977
Linda Parks, 1977
Arthur Rahe, 1977
William Scott, 1977

Years of Service Unknown

Herbert Bergman
Michael Blaz
Loyal Bowerman
Lynn Burroughs
Carl Elliot
Jane Foley
Sara Groesch
Joyce Gutstein
Kate Jackson
Don Keefer
Charles Kidd
Fritz Lambricht
Gary Miller
Toby Miller
John Mulholland
Dianne Skubby
Terry Timson
Darl Vardaman
Pat Zakula

Please note that years of service prior to 1990 are missing or inaccurate due to partial records.

**Denotes those who have served as board president.*

NORTHEASTERN CENTER LOCATIONS

NOBLE COUNTY

Noble County
Outpatient – Albion
833 E. Main St.
Albion, IN 46701
260-636-6975

Noble County
Outpatient – Kendallville
1930 E. Dowling St.
Kendallville, IN 46755
260-347-4400

New Hope Clubhouse
304 S. Lincoln St.
Kendallville, IN 46755
260-347-2454

Pioneer Lodge I
Kendallville, IN 46755
260-349-0237

Promise House
Kendallville, IN 46755
260-544-1050

Stepping Stone
Kendallville, IN 46755

Administration
220 S. Main St.
Kendallville, IN 46755
260-347-2453

DEKALB COUNTY

DeKalb County Outpatient
1800 Wesley Rd.
Auburn, IN 46706
260-925-2453

Inpatient Services
1850 Wesley Road
Auburn, IN 46706
260-927-0726

Community Health
& Outreach Center
1752 Wesley Road
Auburn, IN 46706
260-927-1246

STEUBEN COUNTY

Steuben County Outpatient
3265 Intertech Drive
Angola, IN 46703
260-665-9494

Pioneer Lodge II
Angola, IN 46703
260-668-7198

LAGRANGE COUNTY

LaGrange County Outpatient
2155 N. State Road 9
LaGrange, IN 46761
260-463-7144