

Community Syringe Redemption
Program (CSRP)

Report

March 2025 – February 2026

New York City Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene

Background

The Community Syringe Redemption Program (CSRP) is a mobile syringe collection and redemption initiative operated across eight locations in New York City, in collaboration with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). The program is operated by Addiction Response Resources (ARR), who developed the syringe buyback model that was used as the basis for Local Law 124 of 2022.

The CSRP NYC pilot was launched in March 2025 as a public health pilot program to address public syringe waste by collecting in the highest need council districts in New York City. CSRP is a mobile walk-up service that provides participants with a small cash incentive for used syringes. The purpose of the intervention is to facilitate the removal of ground syringes (not direct service provision). Specifically, the model reduces syringe litter in public spaces, increases neighborhood safety, and encourages people who use drugs to retain their syringes and practice safe disposal.

It also creates low-barrier opportunities to engage and empower New Yorkers who may otherwise avoid formal health systems by acting as a conduit to services. CSRP complements existing syringe service programs (SSPs) and syringe litter clean-up efforts by focusing specifically on safe disposal and redemption.

How It Works

The program is operated by ARR out of purpose-built specialty vehicles at eight sites across Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and the Bronx. Each site was selected with DOHMH guidance and approval based on community need. CSRP operates on a Thursday through Monday schedule to provide services while other programs are not open. Each site operates two, three, or five days per week, with a set, publicly-posted rotating schedule that is mindful of school schedules, businesses, and other neighborhood considerations.

Participant enrollment occurs on a rolling basis during operating hours at all eight sites. At the first encounter, each enrollee must complete an in-depth training on syringe safety, overdose response, and program guidelines, to guide and encourage safe participation in the program. Participants also sign a waiver of liability that extends to ARR, DOHMH, and all other partners, funders, and affiliates.

After enrolling in the program, participants may participate once per day per site, and most make their first transaction the same day as enrollment. Syringe returns are incentivized at a rate of 20 cents per syringe, and must be in multiples of five syringes to achieve dollar increments. There is a stipend cap of \$10 per person, per site, per day as required by the local law. Overdose rescue kits containing naloxone are available free of cost during program hours to participants and non-participants alike. CSRP transactions are also an engagement opportunity; our participants are treated with kindness, respect, dignity, and compassion. Upon building relationships with our clients, formal referrals to social services such as detoxification, treatment, and medical care, may also be provided to participants.

Program Data

The program's key quantitative metrics are number of syringes collected, number of people enrolled, and number of transactions. From March 2025 to February 2026, CSRP collected 1,465,816 syringes, an average of 28,189 syringes per week, thus proving to be an extremely efficient and effective method of collecting used syringes. Additionally, the program has enrolled 1,775 unique individuals, with an average of 34 new sign-ups per week. Further, a total of 30,706 transactions have been logged since the program started in March 2025, an average of 591 transactions per week.

While the purpose of the intervention is to facilitate the removal of ground syringes (rather than direct service provision), the program also periodically provided participants with referrals to services. Referrals to services primarily included referrals to drug treatment programs, including four referrals for detoxification services, four referrals for medication for opioid use disorder. There was also one referral for harm reduction services.

Qualitative data is also tremendously valuable to provide a well-rounded picture of the program's success and impact on communities and individuals served. To explore the reach and real-world impacts of the CSRP, twelve structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with participants in June 2025.

Participant insights reveal that CSRP is not only achieving its core goals of reducing syringe litter, increasing safety, and improving disposal practices, but is also generating meaningful social benefits such as: creating structure in participants' daily lives, offering alternatives to high-risk survival behaviors, and challenging stigma through human connection.

All twelve of the interviewed participants reported a visible decline in discarded syringes in parks, streets, and other public areas. Participants noted feeling that the streets were visibly cleaner and safer for residents.

A number of participants described how CSRP reinforced safer syringe practices. By returning used syringes regularly and receiving new ones through existing syringe service programs, individuals reduced their likelihood of sharing or reusing injection equipment and spoke positively of reducing risk to others in their neighborhood.

Several participants also discussed how they had begun storing syringes at home in designated containers, learning safer storage and transport habits over time.

Further, interviewees expressed pride in being part of a program that contributes positively to their community. Several explained that the modest cash incentive allowed them to feel more in control of their lives.

Most participants were candid about their use of the incentive money, with the majority reporting they used it to purchase food or basic supplies. Others emphasized that the small cash incentive provided an alternative to riskier survival methods like theft and crime.

Closing

Since March 2025, the Community Syringe Redemption Program (CSRP) has successfully launched and operationalized in eight locations, engaged more than 1,700 New Yorkers as program participants, and collected more than 1.4 million syringes.

The program is achieving meaningful outcomes in line with its public health and public safety goals; it is efficiently reducing syringe litter in public places, reducing health risks, offering a safe and dignified alternative to criminalized survival strategies, and providing critical daily structure for participants.

Appendix

Table 1: CSRP NYC Monthly Data Overview, March 2025 - February 2026

Month	Syringes Collected	Naloxone Kits Distributed	Stipends Dispensed (USD)	Participant Enrollments
March 2025	341	29	\$52	28
April 2025	9,642	57	\$1,546	92
May 2025	51,590	52	\$9,409	140
June 2025	98,019	49	\$19,593	177
July 2025	89,596	21	\$17,949	197
August 2025	131,402	18	\$26,277	229
September 2025	162,034	18	\$32,495	239
October 2025	179,373	19	\$36,050	205
November 2025	196,939	18	\$39,623	145
December 2025	162,666	15	\$32,607	105
January 2026	182,203	16	\$36,528	113
February 2026	202,011	10	\$40,566	105
TOTAL	1,465,816	322	\$292,695	1,775

Table 2: CSRP NYC Monthly Site Data Overview, March 2025 – February 2026

Site Name	Syringes Collected	Naloxone Kits Distributed	Stipends Dispensed (USD)	Participant Enrollments
Site 1 Rufus King Park (Queens)	7,479	31	\$1,517	27
Site 2 Borinquen Place (Brooklyn)	4,251	12	\$851	7
Site 3 Highbridge Park (Manhattan)	226,024	54	\$44,406	378
Site 4 St. Mary's Park (Bronx)	263,567	28	\$52,804	249
Site 5 Echo Park (Bronx)	365,658	86	\$72,789	500
Site 6 The Hub (Bronx)	157,249	36	\$31,556	221
Site 7 Walter Gladwin Park (Bronx)	250,078	35	\$50,269	174
Site 8 Kingsbridge Underpass (Bronx)	191,510	40	\$38,503	219
TOTAL	1,465,816	322	\$292,695	1,775