

Public Inebriate Program Enhancements

March 2026

The Vermont Department of Health is enhancing the screening process for individuals who may be in need of the services of a public inebriate program (PIP) by modernizing the current screening process with a centralized virtual 24/7 screening tool. All screenings will be performed virtually by Recovery House, a PIP provider identified by the Health Department to support this work, using an online tool called FastField Forms.

The virtual screening tool will be piloted in Chittenden, Lamoille, Franklin, and Grand Isle counties beginning on March 18th, 2026.

What does this mean for Law Enforcement Officers?

The virtual screening tool is designed to help law enforcement officers to evaluate and assess the most appropriate next steps after encountering an individual who appears to be impaired by substance use. Beginning on March 18th, 2026, law enforcement officers in the pilot counties (Chittenden, Lamoille, Franklin and Grand Isle) should conduct PIP screenings virtually. Law enforcement officers will continue to safely route individuals to the appropriate support option after the screening is completed. The virtual screening tool only changes the process for requesting and conducting a screening; it does not change the public inebriate statute or an officer's legal responsibilities.



Establishing Screenings

- When a law enforcement officer determines a PIP screening is necessary, they will call Recovery House at **802-694-5016 (available 24 hours a day, seven days a week)** to request a virtual PIP screening.
- The Recovery House screener will send a link to join a secure Microsoft Teams meeting via email or text. Once the officer and individual are in a safe, secure location with reliable internet, the officer will join the Teams meeting from their device (e.g., phone, laptop, mobile data computer, or tablet).



Conducting Screenings

- The law enforcement officer will join the Microsoft Teams meeting and conduct the screening with a Recovery House staff member virtually, on-camera.
- The screening form questions will remain unchanged and will be administered by the Recovery House screener. Routing decisions will still be based on the screener's assessment and law enforcement officer observations.



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- If the screener determines the individual is appropriate for placement at a PIP facility, they will contact that PIP facility to confirm bed availability.
- If the screener determines the individual is appropriate for placement at a DOC facility, law enforcement will call that DOC facility to provide notice.
- After confirming the appropriate routing path, the law enforcement officer will transport the individual to the agreed upon and confirmed location.
- The law enforcement officer and the appropriate provider (e.g., DOC facility or PIP facility) will receive an email with the form directly from the Recovery House screener.



Key Benefits

- Screenings will now be available in counties currently without PIP providers, eliminating the need to travel to the emergency department for screenings.
- Screenings can be performed virtually, reducing unnecessary time spent by law enforcement transporting individuals and coordinating with screeners.
- The virtual tool will operate 24/7, which eliminates delays due to in-person staffing challenges or geographic barriers.

Technical Assistance and Questions

The PIP Manual, which provides more details on PIP and the updated screening processes, and other technical assistance resources are available on the [Grantees & Contractors webpage](#).

For any questions about Public Inebriate Program or centralized virtual screening tool, please contact Julia.Harrison@vermont.gov