

Opioid Crisis Recovery Funds Advisory Committee Meeting

August 8th, 2022, 1-3pm

Meeting Minutes

Members: Attorney General Phil Weiser, Cristen Bates, James Mobley, Gordon McLaughlin, Andres Guerrero, Rob Valuck, Jude Solano, Dr. Morgan Medlock, Ashley Koppenhafer, Sue Hansen, Julie Shimonek, Dmitry Kunin, Jeff Kuhr, Jim Schoettler, Wendy Buxton-Andrade, Curt Hayes, Kevin Bommer

Department of Law Staff: Heidi Williams, Jamie Feld, Jack Patterson

Guests: Jose Esquibel

Welcome

Attorney General Phil Weiser welcomed the committee. He reminded the committee of their role, advisory and collaboration for the 10% State Share, which currently is expected to be around \$50 million with more settlements pending.

AG Weiser requested introductions from the committee and provided an overview of the agenda.

State Share Discussion

Heidi Williams provided a quick overview of the settlement distribution structure as designed by the Colorado Opioid Settlement Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by 312 local governments across Colorado with the state.

The distribution is as follows:

60% Regional Share

20% Local Government Share

10% Infrastructure Share

10% State Share

The OCRF role is in advising in the usage of the 10% State Share. The other funds are managed by Regional Opioid Abatement Councils, local governments, and the statewide Colorado Opioid Abatement Council. Heidi noted that the funds are frontloaded, with approximately \$10 million available in Year 1 with a decline in yearly payments until 2038. Heidi also noted that the funds rollover and there is no requirement to spend the funds immediately, but all Opioid Settlement Funds must be used for Approved Purposes.

Heidi shared the current initiatives being funded out of the state share. The Opioid Response Unit is facilitating regional planning, the development of data dashboards, and supporting collaborative efforts. The state is set to release an RFP for Fentanyl Awareness campaign to address youth ages 11-18 and their trusted adults and caregivers.

Attorney General Phil Weiser emphasized that the state will be expanding their focus to protect kids, noting that in addition to the RFP, the office is working on a report about social media platforms and fentanyl and other complementary efforts.

Heidi detailed that the state is sending approximately \$1.2 million to the Tribes, and is exploring efforts to expand recovery friendly workplaces, support addiction medicine workforce development, and engaging non-profits and the faith community in supporting treatment. In criminal justice, the state is in conversations with other agencies, to identify opportunities to provide support in re-entry efforts and expanding the continuum of care.

Cristen Bates expressed appreciation for the overview of the allowable uses and highlighted the opportunities to build upon both existing statewide programs and infrastructure while also elevating and building upon local initiatives and programs that may be beneficial to the state.

Heidi Williams noted the focus of the state in not supplanting existing programs and requested further guidance from the committee in identifying those opportunities.

Jude Solano shared her experiences in providing Narcan training in schools as an opportunity to provide education to get boots-on-the-ground in the communities.

Morgan Medlock emphasized the importance of developing mechanisms for doing this work with communities, noting the importance of engaging the communities and ensuring that the language around training and prevention efforts is the right language. Morgan asked whether there were opportunities for the public to comment on these issues.

Attorney General Weiser and Heidi Williams shared that the goal of the Colorado MOU was to invest power in the regions and communities to develop best practices and emphasized the state's commitment to engage and support communities and requested the committee's continued support in understanding the best way for the state to provide support.

Wendy Buxton-Andrade noted the success of Intensive Recovery Treatment (IRT) programs in the southeast part of the state, emphasizing the importance of breaking the criminal justice cycle and investing in IRT programs across the state as they are unfunded.

James Mobley asked about who would be eligible to apply for the RFA for fentanyl awareness.

Heidi Williams answered that the RFP would be for media vendors, with the resources developed then being made available to schools and other community organizations and members.

Gordon McLaughlin asked about how the state is working to deconflict with the funds being sent to communities.

Heidi Williams shared that the Attorney General's Office is reaching out and engaging with regions, and the role of the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council will be to help facilitate partnerships.

Julie Shimonek shared that she works with a range of resources and vendors that could support some of the initiatives identified. Attorney General Weiser asked for Julie to follow-up with the team and underscored the idea that the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it is connection.

Jose Esquibel highlighted the opportunities for these funds to be used over the long term and taking advantage of the range of funds currently available that may be more time restricted, such as funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. Jose asked those who are interested in learning more about leveraging funds to reach out to him and the Consortium.

Annual Conference and Next Steps

Heidi Williams provided an overview of the goals of the Colorado Opioid Abatement Conference, noting the priorities to connect stakeholders from across the state, provide resources, and begin collaborations. Heidi noted that the next priorities for the state Opioid Response Unit is developing an expenditure data dashboard and toolkits to support communities across the state.

OCRF Engagement

Jamie Feld expressed appreciation for the input from the committee members and the range of expertise and asked for recommendations from the committee in the best way to provide technical assistance to the regions and provide guidance to the state.

Cristen Bates noted that the regional councils have a significant range of expertise and that it may be helpful for the statewide agencies to provide quick reviews.

Wendy Buxton-Andrade emphasized that the state agency review would be helpful to regional councils as the co-chair of Region 19.

Jose Esquibel noted that that review would be helpful to regions in identifying additional funds available that may not currently be leveraged.

Wendy Buxton-Andrade asked for more information about the funding available and the current uses of funds. Heidi Williams offered to send more information in the coming weeks.

Meeting Conclusion

Heidi Williams thanked committee members for the conversation and emphasized the importance of engaging partners to ensure the sustainability of the initiatives taken by regions.

Heidi shared that the Committee would likely need to meet quarterly at first as the funds start rolling out.