



Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC)

Review Committee

Meeting Minutes #16

January 14th, 2025
4:00pm – 5:00pm

Appointees Attending: Terrence Gordon, Aaron Miltenberger, Andy Kerr

DOL Staff Attending: Jamie Feld, Jack Patterson, Natalie Sandoval, Christian Dykson

Guests:

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by ORU staff, who welcomed attendees.

Infrastructure Award Amendment

ORU staff introduced an amendment request from the Fremont County Boys and Girls Club regarding their existing infrastructure award from Round One. The club submitted a proposal seeking approval to sell a previously purchased capital asset and reallocate the proceeds toward the acquisition of a new facility in Cañon City. The intent behind this change was to consolidate operations under one roof in a location better suited to support their programming needs.

Originally, the club had planned to use approximately \$300,000 for renovations at their existing facility. However, due to increased renovation costs and concerns about the facility's location—adjacent to a bar district in downtown—leadership determined that purchasing a new building would be a more effective and sustainable option. The new facility, a former post office, was deemed capable of accommodating both teen and K-7 programming.

The transition plan outlined that office staff and teen programs could relocate within the first week, with additional modifications, such as a basement restroom installation, to be completed within three to four weeks. Once renovations were finished, the K-7 program would also transition into the new facility. Funding for the necessary modifications, including bathroom installation and signage, had already been secured. The club also planned to evaluate fire suppression system requirements, though no significant additional costs were anticipated.

Following the presentation, committee members were invited to ask questions. No concerns were raised.

Terrence Gordon moved to approve the amendment request

Andy Kerr seconded.

Unanimously approved

Regional Plan Amendments

ORU staff presented an overview of the regional plan amendments, noting that 17 out of 19 regions had submitted amendments to roll over unspent funds into their next two-year plan. The updated projected expenditures for 2024 totaled approximately \$25.3 million, with total planned spending for the 2022-2024 period now at \$35.7 million.

A key point of discussion centered on administrative costs, which varied significantly across regions. On average, administrative costs accounted for 3.9% of total allocations. However, some regions exceeded the 10% administrative cap outlined in the MOU, raising the need for further clarification and standardization of reporting requirements. ORU staff explained that some discrepancies stemmed from differences in accounting practices, such as fiscal agents reporting administrative costs immediately, whereas programmatic expenditures were often reported over time on a reimbursement basis.

Another focal point of discussion was the significant amount of funds being rolled over from the 2022-2024 plan to the 2025-2026 plan. Committee members recognized that flexibility in fund allocation was beneficial, given the complexities of program implementation. However, they also noted that if this trend continued, it could indicate challenges in deploying funds efficiently. The topic of rollovers would be raised at the larger COAC meeting for further discussion, particularly in regard to whether COAC recommend regions aim to be more precise in future funding requests based on ability to spend within a given cycle.

Aaron Miltenberger moved to certify review of the 17 submitted amendments

Andy Kerr seconded.

Unanimously approved

Region 3 Funding Request

The committee then discussed a funding request from Region 3 (Weld County). This request had originally been submitted for the November 15th funding deadline and was previously tabled at the December COAC meeting. The request involved approximately \$59,000 in funding for law enforcement-related equipment, specifically a Nighthawk X-ray handheld device intended for vehicle inspections.

Under Exhibit E, there is no general law enforcement expenditures included, raising concerns about whether the request aligned with opioid abatement funding priorities. In response, Region 3 amended its submission, reclassifying the expenditure under “qualitative and quantitative research regarding public health risks.” The justification for this classification was that the equipment would be used to detect hidden drug compartments in vehicles, and data on these findings would be shared with public health agencies.

Committee members raised questions about whether this reclassification truly aligned with the intent of qualitative and quantitative research funding. Some members noted that while the equipment could provide valuable data, its primary function still appeared to be enforcement-related rather than public health-focused. Concerns were raised about whether this constituted an appropriate use of opioid settlement funds. The committee opted to take no action on the request, deferring the decision to the full COAC for further deliberation.

2-Year Plan Certifications & Roll-Over Funds

During the discussion on regional plan amendments, ORU staff highlighted the fund rollovers from one two-year cycle to the next, with some regions carrying over as much as 86% of their allocations. While the flexibility of opioid settlement funds allows for rollovers, the committee discussed whether this trend indicated delays in program execution, barriers to implementation, or overly ambitious initial spending projections.

Many regions are still in the early stages of developing sustainable programs, which has contributed to slower-than-expected spending. Challenges such as hiring staff, securing service providers, and launching public health initiatives were noted as common reasons for delayed expenditures. However, the committee questioned whether greater oversight or accountability should be introduced in future cycles to ensure funds are utilized effectively.

Potential solutions included requiring justifications for large rollovers, setting clearer expectations for spending, or introducing a standardized review process to assess compliance with two-year plans. With the first full plan certification process underway, tracking actual expenditures versus projections will provide important insights into regional spending trends.

The committee agreed to bring this issue to the larger COAC for further discussion. The goal is to determine whether certification of the two-year plan or spending expectations should be considered to optimize fund deployment and maximize the impact of opioid abatement efforts.

Opioid Response Unit Updates

During the meeting, ORU staff provided several updates. The expenditure reporting process had officially launched for local governments and regional councils, with a submission deadline of February 7th. This deadline was critical to ensure compliance with the national reporting requirement of February 28th, which mandates the submission of financial data for all opioid settlement funds distributed in Colorado. ORU staff emphasized that this would be a primary focus over the next month.

Additionally, the Infrastructure Share funding process was underway, with the application deadline set for February 3rd. ORU staff expressed appreciation for committee members who volunteered to participate in the evaluation process, as these applications required thorough review to ensure funding is allocated effectively. Additionally, individuals with lived experience and subject matter expertise have been recruited to serve on the Infrastructure evaluation committee to ensure a range of reviewers and perspectives.

Public Comment

Public comment was opened. No public comments were made.

Adjourn