

BUDGET TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

November 17th, 2023 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Hybrid: In-person at the Community Health Institute/JSI and virtually on Zoom

Attendance

Name	Attendance
Task Force Members	
Traci Fowler (Co-Chair)	In person
Matt McKenney (Co-Chair)	In person
John Burns	In person
Alissa Cannon	Absent
Karen Collins	In person
Annette Escalante	Absent
Kate Frey	In person
Powen Hsu	Absent
Lauren McGinley	In person
Cheryle Pacapelli	In person
Kristine Paquette	In person
Sarah Shanahan	Absent
Shannon Swett	In person
Public	
Dan Andrus	Zoom
Rep. Josi Newell	Zoom
Elizabeth Biron	Zoom
Liaison(s)/Subject Matter Experts/Invited Guests	
Jill Burke	Zoom
Center for Excellence on Addiction/JSI Staff	
Amy Daniels	In person

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Becca Spaulding	In person
Lauren Ferridge	Zoom
Olivia Skaltsis	Absent

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions were completed in person and on Zoom. All Task Force members present were present in person, and three members of the public were present on Zoom. Jill Burke of DHHS was also present on Zoom to go over DHHS recommendations.

Approve Minutes from September 29th Meeting

Shannon made a motion to approve and accept the minutes as read, and Kristine seconded. All voted in favor, except for Traci and Kate, who abstained due to their absence at the previous meeting.

Review of Current Budget

It was emphasized that decisions made during this section of the meeting will not be final, nor be shared outside of the meeting for this reason.

Review of Current Recommendations

Jill Burke reminded the Task Force of some of the upcoming funding cliffs, including the loss of COVID mitigation funding in March 2024, the loss of ARPA funding in 2026, and the upcoming loss of SOR funding due to New Hampshire's lower ranking in overdose fatality rates among other states than it previously held. After this, Jill provided a detailed explanation of the DHHS recommended investments for the fiscal years 2025 and 2026. She noted that due to the complicated process of setting up a contract, it is impractical to have a contract that only lasts for one year. Most of the DHHS recommendations were for level funding for existing investments, with a few requests to increase investment for certain programs. Jill noted that DHHS is also looking into hiring a business consultant to work with providers, to help them continue operating.

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It was noted by a member of the Task Force that the draft Investments Workbook shared with the Task Force by JSI contains more detail about the Governor's Commissions current investments than the document provided by DHHS. One Task Force member asked Jill if there is a history of documents for which funds were not drawn down; another Task Force member added to this by emphasizing the importance of separating funds carried forward from funds that simply went unspent.

Formulate FY25 Recommendations

John Burns suggested that the Task Force begin by identifying the areas of investment that they believe should be deprioritized. After some discussion, the Budget Task Force agreed to recommend that investments in Tertiary Prevention on College Campuses (\$400,000), Military Fitness Reimbursement (\$400,000), Life of an Athlete (\$150,000), Family Resource Center Facilitation Organization and Quality Specialist (\$100,000), and Recovery Friendly Workplace (\$400,000) should be deprioritized. The Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative, notably, was added to this list due to sufficient funding from other sources to support it. Additionally, it was noted that the Commission currently supports two behavioral health staff positions at the Governor's Office, and recommended that the Commission reduce the number of Governor's Office staff positions it supports to one. Regarding Military Fitness Reimbursement, given that this initiative was launched recently, the Task Force recommended that data be gathered from its pilot year to inform future investment decisions based on utilization of the program and desired vs. achieved outcomes. In the meantime, they recommended that the Commission does not set an amount to invest in this program for FY25.

After discussion of investments to be deprioritized, the Task Force discussed areas for which to recommend new or continued investment. The Task Force agreed to recommend that stigma education and reduction be included in every new contract. Additionally, they recommended investing at least an additional \$400,000 toward addressing harm reduction strategies, amounting to a total of \$800,000. They recommended investing in additional financial/investment strategy to assist in this process in future years, and suggested \$250,000 be invested in FY25. They recommended that another \$250,000 be invested in FY26 if needed, as well. They recommended continuing existing support and expanding peer-recovery support

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services in Coos County. They also recommended that funding be increased for recovery housing and rental assistance. The Task Force also agreed to flag areas that should receive additional funding, for which there may be opportunities for alignment and leveraging funding with the Opioid Abatement Commission. These areas are as follows: housing/rental assistance, transportation services, kinship caregiver support, and recovery housing certification.

Once these recommendations were established, Cheryle made a motion to make these the official recommendations to share with the full Commission. Karen seconded, and all voted in favor. There were no abstentions.

Discussion of 2024 Task Force Schedule

There was insufficient time at this meeting to discuss the 2024 Task Force Schedule.

Public Comment

There were no public comments made at this meeting.

Decisions/Recommendations Made

1. The September 29th meeting minutes were approved.
2. Programs that were recommended to be removed or moved to lower priority for Commission funding were: Recovery Friendly Workplace (due to sufficient funding coming from another source), Tertiary Prevention on College Campuses, Military Fitness Reimbursement, Life of an Athlete, Family Resource Center Facilitation Organization and Quality Specialist, and one of two behavioral health staff positions that Commission currently supports at the Governor's Office.
3. The Budget Task Force recommended that the following should be high priority: Stigma Education/Reduction, which the Task Force recommended should be an aspect included in every Commission-funded contract; Harm Reduction, the investments in which the Task Force recommended should increased by at least \$400K; continued support and expansion of recovery support services in Coos County; continued funding of one existing position at the Governor's Office; and

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funding for a strategic financial plan for NH's SUD system amounting to \$250K per year for two years.

4. The Budget Task Force recommended flagging four areas that need funding, but could be possible leverage with Opioid Abatement Commission funding: housing/rental assistance; transportation services; kinship caregiver support; and recovery housing certification.

Next Steps

- The first Budget Task Force meeting of 2024 will be scheduled at a later date.
- Traci Fowler will send a memo to Patrick Tufts and Katja Fox with the recommendations of the Budget Task Force for Commission investments in FY25.