

BUDGET TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2025 9:30 - 11:00 am

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	In person
Karen Collins	In person
Annette Escalante	In person
Kate Frey	In person
Lauren McGinley	In person
Cheryle Pacapelli	In person
Kristine Paquette	Absent
Sarah Shanahan	Zoom
Shannon Swett	In person
Jess Edwards	In person
Public	
Joshua Ritson	Zoom
Vicki Harris	Zoom
Elizabeth Biron	Zoom
Heidi Cloutier	Zoom
Dianne Castrucci	In person
Erin Masury	In person
Liaison(s)/ Subject Matter Experts/ Invited Guests	
Jill Burke	In person
Center for Excellence on Addiction/JSI Staff	
Amy Daniels	In person
Olivia Skaltsis	In person
Julia Tran	Zoom

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Approve Minutes from 1/24/25 Meeting

Matt McKenney made a motion to approve the January 24th minutes as written; Shannon Swett seconded. All voted in favor, except for Jess Edwards and John Burns who abstained as they were not present at the January meeting.

Overview of FY24 Annual Report

The Task Force reviewed the newly released [FY24 Annual Report](#), which details the programs currently funded by the Alcohol Fund. It was recommended that Task Force members share this report with their professional networks and community partners. This is the first time that this information has been aggregated in this way, providing additional transparency. The Annual Report can be found on the NH Center for Excellence on Addiction's Governor Commission's website.

A member commented about fundraising opportunities for programs currently funded through the Alcohol Fund. It was noted that the Alcohol Fund is, by statute, established to provide a percentage of revenue (5% gross profit) from the sale of alcohol to offset the harms caused by alcohol use. Another document of note is the [SFY24 Funding Crosswalk](#), which provides a side by side comparison of different funding streams for strategies in the State Action Plan and can be a helpful "high-level" overview of how NH is supporting programs and initiatives across the SUD continuum of care.

Legislative Update

On Monday, March 26, House Bill 73 was passed. HB 73 proposed a redefinition of key terms related to substance misuse, in particular, harm reduction. It also included amendments to the listed duties of the Commission.

The current status of the proposed (not yet finalized) budget is that the Alcohol Fund's 5% (\$10.7 million) is essentially swept back into General Fund, and the amount is then backfilled by Opioid Abatement funds. Significant concerns were brought up regarding how switching the funding source will severely limit access for alcohol and non-opioid treatment programs in the state. This may also violate the terms of the Opioid Abatement funds, leading Task Force members to strongly advise against this funding change. Task Force Chairs commented that this ultimately represents a \$10.7 million dollar "cut" to the SUD field and that the Legislature should consult with the

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Attorney General's Office on the legality of this proposed funding swap of Opioid Abatement dollars. It was noted that the Opioid Abatement funds are governed by federal litigation and not solely state statute.

Representative Jess Edwards listened to concerns and requested that members email him with examples of programs or services that would be negatively impacted by the restricted nature of opioid settlement funds and inability to care for individuals with Alcohol Use Disorder. Rep Edwards also noted that future bills are looking at the consolidation of the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Other Drugs and the Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission. There will be a drafting process to gain input before the bill is put forth this September. The Task Force expressed support of integrating both commissions as they felt it will maximize funding alignment and efficient use of resources.

Updates on Monitoring Funding Gaps

The Task Force Chairs reminded the group that recommendations for the current slate FY25-26 have been made and approved by the Commission. However, due to changes in the federal and state funding landscape, there are gaps emerging in funding of some programs and initiatives for FY26. For situational awareness, a list of potential emergent gaps was presented at the February Commission meeting, including Juvenile Court Diversion programming, Recovery Friendly Workplace, prevention education, transitional living services, recovery home certification, and the SUD workforce credentialing support. The Chair appreciated this update and requested that the Budget Task Force come back to the April meeting with a "short list" of funding gaps to be considered by full Commission.

Recommendations for April Commission Mtg

Given federal funding being in flux, the Task Force began an initial discussion about prioritizing recommendations for the April Commission meeting.

Positive news was shared that funding gaps had seemingly been resolved for SFY26 for Juvenile Court Diversion and Recovery Friendly Workplace and funding for prevention coalitions. After discussion, Matt McKenney made a motion that the Budget Task Force would prioritize the items (Partnership for Drug-Free NH, Transitional Living, NH Partnership for Recovery Residences, Credentialing Support Partnership) as funding

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gaps and take those recommendations to the Opioid Abatement Commission and Governor's Commission if and only if, per the Department's assessment of the funding landscape, they should move forward. Annette Escalante seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with the exception of Jess Edwards, who abstained.

Jess Edwards left meeting at 10:45 am.

Updates on Process and Timeline for FY27-FY28 Recommendations

In April, the Governor's Commission is hosting Community Listening Sessions to gain input from New Hampshire residents. Two in-person sessions and one virtual session are scheduled, and more information can be found on the NH Center for Excellence's Governor's Commission website. Findings from these sessions will be used to inform funding recommendations for FY27-28.

After a review by the Coordination and Cooperation Task Force, the Budget Task Force will receive initial input by July, and by December, the Task Force will make full recommendations to the Commission.

Public Comment

Diane Castrucci expressed her appreciation for the consideration that has gone into funding and states that any partial funding is better than no funding.

After public comment was completed, Matt McKenney moved to adjourn, Karen Collins seconded, and all voted in favor.

Decisions/Recommendations Made

1. The Task Force approved the minutes from the January 24th Task Force meeting.
2. The Task Force voted to prioritize the items (Partnership for Drug-Free NH, Transitional Living, NH Partnership for Recovery Residences, Credentialing Support Partnership) as funding gaps and take those recommendations to OAC and GC if and only if, per the Dept's assessment of the funding landscape, they should move forward.

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Next Steps

- The next Budget Task Force meeting will take place on Friday, July 25th, at 9:30 am.