

BUDGET TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

October 24, 2025 9:30 - 11:30 am

Hybrid: In-person at NH Granite United Way and virtually on Zoom

Attendance

Name	Attendance
Task Force Members	
Traci Fowler (Co-Chair)	In person
Shannon Swett (Co-Chair)	In person
John Burns	In person
Alissa Cannon	In person
Karen Collins	Absent
Kate Frey	In person
Lauren McGinley	In person
Cheryle Pacapelli	In person
Kristine Paquette	In person
Sarah Shanahan	In person
Jennifer Sabin (ad hoc)	Absent
David Nagel (ad hoc)	Zoom
Doug Griffin (ad hoc)	In person
Public	
Dianne Castrucci	Zoom
Destiny Heery	Zoom
Liaison(s)/ Subject Matter Experts/ Invited Guests	
Katherine Leswing	In person
Jill Burke	Zoom
Liz Biron	Zoom
Center for Excellence on Addiction/JSI Staff	
Olivia DiGeronimo	In person

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Jonathan Stewart	In person
Melissa Adilas	Zoom

Welcome & Introductions of Task Force and ad-hoc members

The Budget Task Force co-Chairs have invited members of the NH Opioid Abatement Commission (OAC) and NH Education Dept (NHED) to join meetings as ad-hoc members of the Budget Task Force. The new ad-hoc, non-voting members are Katherine Leswing, David Nagel, and Doug Griffin. The Budget Task Force and OAC hope to work together to align investment recommendations. .

Review Survey Results & Next Steps

Traci gave an overview of where the Task Force is in its timeline for giving funding recommendations for the next state fiscal year to the full Commission. The Budget Task Force must typically have recommendations prepared by the December meeting. The Task Force is also assisting the Opioid Abatement Commission in making synergistic recommendations specifically in prevention to maximize funding for substance use programs in NH.

In the September 2025 meeting, the Budget Task Force members were tasked with responding to a 10-question survey about needs for funding in NH prior to the October meeting. Jonathan Stewart of JSI reviewed these responses and analyzed themes. He then presented them to the group during this meeting. Recurring themes that emerged: concerns about sustainability of funding and infrastructure, workforce capacity, stable housing, and harm reduction.

The group appreciated the comprehensive nature of the survey themes, and Traci shared that this will be a helpful document to share with BDAS staff and be used for this group to help make funding recommendations.

The group discussed that while focusing on infrastructure is incredibly important, so is funding smaller, grassroots programs. Finding a balance between these opportunities

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will be vitally important. Looking at what is working well in the current infrastructure and focusing on strengthening these aspects could be a strategy to maximize dollars.

A Task Force member brought up an issue with Governor's Commission funding through DHHS. Changing restrictions for the expenditure of funds creates immense, undue administrative burden. This adds to the difficulty with sustaining programs, especially with smaller staff. It could be a huge opportunity for DHHS to have a more collaborative relationship with vendors. Striving for clear and timely communication and partnering with vendors for feedback on contracting processes could improve the efficiency of spending awarded funds. One strategy suggested is to elevate positive change in contracting and question why and how spending restrictions have changed again. Another suggestion is to create a small ad-hoc group to further discuss these issues, or to work with DHHS financing to understand where they may need additional information and help alleviate "pinch points"

Traci suggested presenting this information, along with eventual recommendations for funding, as a memo to DHHS and the Commission Chair.

Discuss and Review Draft Prevention Recommendations for Opioid Abatement Commission

Traci gave a brief overview of the draft prevention investment recommendations that will be presented to the Opioid Abatement Commission in November. There was discussion amongst members about the importance of investing in evidence-based programs, with a focus on at-risk populations and areas of the state.

Traci mentioned that the recommendations presented are initial thinking and that these recommendations have been worked on by members of the prevention field, BDAS and NHED. Some of the programs may potentially be able to be supported entirely by OAC, with Governor's Commission funds then allocated elsewhere.

A question was raised about Student Resource Officers (SROs) in schools and whether they receive formal training in substance use prevention. They do not receive explicit substance use prevention training, but the Court Diversion Network has existing

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relationships with the SROs and would be able to help with evidence-based prevention training. Traci, Alissa and Doug will talk further outside of this meeting.

Problem gambling was brought up by members, but there still is not a definitive answer to how much money the Commission will receive or how it is to be used. The Chair and DHHS are currently looking into this.

Kristine made a motion to endorse the Budget Task Force recommendations to the Opioid Abatement Commission of up to 4.5 million dollars for the support of school-based and community-based prevention programs, as drafted on 10/24/25. Sarah seconded. The group decided to use the language "evidence-informed" rather than explicitly "evidence-based." All in favor. Alissa, Shannon, and John abstained.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Motion to adjourn by Cheryle. Alissa second. All in favor.

Next Steps

- Survey results and a memo will be sent to DHHS by co-chairs.
- The next Budget Task Force meeting will take place on Friday, November 21 at 9:30 am.
- The meeting location for the rest of this year will be at the NH Granite United Way Office.