

## Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund (ORRF) Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes  
June 13, 2024  
10:30 am to 12:00 pm

Date of meeting: June 13, 2024  
Start time: 10:32 am  
End time: 11:56 am  
Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members participating remotely		Vote 1	Vote 2	Vote 3
1	<b>Kiame Mahaniah</b> ( <i>non-voting chair designee</i> ) – Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EHS)	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	<b>Charles Anderson, MD, MPH, MBA</b> – The Dimock Center	-	-	-
3	<b>Matilde Castiel, MD</b> – Worcester Department of Health and Human Services	x	x	x
4	<b>Maureen Cavanagh</b> – Magnolia New Beginnings	-	-	-
5	<b>Michele Clark</b> – Boston Mayor's Office of Recovery Services	x	x	x
6	<b>Abby Dean, LICSW</b> – Brookline Health Department	x	x	x
7	<b>Lisa Golden</b> – City of Lowell Department of Health and Human Services	-	-	-
8	<b>Lindsay Hackett</b> – City of Springfield	-	-	-
9	<b>Vaira Harik</b> – Barnstable County Department of Human Services	x	x	x
10	<b>Adrian Madaro</b> – Massachusetts House of Representatives	-	-	-
11	<b>Candice McClory</b> – Lynn Department of Public Health	x	x	x
12	<b>John McGahan</b> – Gavin Foundation	-	-	-
13	<b>Carla B. Monteiro, MSW, LICSW</b> – Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center	x	x	x
14	<b>Jeffery Olmstead</b> – Amherst Fire Department	-	x	x
15	<b>Andy Ottoson</b> – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	x	x	x
16	<b>Alyssa Peterkin, MD</b> – Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center	-	-	-
17	<b>Joanne Peterson</b> – Learn 2 Cope	x	x	x
18	<b>David Rosenbloom, PhD</b> – Boston University School of Public Health	x	x	x
19	<b>John Rosenthal</b> – Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI)	x	x	x
20	<b>Stephanie Sloan</b> – New Bedford Health Department	x	x	x
21	<b>LaToya Whiteside</b> – Prisoners' Legal Services	-	-	-

(X) Voted in favor; (O) Opposed; (A) Abstained from vote; (-) Absent from meeting or during vote

## **Proceedings**

**Vote to Call to Order:** EHS Undersecretary Kiame Mahaniah welcomed members and called the meeting to order with a roll call vote (see detailed record of votes above – Vote 1).

**Introducing New Council Members:** Undersecretary Mahaniah thanked outgoing member Jennifer Tracey for her service on the ORRF Advisory Council, and welcomed new member Michele Clark, who works at the intersection of SUD and homelessness at the Boston Public Health Commission.

**Vote to Approve March 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes:** Undersecretary Mahaniah asked if anyone had any edits to the March 6 minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion, made by Matilde Castiel and seconded by Vaira Harik, to approve the minutes. Motion carried (see detailed record of votes above – Vote 2).

**Important Announcements:** Undersecretary Mahaniah provided updates on the ORRF's Community Grantmaking initiative, the Mosaic Opioid Recovery Partnership with RIZE Massachusetts, including that the first round of grant applications would be closing soon, and that the next round of grants are scheduled for this fall and will include municipal matching grants. Undersecretary Mahaniah also announced a regional training and technical assistance (TTA) structure for Care Massachusetts, to be implemented later this year, in which every municipality is anticipated to have a single point of contact to serve as its TTA lead

**Opioid Settlements Update:** Sandy Wolitzky, Healthcare Division Chief at the Attorney General's Office, provided an update on 2024 payments to the ORRF, including recent litigation with Publicis Health that has resulted in a one-time settlement payment of \$7.9 million. See the [meeting slides](#) for further details on Chief Wolitzky's presentation. A summary of the ensuing discussion follows:

- David Rosenbloom: Requested for ORRF payments to be summarized in terms of the Fund's balance, funds committed/expended, and interest accrued.
- Vaira Harik: Sought clarification on how settlement funds are dispersed from the national level to municipalities.
- Chief Wolitzky: Clarified that there is a national opioid settlement administrator, a firm called BrownGreer, that receives the funds from defendants and directly dispenses those funds to municipalities and to the ORRF.

**ORRF Mission & Vision, Guiding Principles, and Timeline of Council Activities:** Julia Newhall, Director of Opioid Abatement, Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS), provided an overview of the ORRF Strategic Framework, including the ORRF's mission and vision, seven guiding principles, and work accomplished by the ORRF Advisory Council since its inception in 2021. See [meeting slides](#) for a detailed overview of these topics.

**Overview of ORRF Strategic Priorities and Update on Ongoing Initiatives:** BSAS Director Dee Calvert provided a detailed update on ORRF initiatives, organized around the ORRF's strategic priorities: Equity, Service Expansion/Enhancement, Workforce Development, Supporting Families, Social Determinants of Health, Data Collection & Analysis. See [meeting slides](#) for details on each strategic priority and updates regarding corresponding initiatives.

**Initiative Spotlight: Low Threshold Housing:** Jennifer Halstrom, Director of Housing and Homeless Services at BSAS, presented on BSAS's Housing and Homeless Services Unit and its focus on housing instability and people who are currently experiencing or have experienced SUD. Director

Halstrom detailed the Unit's efforts to ensure people can access treatment while maintaining adequate housing and provided an overview of (1) different housing models, (2) the housing and homeless services continuum, and (3) housing programs supported by the ORRF (see [meeting slides](#) for further details on Director Halstrom's presentation). Highlights from the ensuing discussion are summarized below:

- Joanne Peterson: Asked about access to the ORRF funded housing programs for people on Cape Cod and the South Coast.
- Director Halstrom: Underscored a need for more applications from vendors in these regions for these statewide housing contracts.
- John Rosenthal: Applauded the Low Threshold Housing program and asked about the budget allocated towards the program, and how it can be better supported and expanded. Also suggested a comparison of the costs of the program compared to the cost of incarceration.
- Nicole Schmitt, Director of BSAS's Office of Strategy and Innovation: Responded that \$6 million of the program is funded through the ORRF and \$10 million through the state.
- Candice McClory: Shared her support and a personal anecdote about implementation of this program in her city.
- David Rosenbloom: Praised the program and asked about the need to increase capacity, and whether additional information is available on the prevalence of the problem.
- Undersecretary Mahaniah: Shared that Massachusetts generally has a housing deficit on the order of 200,000 units and estimated that the Low Threshold Housing program's capacity of 600 people addresses about 10% of the actual need. He also noted that in addition to the funding component, stigma surrounding SUD and housing instability remains a factor.
- Abby Dean: Asked about a specific article in the Boston Globe regarding closing the housing gap in Massachusetts.
- Director Calvert: Explained that the Boston Globe article is about temporary housing funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), while the ORRF is committed to funding permanent housing.
- Jeffery Olmstead: Expressed his support for the Low Threshold Housing program.
- Matilde Castiel: Emphasized that supportive services are paramount for communities experiencing SUD, specifically clinical services as a part of permanent supportive housing.
- Director Halstrom: Noted that most permanent housing in Massachusetts is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and often excludes funding for clinical support, by contrast to the Low-Threshold Housing program's broader scope of supportive services.

**Vote to Adjourn:** Undersecretary Mahaniah requested a motion to adjourn, made by David Rosenbloom and seconded by Carla B. Monteiro. Meeting adjourned (see detailed record of votes above – Vote 3).