



CITY OF DOVER DELAWARE

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

November 17, 2025, at 7:06 P.M.

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

The Mayor's **Blue Ribbon** Opioid Use Disorder Taskforce Committee was held on **November 17, 2025, at 7:06 p.m.** with Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. presiding. OUD Taskforce members present were the Honorable Eric L. Buckson, Mr. James Oxford Sr., Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III, Mrs. Toni Jordan, Mrs. Chelle Paul, and Mr. Benard Pratt was absent.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT

District 4 Councilman David Anderson.

No additions or deletions were proposed for the meeting.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mr. Chelle Paul.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. James Oxford Sr.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Chairman Sudler reviewed the agenda items and asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. James Oxford Sr. moved to adopt the meeting agenda for November 17, 2025. The motion was properly seconded by Mrs. Paul. There was no discussion on the agenda item; hence, the motion was unanimously adopted.

PURPOSE:

Chairman Sudler discussed the purpose of the agenda items and recognized Dr. Nancy Bookhart to introduce herself and elaborate on item number one (**Preparing to Write a High-Quality Grant Proposal**) in which Committee Action was not required.



CITY OF DOVER DELAWARE

DR. NANCY W. BOOKHART

**GRANT WRITER AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF ART AT
DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY (DSU).**

**1). PREPARING TO WRITE A HIGH-QUALITY GRANT
PROPOSAL (COMMITTEE ACTION NOT REQUIRED)**



01

GRANT
SPECIFICATION
ALIGNMENT

02

BUDGET AND
PLANNING

03

IMPACT AND
SUSTAINABILITY

DRAFT

Dr. Nancy W. Bookhart - Grant Writer and Adjunct Professor of Art at Delaware State University (DSU) who thanked Chairman Sumner for the opportunity to speak with the community regarding Grant Specification Alignment, Budget/Planning, and Impact and Sustainability Plan. She explained her role on the Grant Writing Team at Delaware State University and highlighted one of their significant accomplishments. She shared with the committee that DSU received a major grant called INTERNET FOR ALL, which aided the institution in rendering internet services to the students. She also mentioned that DSU competes for grants at three primary levels (State, Federal, and Private), and that each member performs a specific role when addressing the grant specifications. Dr. Bookhart then emphasized that when individuals first approach achieving the Grant Specification Alignments, they should not be intimidated by the process but focus on what the grant requires, be direct and to the point, and not exceed the number of pages required for the response. Exceeding the allotted number of pages can hurt your chance of being a grant awardee. Therefore, grant writers must be very detailed and concise, which is why many individuals fail to secure funding.

Additionally, she zoomed in on the point that often relies on ambiguity and on applicants not being explicit about the scope of their plan for addressing the order in which the grant's specifics are being solicited. Dr. Bookhart asserted that an applicant's Budget and Planning Approach should mimic the Grant's Executive Summary notion to determine what to budget for and how to have your plan synchronized with the aims of the executive summary. She stated that following the guidelines and knowing what to include and what to exclude in your plan affects your



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE

planning and budgeting process. After much discussion concerning the aforesaid, Chairman Sudler recognized a community member (Cleve Wilson) who inquired about her contact information at DSU and how they can seek additional mentorship or advisement on getting started in the grant process. Dr. Bookhart responded by providing her contact information to the audience. She then emphasized how crucial it is to adhere to the professional font size (12) and page count in conjunction with the planning and budgeting process, as they are interlocked.

She stated that when it comes to justifying the budget for the grant's purpose, it should be like a grocery list. You should know precisely what you want and how much it costs before you go shopping. In other words, she advised potential grant writers to outline their plans and justify the funds requested to cover their operating expenses and activities in accordance with their proposals. As Dr. Bookhart concluded her presentation, she reviewed the Impact and Sustainability Plan Approach for grant writers to consider. She began by discussing the goals and implementation process of your plan, and how it will impact the community you aim to serve. The aforementioned are the fundamentals of writing a grant. Dr. Bookhart then concluded her proposal and yielded to Chairman Sudler, who then proceeded with the meeting. Chair Sudler thanked Dr. Bookhart for her presentation and asked the community if there were any questions.

Community Member (Cleveland Wilson) asked which sources list the diverse grants an individual may be eligible to apply for. Dr. Bookhart responded by saying that different websites provide an array of grants one could apply for, whether local or regional, such as Pivot, Grant Station, and Grant.Gov, which one may have to become a member of via monetary means (18 to 20 per week), which she believes is worth it. Another Community Member (Cynthia Taylor), who represented the organization called First Step Community Reform, asked if this grant is for 501 (c) (3) or open to other public or private entities. Chairman Sudler responded that her question could be better answered by the next presenter, **Mr. Brad Owens, Executive Director of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission (POSDC)**. Then Chair Sudler recognized another Community Member (Ronda Smack), who asked about how long an organization must be established before being eligible for a grant, based on the notion that an organization representing the LGBT community applied for a grant and was denied due to their period of establishment (5 years) not being long enough.

Dr. Bookhart stated that five years established is more than enough, and, according to her knowledge, eighteen months is typically long enough. Once the community questions were answered, Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III. (Committee Member) asked Dr. Bookhart what is available for individuals without financial resources to seek grants, where free resources are available, and how to connect with individuals who can help someone out. Chairman Sudler recognized



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE

Councilman Anderson, who addressed the question by offering free resources to community members via his City of Dover Sources, which lists grants available through the National League of Cities. Then Mrs. Chelle Paul (Committee Member) further elaborated on the need for non-profit organizations to have the same access and source mentioned by Councilman Anderson. Dr. Bookhart responded to the question by stating that, whether for-profit or non-profit, she would be available to assist in any way possible. Then the Chair recognized Mr. Cleveland Wilson (Community Member), who asked Councilman Anderson for his contact information for another community member to take advantage of the resources mentioned earlier. Chairman Sudler moved on to item number two, titled "Grant Distribution." In this section, Mr. Brad Owens, Executive Director of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission (POSDC), discussed the funding round process, the criteria POSDC uses to select awardees, and the oversight involved in the POSDC audit process.

2). Grant Distribution
(Committee Action Not Required)

MR. BRAD OWENS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
DELAWARE PRESCRIPTION OPIOID
SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION
COMMISSION (POSDC).

Funding Round Process

- Funding Round Process
- POSDC Criteria for selecting Awardee
- Performance Oversight and Audit Process



Mr. Owens expressed his gratitude to the OUD Taskforce for the opportunity to address the community. He explained that he was appointed as the Director of the Commission by Governor Matt Myers in March 2025. The commission was initially established under Governor John Carney's administration, with the Lt. Governor serving as Chair during its early years. Governor Myers later restructured the commission's aims and duties during his administration. Mr. Owens clarified that the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission (POSDC) was created under Senate Bill 166 in 2021.



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE

Its purpose is to determine the best practices for the utilization of the OUD settlement funds, which Delaware is expected to receive and allocate over \$200 million in the next twelve years because of litigation against opioid manufacturers and distributors due to the harm caused in communities. He explained that states, counties, and cities exercised their legal right to join the lawsuit to address the substantial financial burdens resulting from the over-prescription of opioids. Mr. Owens detailed how the funds would be managed and distributed through three funding cycles, with the State of Delaware designated as the governing body for the portions of the settlement awarded to municipalities that participated in the lawsuit.

He emphasized that in the case of Dover, Mayor Christiansen would be responsible for providing the City of Dover's recommendations to the POSDC through the OUD Taskforce. He also explained how the annual distribution of ten to fifteen million would be disbursed throughout the year. He reviewed the financial snapshot of the funds already disbursed to contracts and the contracts they are preparing for 2026 and mentioned that the perception of the state having 250 million dollars to spend from the settlement was inaccurate. He noted that in 2026, fifteen million dollars will be disbursed in the base amount, and five percent of that will go to local governments, with twelve million dollars disbursed for competitive grants. He further mentioned that back pay of two million dollars will be available for two years, one million for one year, and one million for the second year in the rear. Mr. Owens further elaborated that the capital of Delaware and other municipalities can propose whom they want to award the grants to, if the awards align with the OUD abatement remediation guidelines. Dover could hire staff and be accountable for tracking the money, or they could instruct the State committee to distribute the money directly to a specific committee, which would avoid the monthly accountability and reporting of the money, subject to IRS auditing.

Mr. Owens stated that he would rather work directly with the organizations that the municipalities awarded funds to, as it would mitigate potential confusion. He also emphasized the importance of the Taskforce Committee strategizing how to disburse the settlement funds over the next 10 years and how your municipalities have already appropriated the funds to organizations to date. He recommended that the task force invest in other alternatives that have yet to be explored; additionally, he noted that he serves on another committee, DSAMH, under the Chairmanship of **Joanna Champney**, whose abbreviation represents the Division Director of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE



Champney serves as the Co-Chair of the Prescription Opioid Settlement Commission and established and led the Department's Office of Reentry after Governor Carney issued Executive Order 27, which aims to improve the state's service infrastructure for formerly incarcerated individuals. Mr. Owens highlighted the benefits of having committee members from both the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) and the Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Committee (POSDC) collaborating. This collaboration allows for better information sharing between committees, reduces redundant resources, and fosters more innovative strategies for awarding State Opioid Response (SOR) grants to competitive organizations. After a thorough discussion on the initiative of both DSAMH and POSDC, Mr. Owens paused to invite further comments.

Chair Sudler recognized Mr. James Oxford Sr. (OUD Committee Member), who inquired whether the City of Dover was managing its portion of the SOR grants or if it was instructing the state commission to allocate grant funds to specific organizations. Mr. Owens replied that the City of Dover is currently directing its portion of the settlement funds to specific organizations instead of receiving them directly. Committee Member Chelle Paul asked if there were an additional \$500,000 in opioid funds being awarded to the County and how much of that would be distributed to the Capital. Mr. Owens stated that he was not aware of any additional funds. Mrs. Paul also inquired whether the baseline funds of fifteen million and the fifteen percent reference would be received in 2026. Mr. Owens confirmed that the capital of Delaware is expected to receive an estimate of over \$300,000 in 2026, which represents 15% of the baseline funds available. He noted, however, that Kent County comprises various municipalities, and these municipalities could choose to contribute their portion to Kent County. This could potentially increase the County's share to around two million dollars in SOR (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration) grants. Mr. Owens further explained that additional funding is available from other committees, such as the DSAMH (Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health) committee, which administers thousands of federal grants with different requirements for municipalities, non-profit organizations, and for-profit entities.



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE

He also mentioned that organizations can collaborate to create a facility that integrates various healthcare delivery systems, provided that their strategy aligns with remediation guidelines. This approach could be an innovative way to secure SOR grants. Additionally, under the competitive grant process, municipalities could receive more funding and expand on the non-competitive grant money they are assured under the lawsuit, if they adhere to legal guidelines following extensive discussion. During the meeting, Chair Sudler acknowledged a community member, Mathew, who shared his journey through addiction and recovery, as well as his desire to establish a peer-support recovery organization to help individuals throughout New Castle and Kent counties in Delaware. Mr. Owens believes that the most effective way to help individuals off the streets is through prayer and peer support. He envisions a team effort to address the needs of both motorists and pedestrians in the medians. He mentioned that establishing a 501 (c) (3) foundation could assist him and allow him to secure sponsorship. However, he noted that the organization sponsoring him would be responsible for meeting IRS audit requirements and funding guidelines.

Mr. Owens also emphasized the importance of funding and the empirical data that drive the distribution of funds to counties and municipalities through both non-competitive and competitive grant processes. Community member Mathew expressed gratitude to Mr. Owens for his insights and thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak about his vision and journey. Chair Sudler then introduced Frank Parks, the director of Fisherman of Men, who provided details about his program and shared a personal story highlighting its impact on participants' spiritual journeys. Mr. Parks, a Dover High School graduate with over 35 years of recovery, dedicated himself to helping individuals facing housing shortages and lacking life skills by providing essential resources and programs based on Christian principles. He inquired whether the grant process is open to Christian organizations and when it would be available. In response, Mr. Owens confirmed that several open SOR grants are accessible to all organizations, and the competitive grant application process is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2026. He added that local grant funding would be distributed before then, likely following the same annual cycle. Mr. Owens also described how the state receives distinct funding amounts from different distributors under the settlement stipulations, which help determine the total amount available each year for SOR grant distribution.

Mr. Parks then thanked the state committee for their work and offered his assistance in the state's capital. After Mr. Parks concluded his questions, Chair Sudler recognized Mr. James Oxford Sr., who asked whether it is the intent of the City of Dover (Mayor) to control funds for accountability each month, or if the grants will be written for specific allocations to organizations



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE

in the State of Delaware? He believes that the City of Dover should award funding to organizations to help cover operational costs because they are already doing the work and are connected to the landscape of individuals in need, with boots already on the ground. Chair Sudler responded that it is the OUD Taskforce's charge to assess the best approach and organizations for recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, who will determine the course of action regarding who will monitor the SOR grants awarded via the Capital of Delaware. Chair Sudler stated that he is in favor of distributing the funds to organizations with boots on the ground, and then acknowledged Councilman David Anderson, who stated that it is an issue that will have to be discussed among the Council. Mr. James Oxford Sr. reiterated his position that the money should be awarded to the organizations already serving the community. Mr. Owens followed up on the point just made, stating that you can customize your strategy by examining key points in your application process to determine your final plan of action and service points.

Chair Sudler then recognized Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III (OUD-Committee Member), who strongly supported the boots-on-the-ground approach because he believes that faith without work is dead, and we need to move forward with helping individuals, including those on the medians, for positive, cohesive movement. Mrs. Michelle Paul (OUD-Committee Member) concurred with Mr. Bedford. He noted to have the OUD Taskforce contact peer-to-peer staff at organizations to help the taskforce usher individuals off the medians and to other locations in the Capital of Delaware for recovery/public health services. Toni Jordan properly seconded it. There was a call for discussion by Mr. James Oxford Sr., who asked, "Do we have a list of the organizations referred to in the motion, and what the process will be. Mrs. Paul responded that we do have a list of organizations with peer-to-peer staff to help the OUD-Task Force achieve this mission. Mr. James Oxford Sr. then asked, "Is Mrs. Paul willing to be the contact person for this initiative? Her response was Yes! Chair Sudler then stated that her response was aligned with her duties as the Ad-hoc Chair of the Workforce Development Committee. Then Chair Sudler recognized Mrs. Toni Jordan, who stated that we have two issues: she agrees with the committee's responsibility to make recommendations, and that funding should be disbursed to boots on the ground, in addition to aiding individuals in the median, in conjunction with outreach initiatives throughout the City of Dover. Councilman Anderson was recognized and stated that it must be on the record that this is an outreach and that everyone is allowed to participate, but this is not a prerequisite for receiving the SOR grants.

Chair Sudler reinforced Councilman Anderson's sentiment and noted that we have reached out to Chief Johnson for assistance from the Behavioral Health Unit of the Dover Police Department. He emphasized that there are many ways to come together to help individuals in need, beyond



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE

waiting for opioid funds to be disbursed to organizations willing to assist. Chair Sudler echoed Mr. Bedford's sentiment and encouraged those who can provide financial or non-financial support for the proposed outreach initiative to step forward now rather than wait. He expressed his willingness to donate food and secure public health mobile units to assess needs and gather data for our research initiative on Biopsychosocial Approaches to addressing Chronic Pain and Trauma. He believes that acting now demonstrates our commitment to addressing the needs of the Capital of Delaware. After Chair Sudler's comments, the committee unanimously voted to adopt the motion. He then moved on to item number three, where the Community Engagement Ad-hoc Chair, Mr. Bedford, presented a visual and audio slideshow highlighting the critical shortage of recovery housing for women facing challenges such as trauma, substance abuse, addiction, or family crises, particularly those with minimal resources to begin their recovery journey. Following the discussion of all three agenda items and the sharing of valuable information with the committee, the meeting concluded on a high note, with everyone excited to contribute.

SYNOPSIS:

The discussion emphasized the complexities of the grant-writing process required to secure State Opioid Response (SOR) funding. It is crucial to invest significantly in innovative strategies aimed at addressing opioid remediation and Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). Participants recognized the challenges presented by strict financial audit requirements, which are essential for ensuring the responsible use of federal funds. Moreover, the conversation highlighted the importance of establishing concrete best practices for allocating opioid settlement funds. Insights from faith-based organizations and community stakeholders underscored an urgent need for compassionate support and resources. This support is vital for individuals struggling with OUD, particularly those who fall outside the median demographic in Delaware's capital. Prioritizing community feedback and evidence-based practices is essential to developing effective interventions and to efficiently allocating resources to meet the needs of affected populations.

The meeting was adjourned at **9:16 p.m.**

Submitted By:

Roy Sudler, Jr. Ph.D.

Chairman of Mayor's

OUD Taskforce Committee



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE

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