

Maine Recovery Council

9/19/2023 Meeting of the Needs/Grants/Planning Committee

3:00-4:00 pm via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Liz Blackwell-Moore, Joe Everett (Committee Chair), Pat Kimball (MRC Chair), Myles Ouellette, Gordon Smith, Kinna Thakarar, Chasity Tuell

AG's Office: Haley Taranko

Committee Members Absent: Todd Brackett, Bruce Noddin

Introductions of Committee members, including name, organization, and any experience with grants.

- Had a variety of background experience among group that ranges from grassroots funding, grant writing with private/State/Federal grants, grant reviewing, etc.

Gordon & Pat: Overview from the Governance Committee of the role of the grants committee.

- This committee is the spending piece and we are all learning as we go.

Joe: Do we need to set up a charter? Goals? Etc.

- Not required by our bylaws to set up a charter. We do need to identify what our needs/hopes are? Who are the stakeholders we need to reach? What other data do we need?
- Gordon: All funds have to be used for opioid abatement per the litigation, it's important for us, stakeholders and the public to know it's not a blank check that can be used for anything.
- Liz: We need to think about multiple mechanisms of how money is going out re: short term and long term.
- Pat: We will need Ben (chair of the finance committee) to do a presentation of the funds once they have had time to get a clear idea on what the funds and requirements look like to let us know what we can spend short term and long term, etc.

Getting information from Stakeholders:

- Confirmed at last MRC meeting to hold a public hearing (similar to how the legislature does-3 minute timer, can do in person or submit written) during the week of October 23-27. Pat will email full council to set up a subcommittee to work on setting this up. Executive Committee will set up date.
- Would like to have an online portal set up where individuals can submit written testimony.
- Liz presented on the Survey discussed at last MRC meeting to be used to gather quantitative information from individuals, organizations, and municipalities (both the ones receiving their own funds and those that aren't).
 - Will do a separate survey for schools since that will need to gather different information to meet to requirements of the MOU.

- Used the strategies from the MOU Schedule B to build out options for survey. Some of the language and acronyms used aren't necessarily clear for the general public who is not working within the substance use field and can be a barrier for individuals.
- Group consensus-Don't edit too much as it's just a single avenue to gather information to get out ASAP, but do add in term explanations where we can (Ex. OTP is a methadone maintenance program). Liz will work on this.
- How to notify stakeholders of different ways to communicate needs to council in either the survey or public hearing:
 - Grassroots-Everyone get it out to their listservs/networks/etc
 - State public notice process with AG's office
 - Press release to get out to all state media outlets

DHHS presentations from Sarah Squirrel & recommendations: Thoughts from committee how to proceed:

- One option: Dig into their suggestions if we want to do something quickly since they can immediately implement with their systems that are in place.
- Group would like to hear more details on state request (this can be a parallel process with engaging other stakeholders for needs/wants/gaps/etc.)
- Decide what we want and come up with specific questions we want to know as this can also be helpful with other projects going forward.
- Another option: Choose top 3 priorities from DHHS recommendations to get more information on.—Everyone may not have the same top three priorities, Pat will reach out to all council members to identify their top 3 projects they are interested in learning more about and the top 3 overall will be sent along with a request for more information.

Grants/Procurement/Etc Processes:

- Finance committee suggested the option of contracting out to a different entity to administer the grants to make it easier for organizations (especially smaller organizations) and not go through the State process.
 - Joe-Need to build something into our process to make the typical procurement process easier.
 - Gordon-Could put out an RFP or RFI for help with this outside of the state process and this could broaden the number of stakeholders we would be working with.
- Would like to establish ongoing Technical Assistance (TA) for small organizations and grantees to help people through the process and help maintain funding.
- When the grant process is set up, set up an optional training for folks planning to apply to walk through the process for what to expect, what's needed in the app, etc (Example: United Way does this for applicants)

Future Meetings:

- Set recurring schedule to meet the last Tuesday of each month 3:30-4:30pm (start 10/31/2023)
 - Group consensus prefers fully Zoom for committee meeting.
- Set up an extra meeting in October prior to public hearing for any last minute needs with hearing/survey implementation/etc. Meeting will be Tuesday, October 17 3:30-4:30

- Next full MRC meeting is changed from the normal 2nd Thursday of the month at 2:00 (10/12/2023) due to a conflict with the regular space we use to Tuesday, October 10th
 - Note this is also the Maine Public Health Association Conference in Bangor, if there are any members with a conflict let Pat and Haley know.