

MINUTES

Region 16 Opioid Abatement Council Meeting

28 May 2025

2:10 – 5:35pm

4th Judicial District Attorney's Office

105 E. Vermijo Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

4th Floor Main Conference Room

First Name	Last Name	Title	Present(Y/N)
Voting Members			
Lynette	Crow-Iverson	Colorado Springs (COS) City Council	Y
Erik	Stone	Teller County Commissioner	Y
Lt. Jake	Markus	Proxy for Teller County Undersheriff	Y
Holly	Williams	El Paso County (EPC) Commissioner	Y (Proxy Sunny Bryant)
Carrie	Geitner	EPC Commissioner	Y
Michael	Allen	Fourth Judicial District Attorney	Y
Doug	Trainor	COS Police Department	N
Randy	Royal	COS Fire Chief	Y (Proxy Steve Johnson)
David	Leinweber	COS City Council	Y
Lee	Walker	Victor Fire Department	N
Dr. Emily	Russell-Kinsley	EPC Coroner	Y
Mark	Cristiani	Fountain Police Chief	Y

Denise	Howell	Manitou Springs City Manager	Y
Chris	Deisler	Woodland Park Police Chief	Y
Non-Voting Members: Municipalities who will cycle onto the voting membership in future years			
Frank	Salvato	Cripple Creek City Manager	N
Chris	Deisler	Woodland Park Police Chief	Y
Troy	Johnson	Fountain City Attorney	Y
Current Non-Voting Members			
DeAnn	Ryberg	EPC Public Health Deputy Director	Y
Kim	Mauthe	Teller County Director of Human Services	Y
Michelle	Wolff	Teller County Public Health Director	N
Bridgette	Fuson	Department of Human Services (Monument Representative)	N
Non-Voting Members Appointed by Council as SMEs			
Jack	Briggs	Springs Rescue Mission	N
Dr. Eric	Stein Bronsky	Physician, Medical Director CSFD AMR EPC/Teller 911 Authority	Y
Council Member	Albrecht	Cardiologist, lived experience	Y
Jason	Jorgenson	COS School District 11	N
Matt	Riviere	Advocate, lived experience	Y
Laura	Ridenour	EPC Behavioral Health Manager	Y
Staff Support, Members of the Public, and Subject Matter Expertise			
Amanda	Grant	EPC Deputy Director – Financial Services	N
Kenny	Hodges	EPC County Attorney	Y

Others Present:

- Ben Stiner, FullCircle Program Director
- Tommy Naporano, FullCircle
- Declan Tompson, FullCircle
- Kelsey Danizas, CASA Grants Specialist
- Elizabeth Albo, CASA Development Director
- Todd Jones, The Phoenix SM
- Liani Murphy, Serenity Recovery Connection Program Director
- Sheri Trahern, Serenity Recovery Connection CEO
- Kelly Hurtado, Joint Initiatives COO
- Cassy Reyes, Joint Initiatives VP
- Becca Barnhart, CDC Public Health Analyst
- Council Member Olson, Face It TOGETHER CO Strategist
- Julie Dreifaltdt, One Chance to Grow Up Director of Outreach
- Maria Cortes, Suicide Prevention Partnership Resource Navigator
- Cass Walton, Suicide Prevention Partnership Executive Director
- Cory Miller, El Paso County Contract Procurer
- Becky Schaffstein, El Paso County Procurement Manager
- Sam Wilson, FullCircle Faculty Director
- Kaydance Averill FullCircle program participant
- Bryce Barribeau, Full Circle program participant
- Allison Dodge, One Chance to Grow Up
- Diane Carlson, One Chance to Grow Up Co-Founder
- Maelee McKeeburch, EPSO Supervisor

Quorum Met? Yes

1. 2:10-2:15 PM – Introductions and Roll Call

- a. Conducted by Council Member Allen.

2. 2:15-2:22 PM – Consent Calendar

- a. Minutes were approved.

3. 2:22-4:00 PM – Previous Awardee Presentations

a. Applicant 1: Suicide Prevention Partnership

- i. They utilize choirs, concerts, halftimes, and other captive audiences to deliver their messages. They primarily show videos of young people speaking on topics like suicide prevention to reach younger audiences.
 - 1. They state that most students in auditoriums tune out the messages, but at publicly relaxed events like football game halftimes, it is more likely that the message sinks in.
- ii. Suicide Prevention Partnership helps youths with communication bridges to trusted adults, focusing on conversations that are difficult to have without support.
- iii. Youth grief groups for students impacted by loss highlighted higher instances of risky behavior in loss-impacted individuals.
- iv. Council Member Leinweber questioned how suicide prevention ties into opioid use reduction.
 - 1. SPP argued that opioid use is a high risk behavior, and therefore falls under their target audience.
 - 2. The question of, “Have you used food, drugs, or alcohol to cope” encompasses opioid use through drug use.
- v. Council Member Geitner asked how the advocacy portion works, and for whom are SPP advocating.
 - 1. SPP responds that their goal for SPP is to get students and other youth to speak and show up at tables, and those willing to speak receive media training, interview training, and argument training.
 - 2. Ties opioid crisis to mental health crisis because they are interconnected.

b. Applicant 2: FullCircle Program

- i. Prior to the presentation given by Ben Stiner, Facilitator Corbett described the point system in detail, including how points are awarded on the 500-point scale.
- ii. FullCircle focuses on substance abuse differently than most other drug prevention programs by focusing on early stronger drugs, like THC vape pens, edibles, and other high-potency marijuana products. One program is aimed at kids aged 13-15 before they try marijuana.
 - 1. Promiscuity, porn addiction, and self-harm are also addressed in the same age range.
 - 2. Quality of life surveys on youth reveal high levels of anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and other concerning issues.
- iii. Council Member Stone asked for FullCircle’s primary goal for fund utilization.

1. FullCircle wants to diversify their types of income, like grants, to create strong ties to the community. The goal is to have a large fundraiser, example provided was a golf tournament, to garner attention and funding. Capital given to the campaign will primarily be used to gap fill between state and local efforts to create a smoother program.
- iv. Council Member Leinweber mentioned that HMIS data supports homeless people.
 1. Currently not using HMIS data, but the hope is to track data with the surveys and app currently possessed by FullCircle.
- v. Facilitator Corbett highlighted the difficulty of assessing impact, so whomever receives funds must have the proper data requirements.
 1. FullCircle stated that this was the primary reason for creating the app with the surveys.
- vi. Council Member Deisler asked how this program helped its targets.
 1. Both FullCircle program participants (Kaydance and Bryce) stated that the program helped them move on in life, with Kaydance explicitly stating that “[the program] saved my life.” Council Member Cristiani stated that those perspectives are invaluable.

c. Applicant 3: TESSA

- i. Ann Markley presented, highlighting TESSA’s multi-prong approach to helping youth in the community. Domestic violence is their primary target.
- ii. TESSA utilizes an expansive outreach, and are passionate about prevention due to the correlation drug use has to domestic violence.
 1. TESSA focuses on going into classrooms to teach proper ways to act and deal with stress, creating habits outside drugs to carry into adulthood.
 2. Strategic plans are utilized to implement practical learning opportunities, not lectures.
- iii. Council Member Johnson asked what interaction with the schools looks like and consists of.
 1. Each school is approached differently, with some presentations being performed on one day, and others sequential.
- iv. Council Member Geitner asked what “housing first” means, and whether opioids are explicitly banned when housing individuals.
 1. TESSA defines housing first as “No barrier to get stable housing...and...[the client] must fall under a victimization category.” Substance abuse is a factor for victimization. Once the client obtains their own home, funding for housing decreases monthly until no further help is required.
- v. Council Member Geitner then asked what tailoring is done for substantially adverse clients.
 1. Trainings are given to staff on certain populations, including the deaf community, blind community, and LGBT community.
- vi. Council Member Allen requested a quantifiable way to determine impact of the grant money.

1. TESSA uses pre- and post-assessment surveys, including long-term surveys. Individuals going to safe houses are assessed constantly to show improvement.

d. Applicant 4: CASA Pikes Peak

- i. Angela Rose presented with Elizabeth and Kelsey. CASA has a 4 star rating, with 86% of all money going into the agency being utilized on children, while passing clean audits.
- ii. Operates by training and supervising people to help applicants with direct services. Those who qualify are children, substance abuse victims, domestic violence victims, and other situations affecting family unity.
 1. Decreasing risky behavior and correcting faulty perceptions of drug use.
 2. With the extra grant money, they believe they can help at least 26 new kids affected by opioid abuse.
- iii. Highlights the success of their program, with 99% of all clients reporting no new domestic violence while participating in the program.
- iv. No questions about the program, Council Member Stone asked if the money would go to additional staff.
 1. All additional grant money would go to training current staff.

e. Applicant 5: Joint Initiatives for Youth and Family

- i. Kelley Hurtado presented, highlighting Joint Initiatives' programs working with detained youth, families, and directing youth to make better decisions in their lives.
- ii. When youth are showing signs of being on the wrong track, Joint Initiatives determines which services would be best to correct behavior.
- iii. With increased funding from the grant, they plan to reach out to more than 2000 families, including both English and Spanish speaking households.
 1. Joint Initiatives is also committed to teaching English to Spanish only households.
- iv. For drug prevention and risky behavior reduction, Joint Initiatives is already seeing 900+ individuals, with 150+ in coordinated care with other companies.
- v. Council Member Stone wanted to see the budget slide again to unpack what hiring additional coaches and coordinators concretely does to help.
 1. Joint Initiatives highlighted the importance of new staff to connect with patients one-on-one.
- vi. Council Member Johnson questioned the sustainability of hiring new staff off grant money.
 1. Joint Initiatives outlined a 2-fold approach. Part one is working on leveraging local funding to achieve collective impact goals. Part two is because funding has been reliable in the past, they are diversifying funding to ensure maximum reach in the event of no funding from the council.
- vii. Council Member Geitner asked what success looks like in this business, as well as what mechanisms exist for tracking opioid use and prevention, and if there were specific high risk targets.

1. All at risk may be sent to Joint Initiatives, they specialize in situations that “are too complex for one system”.
2. They utilize a child needs assessment to determine which plan that child should be on. No hard answer was given to opioid use tracking, only that they would be “looking to build [a tracker] in with this funding”.
3. Success in this company is when programs are completed, adult mentors are contacted and utilized, a child completes a therapy program, and sometimes success is determined by the court.

f. Applicant 6: One Chance to Grow Up

- i. Diane Carlson presented for One Chance, highlighting that early marijuana use in teens is a primary indicator of opioid abuse at later ages.
- ii. One Chance presented several sourced and cited compelling figures. One overdose costs the hospital and public \$11M, 72% of youth are less likely to abuse drugs if a trusted adult or parent disapproves, and statistics on the effectiveness of educating both the child and parents.
- iii. Because children and teens view recreational marijuana from dispensaries as less harmful, they are more likely to justify use or be compelled to use.
- iv. The 25-and-under crowd is less likely to have strong stress coping skills and less likely to have information on the negative aspects of marijuana or other drugs like opioids. By focusing on reduction of early marijuana use, opioid use should decrease in the following years.
- v. Effectiveness is assessed with pre- and post-program surveys.
- vi. Council Member Stone asked about how health warnings differ from the non-effective talks given in school auditoriums, and what the outcomes are of the program. Council Member Stone also asked about the data quality, as kids tend to lie.
 1. One Chance responded that they only push messages they (One Chance) approve of, which includes billboards.
 2. Prevention itself is “hard to measure”, and “when youth [use] rates decrease, we have a concrete data point”.
 3. One Chance agrees that retaining data not fouled by dishonest answers is difficult, but the goal of “reducing substance abuse and behavior” while simultaneously promoting social behavior is itself hard to retain solid data.
- vii. Council Member Geitner commented on the difficulty of retaining prevention data, asking specifically about the Rise Above data. She also asked about the surveys’ ability to extrapolate for the broader population.
 1. One Chance said that Rise Above is a helpful measure, and they utilize Rise Above for their experience tracking many different drug use groups.
 2. One Chance has noted that through 12 years, they know how to “pivot” their message as need be.

4. 4:00-4:45 PM – Youth Prevention Applicants: Q&A Session

- a. Council Member Geitner and Council Member Stone requested further discussion prior to voting at this time.

- i. Council Member Geitner asked what the council is trying to achieve, and if there were any competing or duplicate applications.
 - 1. Council Member Leinweber noted that the applications are just for one year, and questioned whether the “one-and-done” deals are sustainable. Brought up Joint Initiatives’ budget which allocated 78% of requested grant money to personnel hires.
 - ii. Council Member Crow-Iverson highlighted the importance of education itself, showing that the dispensaries already call marijuana recreational as an example of problems “already on the ground”.
 - 1. Council Member Geitner agreed that this is the best place to attack, as marijuana is where “drug dependency begins”. Educating kids and teachers will turn the whole community against Colorado’s current drug culture.
 - iii. Council Member Johnson points out that focusing on halting marijuana usage is not itself directly tied to opioids. Council Member Geitner says it makes sense to start there as it is the origin of the problem.
 - iv. Council Member Stone believes that marketing is not one and done, and education is critical. Media is used for and against marijuana already, and billboards reach anyone and everyone on the road. Council Member Crow-Iverson agrees, but Council Member Leinweber stated that kids do not look at billboards, and TikTok is the best way to reach young people.
 - 1. Both participants in FullCircle’s program agreed with Council Member Leinweber.
 - v. Council Member Stone supported a “pass through” for One Chance to Grow Up. Council Member Stone and Council Member Leinweber suggested One Chance partner with FullCircle
- b. The following applicants were unanimously advanced by the Council for further consideration.**
- i. **Applicant 1: FullCircle**
 - 1. Council Member Stone calls FullCircle a “no-brainer” candidate for their loyalty to the program and overlap of the council’s goals and FullCircle’s goals.
 - 2. No objections or reluctance from any council member.
 - 3. The Council directed staff to move FullCircle forward for further consideration.
 - ii. **Applicant 2: CASA**
 - 1. Council Member Johnson noted CASA’s high return on investment, locality, and support levels for kids in bad spots. Council Member Stone agreed.
 - 2. Matt Rivier spoke as a personal victim to fentanyl poisoning, and stated he wished he knew more about drug abuse before his kids turned to oxycontin. Highlighted the importance of multi-prong approaches like going to schools during the day and teaching the parents at night.

3. CASA received no objections or reluctance to fund from any council member.
4. The Council directed staff to move CASA forward for further consideration.

c. The following applicants had additional discussion by the Council.

i. Applicant 1: One Chance to Grow Up

1. Council Member Stone supported funding them, and both Council Member Leinweber and Council Member Stone suggested One Chance work with FullCircle.
2. One Chance received no objections from any council member.
3. After further discussion, the council directed staff to move One Chance to Grow Up forward for further consideration.

ii. Applicant 2: TESSA

1. Council Member Stone points out that they are looking to increase their outreach and services, and with funding the quality will be higher.
2. Mark Cristiani is familiar with TESSA's approach, and has no concerns regarding implementation.
3. Steve Johnson questions the quantifiability of data.
4. Council Member Leinweber and Steve Johnson showed reluctance to give full thumbs up.
 - a. TESSA responded by highlighting their new focus on school advocacy, utilizing small groups instead of assemblies.
5. Carrie Geitner asked if there was anything controversial in the program that the parents might object to.
 - a. TESSA responded in the negative because they do not push lifestyle changes, like LGBT, outside drug use.
6. Council Member Markus asked what the company does within the schools and noted the difficulty of connecting this information to kids.
 - a. Most interactions occur in the library, and while it is difficult to reach kids, it is not an impassible challenge. Council Member Cristiani was a school resource officer, and noted that DARE and similar programs do not work, but what TESSA is trying might.
7. After discussion, the Council directed staff to move TESSA forward for further consideration.

iii. Applicant 3: Joint Initiatives for Youth and Family

1. Council Member Geitner expressed concern with funding fit, as several things Joint Initiatives does is outside the scope of funding for opioid abatement. Education is important, but it is not opioid education, it is general education.
 - a. Council Member Stone and Council Member Leinweber commented on the staff-heavy portion of the budget (78%). Joint Initiatives rebutted by stating there is a deep need for staff to connect on a personal level with the patients, and that requires manpower.

2. Council Member Geitner suggested cutting certain things out of Joint Initiatives' proposal, but is not opposed to what currently exists. She also asked how long the program had remained operational.
 - a. The program has existed for 10 years. At least half have dealt with some form of drug abuse, though opioid abuse itself is not tracked in its own category.
3. Council Member Cristiani mentioned the possibility of cutting a portion of funding from the request.
4. Council Member Stone agrees with Council Member Geitner's concerns over scope misalignment. Due to the high percentage of the fund being allocated to personnel, it is unclear how the results will turn out.
5. Council Member Markus suggests Joint Initiatives should examine and present a line item at the next meeting outlining what costs are necessary and why. Perhaps with this information, the council feels confident.
6. The Council did not direct staff to move Joint Initiatives forward for further consideration.

5. 4:45-5:00 PM – MAT / MOUD Applicants: Follow-Up Presentation

a. Crossroads Turning Points

- i. Submitted an oral argument that because Crossroads is the only detox center in the Colorado Springs area, they serve the opioid victims through medication. Argues that Crossroads takes pressure off hospitals by housing and referring opioid and other substance abuse victims.
- ii. Has expertise in helping addiction victims by lowering "any and all barriers" to treatment. The program includes the 12-step program, withdrawal abatement drugs, easy access to help, and eventual referral to sober living centers.
- iii. Council Member Johnson agrees that withdrawal is the most difficult time for addiction victims, highlights the importance of reduced barriers to treatment and sobriety.
 1. Crossroads responds, listing examples of how they reduce barriers (no physical forms, no long waiting times). States only difficulty is finding doctors who are willing to participate and endorse the program
- iv. The Council directed staff to move Crossroads forward for further consideration.

6. 5:00-5:10 PM - Previous Awardee Update

a. CO Rise Above

- i. Jenna Garrow and Eric Anderson represented CO Rise Above, immediately stating their return on investment. Highlights that stopping drug experimentation in youth leads to the greatest reduction in likelihood of adult drug abuse.
- ii. Jenna Garrow stated that CO Rise Above worked with One Chance to Grow Up.
- iii. CO Rise Above ensures that all of their advertising and outreach features real people from the counties they advertise in, thereby "localizing the results" and further encouraging program participation.
 1. CO Rise Above has three focus groups, two in El Paso County and one in Teller County, focusing on 13-18 year olds in each.

- iv. CO Rise Above published an app with a survey inside that received strong participation. On TikTok alone, CO Rise Above received 7.9M impressions in El Paso County and 3.3M impressions in Teller County. The results of these surveys are then used to create statistics speaking to peer perception of drugs.
 - 1. CO Rise Above argues this speaks to children and youth best because youth tend to listen the most to other youth.
 - 2. Council Member Geitner noticed that between El Paso County and Teller County responses and facts posted differed, to which CO Rise Above responded that it is county specific on purpose.

7. 5:10-5:22 PM – Strategic Planning Discussion

a. Planning for Remaining Grant Applicants

- i. SOWs and Recommended Interviews are awaiting evaluation. Becky confirmed that the evaluation criteria exists, but who is applying the evaluation criteria is not determined
- ii. Members agreed that the top ranked SOW applicants can be combined and reviewed in July.
 - 1. Council Member Geitner did not want the current form of the point ranking system to be used alone to make decisions. Council Member Geitner brought up the example that One Chance To Grow scored the lowest and would not be funded but they would have the highest score in other metrics.
 - 2. Council Member Crow-Iverson stated that she did not want to see rank based on cost, either, due to potential potency of focused but cheaper programs.
- iii. Council Member Crow-Iverson requested that presentations should be done rapidly because the council is behind schedule on releasing money to the applicants.
 - 1. Council Member Stone questioned the rubric's ability to filter applicants.
 - 2. Council Member Allen signaled that higher confidence in the scoring system would create more understanding and opportunities for removing applicants.
 - 3. Council Member Johnson requested a word or character limit be imposed on applications.
 - 4. Council Member Crow-Iverson recommended that we only have the presentations in the next meeting due to the number of applicants the council wishes to review.
 - 5. Council Member Allen suggested starting the meeting in June at 1:30 PM.
 - 6. The council agreed to start the next meeting at 1:30 PM to cover the applicants.

b. High Concentration Marijuana and Opioid Use Disorder RFP Update

- i. Facilitator Corbett recommended the best way to handle the RFP is to create a sub-committee. The council agreed. Facilitator Corbett asked for volunteers.

Those volunteering need to sign a no-conflict of interest form. This sub-committee will coordinate with James (and Becky).

- ii. Council Member Stone, Council Member Geitner, Council Member Markus, and Council Member Crow-Iverson all volunteered to be the evaluators. Each is to be emailed after the meeting on how to share the voting, paperwork, and interviews. If further disclosure is needed, extra paperwork will be provided by email.
 - 1. Responses were received and preliminarily scored. Recommended that we develop a subcommittee to review the applications and bring their decision back to the full council for endorsement.
- iii. Attorney Hodges highlighted that if more than two council members are in attendance, the meeting must be made public. It was agreed that a public meeting would be created and it would enter an executive session as needed to protect the confidentiality of the applicants as per the procurement rules.
- iv. Becky, Attorney Hodges, and Facilitator Corbett will come back to the committee with the results of the evaluation.
 - 1. Attorney Hodges reminded the council that any time there are two or more members discussing council matters, the meeting must be posted with notes taken, as though it were a monthly meeting.

c. COAC Updates

- i. Facilitator Corbett attends the COAC monthly meetings on behalf of the council. He will provide summaries from those meetings to the council.
- ii. Financial reporting required from Amanda Grant, which was completed.
- iii. Facilitator Corbett passed out the financial reports.

8. 5:22-5:35 PM – Public Comments

- a. Eric Olson hopes that the decision on funding would be reached at the next meeting. He is asking for a decision at the next meeting to prevent a funding lapse.
- b. Liana Murphy from Serenity requested clarity on the decision process. Stated that her current contracts expire June 30 and to continue operations, the funds from the council are required. Is happy to present in the June meeting, but wants a decision made above all else.
- c. Sherri Trahern asked about the timing of funding for the next cycle. She also stated that SRC is “doing the work [they] are supposed to be doing” and is looking forward to presenting at the next meeting.
 - i. Council Member Geitner highlights that there is a limited amount of grant money. There is a limited amount of grant money and the council needs to understand the outcomes for what was spent.
- d. Council Member Allen noted to thank his staff who had to stay past five to allow the meeting to run later.

9. 5:35 PM – Adjourned by Facilitator Corbett.