



## **Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority**

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### **NEWS RELEASE**

#### **OAA Awards \$9.1 Million in Funding to Agencies of the Commonwealth**

*August 5, 2024*– On Friday, August 2, 2024, a committee of the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) voted to award \$9,079,332 in funding to sixteen different agencies of the Commonwealth for opioid abatement and remediation efforts.

Under a statute that was passed into law in 2021, a minimum of 15% of opioid settlement funds paid to the Commonwealth is to be spent on abatement efforts managed by state agencies.

Senator Todd Pillion, Chairman of the OAA, noted that the awards will be used to expand and accelerate the fight against the opioid crisis in Virginia. “The OAA’s financial support of these state agencies will allow Virginia to continue to lead the nation in fighting the scourge of opioid and substance use, by investing in efforts that include prevention and education, research, treatment, and support for people in recovery.” Funding for these projects is scheduled to be transferred from the OAA to the recipient organizations as early as October 1.

Dr. Sarah Thomason, a clinical pharmacist who chairs the OAA’s Grants Committee, noted that with this latest round of awards, the OAA will have allocated nearly \$64 million in awards to cities, counties, and state agencies since the OAA began offering grants last year.

The approved projects were selected through a competitive process and included a review of proposals submitted by the agencies. The resulting awards will be the second allocation of OAA funds for state agencies. Funding for the OAA grants and awards is a result of Virginia’s participation in numerous national settlement payments from manufacturers and distributors of prescription opioids. The payments from the various settling companies are expected to continue for at least 15 more years and will likely exceed \$1.1 billion in total funding.

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The OAA was established by the General Assembly in 2021 to oversee the distribution of 55% of Virginia's total settlement funds. Of the remainder, 30% is distributed directly to cities and counties and 15% to the Commonwealth. The use of funds is restricted by court orders and state statute, with the restrictions aiming for the funds to be used for opioid abatement efforts.

For more information contact [info@voaa.us](mailto:info@voaa.us)

## Approved Funding for Agencies of the Commonwealth

### **Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services (DBHDS).**

- \$117,165 for the second year of funding of a Substance Use Data Analyst. The agency will also carry forward a balance of \$11,133, thus the total expenditure will be 128,298.
- Extend the “Judicial Substance Use Training program” to September 30, 2025. No additional funding is recommended.
- Extend the “Recovery High School” project to September 30, 2025, with no additional funding, to ensure the funds awarded by the OAA are used to support the new FY2025-26 General Assembly budget requirement for the expansion of recovery high schools in Loudoun and Virginia Beach.
- \$385,000 to enable continuing collaboration with the Virginia Recovery Corps (an AmeriCorps program). Recovery Corps develops qualified, Certified Peer Recovery Specialists that are integrated into and add to a full continuum of addiction recovery services. OAA funding will enable VRCP to access and draw down nearly \$2 million in Federal matching funds that will be used to support 70 Peer Navigator positions.

### **Department of Corrections (DOC)**

- \$276,770 for the second year of funding for six social workers (located at six VADOC specialized SUD program sites) that assist with substance use disorder treatment. In addition to the recommended funding of \$276,770, VADOC will carry forward \$293,236 from the first year for this program, thus the total expected expenditure will be \$570,006.

### **Department of Education (DOE)**

- \$520,250 for the second year of funding for DOE’s statewide, cross-sector effort to address opioid misuse by educating students, parents, school employees, and student-athletes about the dangers of drug use and how to prevent opioid misuse and addiction.

### **Department of Health (VDH)**

- \$473,137 for the second year of funding for the statewide naloxone distribution program.
- \$277,944 for the second year of funding for the “Comprehensive Harm Reduction” project. VDH will also carry forward \$722,056 from the first year for this program, thus the total expected expenditure will be \$1 million.
- \$128,703 for the second year of funding for three substance use coordinator positions at the Richmond and Henrico Health District, the Hampton and Peninsula Health District, and the Portsmouth Health District. VDH will also carry forward \$176,278 from the first year for this program, thus the total expected expenditure will be \$304,981.
- \$83,685 for an Overdose Prevention Strategist position for the West Piedmont Health District.
- \$130,407 to support the establishment of a standardized approach for local and regional overdose review teams.

### **Department of Health Professions (DHP)**

- \$361,219 for the second year of funding for a program that connects the prescription monitoring program to prescribers' electronic health records and pharmacists' pharmacy dispensing systems.

### **Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)**

- Continuation of the multi-year, multi-step "Discharge Bridge Program." DMAS will carry forward \$150,000 from the first year.

### **Department of Social Services (DSS)**

- \$411,000 for the second year of funding for the kinship navigator program in coordination with local governments and community partners.
- \$291,247 to implement an Opioid Reduction Registry within the 211 Virginia Resource Database and the creation of a text platform for individuals dealing with substance use disorder, as well as the inclusion of new and expanded substance use disorder services that will be more readily available statewide, all integrated with 988 and various resource locators.

### **Office of the Attorney General (OAG)**

- \$675,000 for the second year of funding for the OAG's "Fentanyl and Opioid Prevention and Awareness" mass media campaign to educate Virginians regarding the dangers of opioids, with a focus on fentanyl.

### **Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia (OES)**

- \$113,000 for the second year of funding for the development and promotion of a statewide best practice standard for drug testing within alternative dockets and recovery courts. OES will also carry forward \$387,000 from the first year, thus the total expenditure will be \$500,000.

### **Radford University**

- \$210,698 for the second year of funding for the "Healing, Outreach, Prevention, and Empowerment (HOPE)" project run by Radford Collegiate Recovery Program. Radford University will also carry forward \$90,908 from the first year, thus the total expenditure will be \$301,606.

### **University of Virginia (UVA).**

- \$269,489 for the second year of funding for the UVA "Street Medicine Access Reduction and Treatment" (SMART) clinic, an office based opioid treatment (OBOT) program to engage individuals with opioid use disorder.
- \$215,075 for the pilot "COSMOS" digital contingency management platform. UVA has designed this pilot to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of digital contingency management intervention in reducing opioid and substance use, as well as improving participant recovery outcomes.

### **Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).**

- \$207,820 for the second year of development for a technical resource “toolkit” of opioid abatement best practices and evidence-based programs that cities and counties can implement using opioid settlement funds. VCU will also carry-forward \$28,279 from the first year, thus the total expenditure will be \$236,099.
- \$74,401 for the second year of a project by the VCU Massey Cancer Center to research and develop protocols for pain management in palliative care settings. VCU will carry-forward \$170,599 from the first year, thus the total expenditure will be \$245,000.
- \$575,088 for the “Virginia Naloxone Project,” which will train, equip, and support at least twenty emergency departments across Virginia with take-home Naloxone for at-risk patients, as well as the improved connection to addiction treatment services and the development of data collection and continuous quality improvement program structure.
- \$84,373 for a “Fast Track to Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) Program” to expand existing VCU coursework and clinical internships for Bachelors level (BSW) and Masters level (MSW) social work students to provide credit towards the Virginia Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) certification.
- \$82,322 to support the expansion of VCU’s Recovery Scholars Program (RSP), which will extend to ten colleges and universities across Virginia. These funds will support scholarships to students in recovery who are pursuing certification for Substance Abuse Counseling (CSAC) and professional Certified Peer Recovery Specialists in the workforce who are seeking to further their careers.

### **Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (Virginia Tech)**

- \$725,008 for the second year of a program to provide training for teachers to implement the evidence-based Botvin Life Skills program, Mental Health First Aid, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) training in schools, as well as VCE’s continued partnership in regional substance use education and prevention coalitions.

### **Virginia Foundation for Health Youth (VFHY)**

- \$1,400,000 for the second phase of the “Prevention and Education Campaign on Fentanyl and Overdose for Youth and Young Adults” (also referred to as “Deadly Dose”) project, a statewide prevention and education campaign for youth and young adults.
- \$115,000 to support the “Expanding Access to the Dangers of Fentanyl Module” program in high-risk public-school systems. VFHY revise the existing “Dangers of Fentanyl” educational module for use in middle schools, provide training to teachers on curricula usage, and create a Spanish-language version.

### **Virginia Indigent Defense Commission (VIDC)**

- \$374,546 for the second year of funding for collaboration between the VIDC and Virginia Recovery Corps (an AmeriCorps program) to embed peer navigators within public defender offices in localities with the highest overdose death rates combined with the largest public defender caseloads. VIDC will also carry forward 33,194 from the first year, thus the total expenditure will be \$407,740.

### **Virginia State University (VSU)**

- \$241,341 for the VSU Public Health Institute's "Healthful Engagement for Support, Treatment, Recovery, and Interventions" project to enhance treatment and recovery service accessibility for adult residents through individual and group support sessions for substance use, and evidence-based and empirically supported therapies for addiction recovery.
- \$90,100 for the VSU "Leveraging Workforce Needs" program to address workforce needs for abatement efforts. In this project, VSU seeks to educate and prepare certified peer recovery specialists, certified substance abuse counselors, and Virginia certified drug and alcohol counselors. VSU will coordinate pipeline related opportunities for Virginia State University psychology and social work students.
- \$169,534 for the "Mobilization of Access for Underserved and Marginalized Communities" project to identify and address disparities in access to abatement efforts for people in traditionally disadvantaged communities.