Memo to the Grants Committee
February 25, 2026
From: Liz Blackwell-Moore, Public Health Director
Subject: FY 2027 Substance Use Disorder Assistance Program grant application.

The Maine Department of Public Safety is planning to release a Request for Applications for the FY 2027 Substance Use Disorder Assistance Program. The purpose of the program is to "assist persons with presumed substance use disorder using liaison strategies both before and after arrest to refer alleged low-level (non-felony) offenders into community-based treatment and support services." We have been told the program will run from April 1, 2026-March 31, 2027. The Department of Public Safety anticipates make multiple awards with $500,000 in available funding.

The Department of Public Safety's Substance Use Disorder Assistance Program has funded Cumberland County Public Health's Pathways of HOPE program since 2023 – a collaboration between the Cumberland County Public Health Department and the Portland Recovery Community Center. To date, this program has served over 90 Cumberland County residents and supplied approximately 120 months of recovery housing to people in the program. If award to CCPH again this year, the SUD Assistance Program grant funding will continue to fund the Pathways of HOPE program which includes:

- 1 FTE social service navigator at Portland Recovery Community Center
- Program management by the Behavioral Public Health Manager, Brandon Irwin, within the County Public Health Department
- Treatment and recovery housing funds
- Finance supports from Sadie Dalzell, Finance and Administrative Assistant, within the County Public Health Department

Adapted from existing deflection program models[1], Pathways of HOPE relies on several referral pathways. First, the self-referral pathway will receive anyone who voluntarily walks in the door at the Portland Recovery Community Center attempting to access services. In previous iterations of the program, many of these self-referred participants learned about the program through word-of-mouth. Second, the program will partner with local agencies from across the criminal legal system, including local law enforcement agencies (officers and behavioral health liaisons), treatment court, probation, and jail reentry to establish and/or strengthen pathways to the program. In these pathways, the program relies on personnel within the criminal legal system to identify potential participants and refer them to the program. In the past, this has in some cases also involved transportation to PRCC. Lastly, the program will receive referrals from community-based programs that interact with people who use drugs and who have current or are at risk of criminal legal system involvement. This pathway largely includes, but is not limited to, outreach workers who interact with the unhoused population.

Participation is voluntary but requires the individual to meet with a Peer Resource Navigator employed by PRCC to assess and identify unmet needs, receive referral information and be linked to services (as needed and applicable). Once the PRCC social service navigator has completed an assessment to identify the unmet needs of the person with an SUD, they support them to connect with recovery supports, treatment, recovery housing, or other social services to support them to get their needs met. If there is a financial barrier for getting into treatment or recovery housing and the person is at high risk for involvement in the criminal legal system or

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[1] The Six Pathways: Frameworks for Implementing Deflection to Treatment, Services, and Recovery. Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)'s Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP), Center for Health Justice (June 2023).

overdose, the grant can pay for up to $3000 in treatment or a few months of recovery housing. (Number of months will depend on total funding awarded).

No matching funding is required for this grant and no additional funding will be needed from the County in order to complete the requirements of this grant.