

Massachusetts SOR Initiatives

Addressing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse & Use Disorders: The Impact of State Opioid Response (SOR) Grants

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) administers the SOR grant program. SOR addresses the opioid overdose crisis by providing resources to states and territories to increase access to Federal Drug Administration-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and to reduce unmet treatment needs and opioid-related overdose deaths with prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery supports. In 2020, SOR expanded to support evidence-based services for stimulant misuse and use disorders (StUD), including cocaine and methamphetamine.

This brief was developed by the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) in collaboration with the Opioid Response Network (ORN) as part of a series of state reports intended to showcase initiatives across the continuum of care that states have implemented with SOR funds. The ORN is a SAMHSA-funded technical assistance and training center that works with states, health professionals, community organizations, the justice system, and individuals in all 50 states and nine territories to support efforts to address the opioid and stimulant crisis.



Single State Agency (SSA): Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Addiction Services

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Addiction Services has received \$343 million in SOR funding from FY18 through FY23. For FY23–FY24, it received \$59.6 million. Massachusetts aims to address the opioid overdose crisis with SOR by serving affected individuals through a data-driven recovery-oriented system of care approach. Overarching goals for the funding include:

1. Improving, enhancing, and expanding the state's infrastructure for reporting on the opioid epidemic
2. Enhancing opioid misuse, addiction, and overdose prevention interventions by expanding overdose prevention in high-risk, high-need communities using innovative and evidence-based methods
3. Expanding treatment and recovery support for people with opioid use disorder (OUD) and StUD
4. Increasing capacity through targeted workforce development and training activities
5. Increasing education and awareness to reduce stigma and increase access to MOUD through development of strategic communications campaigns



Preventing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse Before It Starts

The Massachusetts SSA has used SOR to implement several prevention programs, including school-based interventions, youth and young adult access centers, and Native community prevention programs.

Prevention in Early Childhood

Massachusetts funds approximately 15 municipalities working to strengthen prevention in early childhood capacity and infrastructure to enhance protective factors and minimize risk factors for children (prenatal to age 11) with elevated levels of risk for future substance use and related health and behavioral health issues.

Access Centers

In partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, the SSA continues to fund substance addiction education, assessment, and referrals for transition-aged youth and young adults ages 16 to 21 who are at high risk of developing or currently experiencing a substance use disorder (SUD) and/or co-occurring mental health condition.

Overdose Reversal Efforts: Saving Lives

Massachusetts has used SOR to support initiatives that provide access to overdose reversal medications.

Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) Expansion

The state funded approximately 22 community-based organizations to provide harm reduction services, including, but not limited to, overdose prevention education and naloxone distribution to individuals at high risk for experiencing or witnessing an opioid overdose.

Implementing Harm Reduction Strategies

Massachusetts has used SOR to implement programs aimed at reducing harms associated with OUD and StUD.

Post-Overdose Support Teams (POST)

Massachusetts funds approximately 11 harm reduction organizations to offer post-overdose support services to individuals who have recently experienced a nonfatal overdose, as well as to their social support networks. POST offers in-person, home-based, and venue-based outreach and support grounded in a harm reduction approach after an overdose or stimulant-related acute medical event occurs and is reported to the program. Community programs receive triggers for service based on data, such as police reports, 911 calls for service, emergency medical services records, and other data sources tracking overdose events. Three funded sites successfully contacted at least 1,563 individuals located at addresses where an overdose occurred.

Increasing Access to Treatment

Massachusetts has implemented initiatives to increase access to OUD and StUD treatment in the state.

Collaborative and Transitional Models (CTM)

Massachusetts funds three CTMs offering low-barrier access to evidence-based treatment, including FDA-approved MOUD. This innovative program serves as a treatment intake hub, providing immediate access to

buprenorphine and naltrexone treatment, along with mental health and recovery support navigator services for individuals with OUD. Programming was later expanded to include treatment for StUD. Patients present from any location—such as home, hospital inpatient units, emergency departments, or correctional facilities—and are able to quickly stabilize. MOUD can be initiated on demand without delay (or continued without interruption) while a recovery support navigator helps find long-term treatment providers in each patient’s home community.

MOUD Enhanced

Massachusetts funds opioid treatment programs (OTPs) and office-based opioid treatment (OBOTs) programs to enhance their services. This program also expands and enhances OBOTs and OTPs in identified geographic areas of high need and among high-risk, high-need populations. Enhanced services consist of community- or home-based outreach, innovative models to serve hard-to-reach patients, specialized case management, and clinical and other support services, such as:

- Client community outreach, including to specific populations like young people or pregnant and parenting women
- Contingency management, which provides motivational incentives to treat individuals living with SUD, promote their retention in treatment, and support their path to recovery
- Expanded access and entry to care, including same-day admissions or dispensing and an increased referral network
- Expanded locations and hours to increase treatment access for individuals unable to attend during regular hours
- Increased staffing, including bilingual staff
- Mobile MOUD and wraparound services
- Recovery support and navigation services



Stimulant Treatment and Recovery Teams (START)

Massachusetts has used SOR to support START programs across the state. START began as a two-year pilot program. The model has expanded to improve accessible care, treatment, and services for people with StUD. Because stimulant use is relatively more common in some racial and ethnic groups, the lack of stimulant care access results in racial and ethnic inequities. By implementing evidence-based practices for StUD and OUD treatment through a multidisciplinary team approach consisting of providers from primary care, behavioral health, and case management services, patients create their own holistic treatment plan incorporating core treatment pillars: Engagement; Emergency pharmacological protocols; Contingency management (within \$75 SAMHSA cap); Cool down spaces and exercises; and Wraparound support to reduce stimulant use.

Supporting Long-Term Recovery

The state used SOR to expand recovery support, including community centers, housing, and links to services.

Access to Recovery (ATR)

Massachusetts continues to fund ATR, a program offering support services, such as basic needs, sober housing, recovery coaching, and job training, to people in early recovery.



Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

In partnership with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, Massachusetts continues to fund RRH for individuals with OUD or StUD. SOR RRH provides housing assistance to people who have a history of SUD and are at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

Out of School Enrichment

Massachusetts continues to fund around three vendors to provide developmentally appropriate, recovery-oriented enrichment programming for youth and young adults in recovery from OUD or StUD.

Alternate Peer Groups (APGs)

Massachusetts funds two APGs, a comprehensive adolescent recovery support model that integrates recovering peers and pro-social activities into evidence-based clinical practice. They also continue to develop, build, and maintain young adult recovery support networks throughout the state.

Reaching & Serving Populations of Focus

Massachusetts has used SOR to implement and support programs that reach and serve populations of focus, including pregnant and parenting people, older adults, youth, and Native Americans.

Moms Do Care

Massachusetts provided funding for Moms Do Care, a program model serving pregnant, postpartum, and parenting women with a history of OUD or StUD. Each project participant is paired with a perinatal peer mentor who acts as care navigator and peer support specialist in assisting participants to access MOUD, as well as obstetric, primary, mental health, and pediatric health care. The mentor also links them with wraparound treatment, recovery support, and family services. The expanded model supports a medical and behavioral health home for perinatal women with OUD to increase engagement through service integration, patient-centered scheduling, care navigation, and peer support. This model seeks to create seamless provider collaboration, through co-location or close integration of services.

FIRST Steps Together

Massachusetts provides SOR funding for the Home Visiting Initiative, also known as FIRST Steps Together. The program is a home-visiting parenting and recovery support initiative serving pregnant women, mothers, and fathers of young children who are impacted by OUD or StUD.

Native American and Indigenous Community Programs

Massachusetts continues to develop and assess Native arts programs focused on health, wellness, and prevention of substance use. The program provides community art activities and guidance for culturally appropriate, trauma-informed support in Native communities by request. This includes digital storytelling, sacred parenting classes, traditional arts and crafts projects, and more. The programs engage in strategies that build protective factors and address risk factors for Tribal/Indigenous youth, families, and communities designed to prevent future substance misuse. They engage young adults in innovative pro-social programming to develop resiliency, healthy decision-making, Native identity, and expression.

School-Based Interventions

The Massachusetts SSA funds around 41 agencies to implement developmentally appropriate assessment and intervention services in middle and high school settings.



MOUD in Long-Term Care Facilities

This project's goal is to support long-term care facilities in providing care for residents diagnosed with an OUD or StUD, including those who receive MOUD.



About the Opioid Response Network (ORN): ORN is a group of diverse individuals and organizations working collaboratively to address the opioid and stimulant crisis. Funded by SAMHSA's SOR/Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Technical Assistance (TA) grant, ORN works with states, health professionals, community organizations, the justice system, and individuals in all 50 states and nine territories to provide education and training. **Visit the ORN website [here](#) or request training or TA [here](#).**

Disclaimer: Funding for this initiative was made possible (in part) by grant no. 1H79T1o85588-01 from SAMHSA. The information contained in this brief was provided and verified by the state/jurisdiction. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of SAMHSA or the Department of Health and Human Services.