

Nevada 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): Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public and Behavioral Health Bureau of Behavioral Health, Wellness, and Prevention

From FY19 through FY23, the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public and Behavioral Health Bureau of Behavioral Health, Wellness, and Prevention received \$65.5 million in SOR funding. For FY23–FY24, it received \$17.3 million.

Each goal and initiative for the Nevada SOR III project builds on the work completed under Nevada's State Targeted Response grant, SOR I, and SOR II. SOR III aligns with the areas identified in Nevada's Opioid Needs Assessment and Statewide Plan that was developed and published in 2022. The focus of the latest iteration of SOR (SOR III Year II) is service delivery expansion via the following identified goals:

Goal 1. Decrease youth substance use by implementing evidence-based programs within school districts that address risk factors that may lead to initiation.



Goal 2. Expand overdose prevention activities to prevent opioid and stimulant overdose deaths.

- Increase product accessibility through naloxone saturation plan
- Expand number of counties distributing fentanyl test strips
- Expand number of counties with public health vending machine distribution
- Develop a module to include additional questions specific to overdose witnessed/naloxone use in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

Goal 3. Increase access to clinically appropriate treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) and StUD.

- Increase continuing education opportunities for primary care, behavioral health, and peer support providers to increase proficiency with health equity and inclusion
- Increase continuing education opportunities for primary care, behavioral health, and peer support providers to increase proficiency providing trauma-informed care
- Increase services for special populations, including but not limited to, veterans, service members (and families), youth and families, and the aging population with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Increase number of physicians attending continuing education to support and provide MOUD
- Increase number of providers using screening, brief intervention, referral to treatment (SBIRT)
- Increase treatment utilization by pregnant and postpartum individuals with OUD or StUD
- Increase number of individuals served within justice-involved populations
- Increase number of mobile MOUD units throughout rural communities
- Increase number of emergency departments implementing MOUD induction

Goal 4. Enhance access to recovery support services throughout Nevada.

- Increase recovery housing facilities
- Increase utilization of peer support services to assist with high-risk transitions of care (e.g., criminal justice settings)
- Increase supported employment and work readiness efforts

Goal 5. Increase production and distribution of culturally appropriate translated materials and direct outreach, including training given in multiple languages.

- Develop culturally appropriate translated materials for all SOR harm reduction referral products
- Develop and implement harm reduction trainings in alternative languages
- Develop and deploy social media and traditional media campaigns focusing on connectivity to care and stigma reduction
- Provide education to patients, persons in recovery, and healthcare providers on alternatives for pain management and support services

Preventing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse Before It Starts

Nevada has used SOR to support prevention programs like school-based interventions, distribution of drug deactivation bags, and an awareness campaign.



Nevada Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board Support

Nevada law (NRS 433.428, 433.429) created five behavioral health regions and a regional behavioral health policy board for each region. Each region employs a regional behavioral health coordinator (RBHC) to work with each health policy board. Using SOR funds, each RBHC promoted and connected SOR activities, programs, and service provider organizations to stakeholders and partners throughout their respective communities. Each RBHC identified and coordinated with other entities in the behavioral health region and throughout the state to review and identify issues relating to substance use and mental health and developed an annual report, which included the specific substance use and mental health needs of the behavioral health region.

Some specific activities the RBHCs participated in included regular attendance at county substance misuse task force meetings, holding positions on substance misuse prevention coalitions, working with Safe Baby Court and other drug courts, participating in prescription drug take-back programs, and facilitating meetings around Medicaid policies and crisis response planning.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Nevada's SOR team, the MTSS team from the Nevada Department of Education, and local substance use disorder (SUD) prevention coalitions are developing a training and implementation plan to place prevention support specialists in school districts that have already implemented MTSS or in the process of doing so. These specialists will be contracted through the statewide SUD prevention coalitions. The role of the prevention support specialists will be flexible to meet each school district's needs and support instructors and administrators. A learning series was developed for the end of summer 2024 with an expectation for final placement beginning in the fall for the new school year.

Distribution of Deterra Drug Deactivation Bags

The Nevada SSA has continued collaborating with the State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services and Adult Protective Services. This has included providing staff with Deterra bags for distribution to clients and working with the agency to provide live and recorded opioid-related learning events for staff.

Faces of Recovery Campaign

Faces of Recovery, an opioid awareness campaign, was developed using SOR. The campaign won numerous Northern Nevada American Advertising Federation awards for public service campaigns.

SBIRT Training for Primary Care and Substance Use and Mental Health Practitioners

The Adopt SBIRT program is a SOR initiative that provides key resources to help organizations promote, prepare, adopt, and implement SBIRT. Training is provided through face-to-face training, online courses, and an interactive virtual learning series.

Adopt SBIRT hosted numerous learning opportunities during the last completed funding cycle, including:

- **Self-Paced Online Course on SBIRT:** The four online training modules provide epidemiological trends and data on the percentage of the U.S. population participating in risky alcohol and other drug use, and medical conditions associated with risky drinking and drug use.
- **Screening and Brief Intervention for Alcohol and Opioid/Substance Use:** A self-paced online module course that includes a comprehensive evidence-based approach for facilitating conversations between patients/clients and healthcare providers in medical and community health settings regarding alcohol and opioid/substance use.
- **Preparing Your Health Center for SBIRT:** An extended online learning series that uses blended activities, self-study, and performance feedback related to the implementation of SBIRT and exposes

participants to standardized SBIRT protocols. Through virtual-interactive learning, participants receive real-time performance feedback related to SBIRT implementation strategies with an emphasis on integrating brief interventions into current services and workflow.

- **SBIRT for Health Professionals Project ECHO Series:** Adopt SBIRT staff collaborated with the Nevada Perinatal Health Initiative (NV-PHI) and other partners to support SBIRT training and technical assistance, outreach, and implementation associated with reference guides developed by NV-PHI for interdisciplinary professionals working in reproductive health settings across the state. The reference guides for *Reproductive Health Complicated by Substance Use (2020)* and *Labor and Delivery Complicated by Substance Use (2021)* provide basic directives for successfully implementing SBIRT, specifically how to apply it to pregnant and non-pregnant people in reproductive-age populations.

Overdose Reversal Efforts: Saving Lives

Nevada has used SOR to support its overdose reversal medication distribution and education initiatives.

Trac-B Public Health Vending Machines

Nebraska Trac-B Exchange operates harm reduction vending machines across Nevada to provide an easily accessible method for people who use drugs to obtain a range of harm reduction supplies, including naloxone administration instructions, overdose education, safer drug use tips, and contact information for referral services, along with safe syringe disposal/exchange. Funding supports the maintenance and purchasing of additional vending machines across Nevada. New vending machines completed 720 transactions for products, including naloxone kits, fentanyl test strips, condoms, pregnancy tests, hygiene kits, snacks, reusable water bottles, washing machine soap, foil emergency blankets, rain ponchos, tape, matches, and zip ties. SOR provided funding for only the vending machines, naloxone, and fentanyl test strips. Other funding was used for all other products.

Expanded Naloxone Distribution Efforts

In FY22, Nevada used SOR to distribute 22,907 naloxone kits. For FY23, they distributed 27,885. In collaboration with OD2A funds, an additional 22,190 naloxone kits were distributed, bringing the total to 50,075 kits. That was an increase of 18,584 kits (119% more) than in FY22. In FY23, 38 new naloxone distribution sites were added, including six new schools. Additionally, schools were provided with overdose education to school nurses, counselors, principals, and teachers.

Naloxone Administration Training for Law Enforcement and First Responders

Using SOR II NCE funds, an online self-paced course was developed and is accessible through the University of Nevada–Reno’s Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies to train law enforcement on naloxone/Narcan administration. The one-hour online course covers how pain and opioids work in the body, how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose, the role of naloxone in an opioid overdose and how it can prevent death, and how to use various forms of naloxone.

Implementing Harm Reduction Strategies

Nevada has used SOR to support allowable harm reduction services, described below.

Fentanyl Test Strip Distribution

Nevada used SOR to purchase fentanyl test strips and began distribution in March 2022. Education and distribution targeted the highest need populations. Priority was given to harm reduction organizations, syringe services programs, organizations that engage in street outreach and work directly with high-risk populations, law enforcement/first responders, leave-behind programs, existing naloxone distribution sites, and prevention coalitions. The program began with one pilot site and has expanded to 58 sites.

In one year, Nevada used SOR funds to distribute more than 50,000 fentanyl test strips.

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Updates

BRFSS is a state-based nationwide survey sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to gather data on health risk behaviors, preventive health practices, and healthcare access primarily related to chronic disease and injury health risks in the United States. Nevada uses BRFSS data to identify emerging health problems, establish and track health objectives, and develop and evaluate public health policies and programs. Nevada's SOR team is working with BRFSS research faculty to implement SOR-specific questions for the 2024 survey.

Anonymous Support Boxes

Anonymous support boxes with recovery and treatment service linkage information and harm reduction materials, including naloxone, have been placed in 17 businesses with a Nevada Recovery-Friendly Workplace (RFW) designation. The RFW initiative is designed to help individuals with SUD achieve long-term success in the workplace by creating a balance between their work and recovery commitments. Boxes are placed in an inconspicuous location where materials can be picked up by employees at any time. The workplace can order more materials by scanning the QR code on the box.

Translation of Harm Reduction Materials and Trainings

Recently, all SOR-produced harm reduction materials have been translated into Spanish, as Spanish is the second most common language in the state. Additionally, SOR has identified bilingual recovery ambassadors to provide harm reduction trainings in Spanish upon request.

Increasing Access to Treatment

Nevada has used SOR to increase treatment access, including training for medical professionals, court treatment programs, and SBIRT implementation.

Opioid Treatment and Recovery Center (IOTRC) Training for Pre-Professionals

This initiative places pharmacy and physician assistant graduate students with SUD treatment providers to complete rotations of at least one day through an IOTRC hub to expose students to MOUD. So far, 29 pharmacy students, 29 physician assistant students, and 10 medical students have completed a rotation. The students interact with prescribing doctors, nurses, and counselors and receive complementary reading assignments as part of their coursework.

Specialty Court Programs

Nevada has used SOR to support a MOUD re-entry program, which is a court-supervised treatment program for individuals on early release from prison or those on parole who have OUD or StUD.





Additionally, the Las Vegas Justice Court Misdemeanor Treatment Court received SOR funds to provide service linkages to individuals with OUD or StUD and a history of chronic incarceration for misdemeanor crimes. Services include appropriate treatment service referrals, stable housing, and wraparound services to reduce recidivism and increase positive outcomes for participants.

Project ECHO MOUD Office Hours

MOUD office hours take place monthly and provide a forum to discuss patient cases, address questions and concerns, and collaborate regarding MOUD. From September 30, 2021, through March 30, 2022, 12 MOUD office hours were held with 60 attendees. As a result of the activity, 100% of participants reported increased knowledge, 93% a decreased sense of professional isolation, 93% an improved ability to provide appropriate care, and 79% reported they would make changes to their practice.

CrossRoads of Southern Nevada – Veterans Program

Using the Seeking Safety treatment model, CrossRoads of Southern Nevada provides SUD treatment for veterans in residential and intensive outpatient settings using cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, and motivational interviewing. The program is purposefully flexible so veterans can enter at any time within the level of care and experience all modules.

Project ECHO for StUD

Project ECHO, with the University of Nevada–Reno School of Medicine, began offering a StUD clinic starting July 2023 for six sessions. The clinic will be cohort-based and offer a variety of topics depending on the audience, including:

- Neurobiology of StUD
- Medications used for StUD
- Special populations
- Burnout/compassion fatigue
- Challenges in StUD treatment

Additionally, discussions have started with Renown Medical Center, Northern Nevada’s largest hospital system, to develop a pilot project focusing on the special needs of individuals exhibiting chronic psychosis due to stimulant misuse.

Supporting Long-Term Recovery

To help individuals reach and maintain long-term recovery, Nevada has implemented support services, such as a recovery-friendly workforce initiative, parenting programs, and a recovery community organization.

Recovery-Friendly Workplace (RFW) Initiative

The RFW initiative was established in 2018 and empowers individuals with OUD and StUD to achieve long-term career success by bridging the gap between recovery and employment. Through SOR, RFW has expanded services offered to individuals who need supportive coordination of care and direct navigation to needed services while in recovery. It offers comprehensive services to special populations impacted by OUD or StUD, including veterans, veterans who are unhoused, people involved in the criminal justice system, and disconnected youth. Through collaboration with city, state, and federal partners, as well as community-based organizations, RFW identifies recovery-friendly employment opportunities and

1,414 individuals gained employment in the first year of this initiative.

builds a strong foundation for sustained recovery and career success, using workforce as a recovery tool. The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services RFW has created a team of specialists who navigate individuals to immediate care coordination.

Parenting as a Path to Recovery Program

The University of Nevada—Las Vegas Ackerman Center and the University of Nevada—Reno Nevada Center for Excellence in Disability collaborated to develop the Parenting as a Path to Recovery Program. The program was designed to address the issue of numerous parents entering treatment as a means through which to retain or regain custody of their children but lacking the skills to cope with parenting stressors that often leave people vulnerable to relapse. Additionally, parenting children with developmental and behavioral challenges as a result of in-utero exposure to opioids or stimulants without support further exacerbates parental stress. A 90-minute Positive Behavior Support 101 class is delivered to recruit individuals in treatment to the four-week Addressing Challenging Behaviors course.

Foundation for Recovery

The only recovery community organization in the state, Foundation for Recovery, which has an office in Las Vegas, was the main provider of peer support services under SOR. An additional 11 organizations that provide treatment use peer support services to enhance care.

A total of 1,248 clients received peer support services.

Paramedicine Buprenorphine Induction Efforts

Nevada provided SOR funds to the City of Las Vegas to develop a community paramedicine program that includes buprenorphine induction during transport as appropriate and follow-up care. Additionally, they will serve as a liaison to local hospital systems to advocate for buprenorphine induction in the emergency room.

Reaching & Serving Populations of Focus

Nevada has used SOR to implement several programs and services to reach and serve populations of focus, including justice-involved individuals, pregnant and parenting women, high school students, and older adults.

Distribution of Detera Drug Deactivation Bags to Older Adults

SOR III staff have continued collaborating with the State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services and Adult Protective Services. This has included providing staff with Detera bags for distribution to clients and working with the agency to provide live and recorded opioid-related learning events for staff.



Nevada Department of Corrections, Nevada Prison Opioid Project (NPOP)

The Nevada Department of Corrections is working to implement a MOUD program for justice-involved individuals with OUD who are currently serving sentences within the state's prison system. A prison system of this sort is not currently implemented in Nevada. Presently, Nevada only has one jail facility that has a complete MOUD program, so the opportunity for a continuation of care into the prison system is much needed. Efforts will involve various phases, including training staff and inmates on the benefits of MOUD and



correcting common misconceptions regarding the practice (of which there are many, specifically among Nevada’s rural and frontier populations). Additionally, the project will use funding to purchase methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone for administration to individuals who are incarcerated.

Empowering Mothers for Positive Outcomes With Education, Recovery, and Early Development (EMPOWERED) Program

EMPOWERED supports pregnant and postpartum mothers who use or have used opioids or stimulants for any reason. It is designed to empower moms to be prepared for the birth of their babies, and to thrive as a mother, caregiver, and woman. EMPOWERED is a recovery-oriented program that combines MOUD with education, counseling, and peer support services and aims to manage the social determinants of health of program participants and their families. This federal funding is intended to combat multiple facets of substance misuse and improve birth outcomes.

Mission High School (MHS) and Foundation for Recovery Drug Testing and Peer Support

MHS, a comprehensive secondary school designed for students in recovery from SUD, conducts drug testing of its students at random and if opiate, stimulant, or other substance use is suspected. Foundation for Recovery, a community nonprofit led by volunteers and staff in recovery from mental health concerns and SUD, provides assistance for people and families struggling with substance use. Funding serves to enhance the school’s drug testing efforts and provide subsequent supports to students after a positive result.



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](#).**

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