



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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2017

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #245

Expansion of Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (Corrections -- Community Corrections)

[LFB 2017-19 Budget Summary: Page 144, #5]

CURRENT LAW

The Department of Corrections operates the Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (OARS) program. The program is funded through the Becky Young community corrections appropriation. Current funding for the program is \$2.6 million GPR annually.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$660,800 GPR annually to expand the OARS program to the following counties: Eau Claire, Langlade, Lincoln, Menominee, and Shawano.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The OARS program began in 2011 and provides intensive case management and mental health services to serious mentally ill offenders in 37 counties. To qualify for participation, an offender must: (a) volunteer for participation; (b) be referred to the program by Correctional staff; (c) be assessed at medium- or high-risk to reoffend; (d) be diagnosed with a serious mental illness; (e) have at least six months of post-release supervision remaining on their sentence; and (f) be in a county where OARS programming is provided. Current funding for the program is \$2.6 million GPR annually. The 37 counties in which the OARS program currently operates include:

Adams	Green	Manitowoc	Portage	Washington
Brown	Green Lake	Marinette	Racine	Waukesha
Calumet	Iowa	Marquette	Rock	Waupaca
Columbia	Jackson	Milwaukee	Sauk	Waushara
Dane	Jefferson	Monroe	Sheboygan	Winnebago
Dodge	Kenosha	Oconto	Trempealeau	
Door	Kewaunee	Outagamie	Vernon	
Fond du Lac	La Crosse	Ozaukee	Walworth	

2. Services are provided based on each offender's needs and may include: (a) intensive case management and supervision; (b) assistance with obtaining and maintaining safe affordable housing; (c) resources for medication and access to psychiatric care; (d) treatment addressing criminogenic needs; (e) access to local transportation, budgeting, and financial resources; and (f) access to structured activities including employment and education. Since services are tailored to each individual's needs, costs vary from participant to participant.

3. Corrections works with the Department of Health Services to provide case management services to OARS participants, working with the participant, correctional institution social worker, the probation and parole agent, and the OARS program specialist. Participants receive services, depending on their individual case plan, for six months to two years in the community.

4. The OARS program works to reduce recidivism among offenders with serious mental illness. Tracking the recidivism rates of OARS participants with non-OARS offenders from 2011-2013, Corrections resulted in the following findings:

<u>One-Year Recidivism</u>		<u>Two-Year Recidivism</u>		<u>Three-Year Recidivism</u>	
<u>OARS</u>	<u>Non-OARS</u>	<u>OARS</u>	<u>Non-OARS</u>	<u>OARS</u>	<u>Non-OARS</u>
10%	18%	25%	30%	27%	36%

5. According to Corrections, the program's "success stems from understanding the added complexity of mentally ill participants with criminogenic needs, and the DHS/DOC partnership that allows both organizations to apply evidence-based practices to treat those needs."

6. In 2015-16, there were 582 medium- and high-risk inmates with a serious mental illness who met the criteria for the OARS program. During that year, there were 261 OARS participants.

7. Under the bill, \$660,800 GPR would be provided annually to expand the Corrections' OARS program to additional counties, Eau Claire, Langlade, Lincoln, Menominee, and Shawano. This funding amount was included in the Department's 2017-19 biennial budget request. While costs vary between participants depending on individual needs, the Department estimates an additional 40 offenders would receive treatment under the program. [Alternative 1]

8. While the bill would provide \$660,800 GPR annually to expand OARS by up to 40 offenders, funding at a lower amount could be considered and still expand the program. For

example, if \$330,400 GPR was provided OARS could expand to 20 additional offenders annually. [Alternative 2] This alternative would expand the program but at a slower rate than that proposed by the Governor.

9. Alternatively, the Committee may wish to maintain the current level of funding for the program. Under this alternative, funding would remain at \$2.6 million. [Alternative 3]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$660,800 GPR annually for expanding the OARS program to Eau Claire, Langlade, Lincoln, Menominee, and Shawano Counties.

ALT 1	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$1,321,600	\$0

2. Provide \$330,400 GPR annually to expand the OARS program.

ALT 2	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$660,800	- \$660,800

3. Delete provision.

ALT 3	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$0	- \$1,321,600

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