



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #245

Expansion of Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (Corrections -- Community Corrections and Health Services -- Care and Treatment Services)

[LFB 2019-21 Budget Summary: Page 102, #1 and Page 217, #13]

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 \$2,930,400 GPR annually.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$3,926,500 GPR in 2019-20 and \$3,901,600 GPR in 2020-21 to the Department of Corrections to expand the OARS program statewide (from 44 counties to 72 counties) and to increase the average daily population to approximately 400 participants.

Provide \$74,800 GPR in 2019-20 and \$99,700 GPR in 2020-21 to support 1.0 GPR position annually for the Department of Health Services to administer OARS, as part of a statewide expansion of the program.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Department of Corrections

1. The OARS program began in 2011 to provide intensive case management and mental health services to serious mentally ill offenders released to the community on parole or extended supervision subsequent to serving time in prison. Under the 2017-19 biennial budget, \$330,400 GPR annually was provided to expand the program from 37 counties to the present 44 counties (to also

include Eau Claire, Langlade, Lincoln, Manitowoc, Menominee, Shawano, and Wood Counties). Current funding for the program is \$2.9 million GPR annually.

2. To qualify for participation, an offender must: (a) volunteer for participation and have a general motivation and willingness to engage in treatment programming; (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. The counties in which the OARS program currently operates include:

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

3. Services are provided based on each offender's individual needs and may include: (a) intensive case management and supervision; (b) assistance with obtaining and maintaining safe and 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.

4. Corrections works with the Department of Health Services to provide case management services to OARS participants, by working with the participant, correctional institution social worker, probation and parole agent, OARS program specialist and case manager, and treatment providers in the community. Participants receive services, depending on their individual case plan, for six months to two years in the community. Based on the most recent data collected by the Department of Corrections, the average length of participation in the community portion of the program is 14 months.

5. According to the Department of Health Services, OARS program goals include "promoting offender self-sufficiency, decreasing long-term costs associated with this population, encouraging offender involvement in meaningful, healthy structured activities, [and] improving continuity of care of offenders with mental health needs as they release from prison to the community."

6. Tracking by Corrections of the recidivism rates of OARS participants compared to non-OARS offenders from 2014-2016 (the most recent data for which recidivism tracking data is available) 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>
13.8%	18.2%	18.2%	27.1%	31.7%	35.6%

7. Between 2014-15 and 2016-17, the average number of medium- and high-risk inmates with a serious mental illness who met the criteria for the OARS program was 529 individuals annually. Between 2015-16 and 2017-18, the average number of inmates who met the criteria for the OARS program rose to 543 individuals annually. While the program does not maintain a waitlist, the Department estimates that approximately 25% of eligible individuals do not participate in the program by choice. Individuals choosing not to participate may be referred by the institution's social worker to community mental health programs in the offender's county of release. Those offenders may also be supervised by Division of Community Corrections mental health probation and parole agents, when available, to potentially aid in addressing their individualized mental health treatment needs.

8. During 2017-18, the program had an average daily population (ADP) of 164 participants. In 2017-18, 32% of participants were female and 68% were male. These percentages are comparable to 2016-17, when 30% of participants were female and 70% were male. Utilizing the most recent three-year average, approximately 243 OARS-eligible individuals did not participate in the program, but would have, if the program existed in their county of residence or if space was available in the program in their county of residence (to participate, individuals must live in a county that operates the OARS program). For individuals being released to unserved counties, the Division of Community Corrections has 13 psychologists available to provide assessment and, in some cases, individual and group therapy. The Division of Community Corrections supervises more than 65,000 offenders in the community, so it is often necessary to rely on available community resources and counties to provide additional mental health services.

9. Under the bill, an additional \$3,926,500 GPR would be provided in 2019-20 and \$3,901,600 GPR would be provided in 2020-21 to expand the OARS program to all 72 counties, and to increase the average daily participants in the program to approximately 400 total individuals (compared to the current ADP of 164). While costs vary between participants depending on individual needs, the Department estimates an additional 225 offenders would receive treatment under the program. Case management contracts are in place for the OARS expansion, and, as a result, the Department does not foresee any issues in finding service providers in the currently unserved counties or in counties currently operating the OARS program that anticipate an increased ADP under the bill. Case managers facilitate psychiatric and therapeutic appointments through local health systems and/or county providers. In sparsely populated counties with limited county-funded resources, case managers usually travel with participants to attend psychiatric appointments in other areas. In some instances, case managers use Tele-Health for psychiatric treatment. The Department works with DHS to ensure that the needs of participants are being met. Under this alternative, funding for the program would increase by 133%. [Alternative A1]

10. On the other hand, given that the program already exists in 44 counties, the Committee could instead provide funding for a significant ADP increase, without expanding the OARS program to new counties. The Department estimates the average annual release of likely participants in the unserved counties is 28 individuals (on average, one individual per unserved county). The currently unserved counties include:

Ashland	Crawford	Grant	Pierce	St. Croix
Barron	Clark	Iron	Polk	Taylor
Bayfield	Douglas	Juneau	Price	Vilas
Buffalo	Dunn	Lafayette	Richland	Washburn
Burnett	Florence	Oneida	Rusk	
Chippewa	Forest	Pepin	Sawyer	

11. The Department estimates the cost-per-participant is approximately \$17,360 per year. If \$3,419,920 GPR were provided annually, OARS could increase funding for counties with existing OARS programs to allow for an additional 197 offenders to receive treatment under the program (the recommended increase, less the 28 anticipated participants in the unserved counties). This alternative would increase the ADP by approximately 197 participants. [Alternative A2]

12. Alternatives 1 and 2 both seek to more than double the current average daily population (164 participants). If the Committee wishes to expand the program, but at a lower rate, \$1,736,000 GPR annually would allow the ADP to increase by 100 participants (an approximate midpoint between no increase and the Governor's recommendation). [Alternative A3]

13. Alternatively, the Committee may wish to maintain the current level of funding for the program. The program and corresponding funding increases was not identified in the Department's 2019-21 biennial budget request. Further, the OARS program was expanded by \$330,400 annually in the most recent biennial budget (2017 Act 59). Under this alternative, funding would remain at \$2,930,400. [Alternative A4]

Department of Health Services

14. In addition to funding for the statewide expansion of the program, the bill would provide funding to support 1.0 GPR position in the Department of Health Services (DHS) to support the anticipated additional workload associated with the expansion.

15. DHS currently has 2.0 GPR positions to administer OARS. The duties of the positions include monitoring the progress of clients through the program, procurement of contracted case management services, and monitoring the contract work.

16. DHS has had 2.0 positions to administer OARS since it was established in 37 counties in 2011, and no additional positions have been provided with subsequent expansions of the program to service additional clients and to operate in additional counties. The Department believes that the statewide expansion would require additional administrative workload associated with more clients and with contract services in more counties.

17. If the Committee approves of the expansion of OARS as proposed in the bill, it could also approve the additional funding and position in DHS to administer the expansion. [Alternative B1] If, however, the Committee decides to not expand the program, or provides a lower level of funding for a smaller expansion, the Committee could decide that the additional DHS position is not warranted. [Alternative B2]

ALTERNATIVES

A. Department of Corrections

1. Provide \$3,926,500 GPR in 2019-20 and \$3,901,600 GPR in 2020-21 to expand the OARS program statewide and increase the number of participants in counties currently served.

ALT A1	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$7,828,100	\$0

2. Provide \$3,419,920 GPR annually to expand participation in the OARS program to an ADP of 197 in counties with existing OARS programs.

ALT A2	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$6,839,840	- \$988,260

3. Provide \$1,736,000 GPR annually to expand participation in the OARS program to an ADP of 100 in counties with existing OARS programs.

ALT A3	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$3,472,000	- \$4,356,100

4. Take no action.

ALT A4	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$0	- \$7,828,100

B. Department of Health Services

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$74,800 GPR in 2019-20 and \$99,700 GPR in 2020-21 to support 1.0 GPR position annually for the Department of Health Services to administer OARS.

ALT B1	Change to Base		Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$174,500	1.00	\$0	0.00

2. Take no action.

ALT B2	Change to Base		Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$0	0.0	- \$174,500	- 1.00

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