

Task Force on Community Safety and Firearm Suicide Prevention

September 15, 2024 Report

Introduction

The Task Force on Community Safety and Firearm Suicide Prevention (the “Task Force”) was created by SB 1503 in the 2024 legislative session. The Task Force has not yet had its first meeting, so staff has prepared this report to comply with the requirements of SB 1503.

This report is subject to ratification by the Task Force.

Task Force Purpose

The purpose of the Task Force is to coordinate with the Department of Justice, the Oregon Health Authority, sheriff departments that provide for voluntary storage of firearms, federally recognized Indian tribes in this state, faith-based groups in this state and the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide to study best practices for reducing deaths from community safety threats and for suicide prevention. The Task Force brings together representatives with diverse experiences and areas of expertise to accomplish this purpose and is staffed by Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ). More specifically, the Task Force will be meeting regularly to study:

- How to better support youth experiencing suicidal ideation;
- How to better support rural Oregonians experiencing suicidal ideation;
- How to reduce stigma on suicidal ideation;
- Barriers to suicide prevention support;
- Current community safety protocol across this state, including at hospitals and behavioral health facilities, and recommendations for improvement of the protocol;
- Locations and events most targeted in community safety threats;
- Rates of success for extreme risk protection orders and barriers to implementation and capacity for police stations or other entities to implement voluntary surrender or holding of firearms;
- Barriers to implementing best practices for community safety and suicide prevention;
- How domestic violence is a risk factor for community safety threats and suicide; and
- Risks to first responders.

Legislative History

The legislative history of SB 1503 can be viewed at the following link:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2024R1/Measures/Overview/SB1503>

The text of SB 1503 can be viewed at this link:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2024R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB1503/Enrolled>

Task Force Members

The following individuals are currently serving on the Task Force:

Non-voting members:

Sen. Floyd Prozanski	Democrat Senate member
Sen. David Brock Smith	Republican Senate member
Rep. Jason Kropf	Democrat House member
Rep. Rick Lewis	Republican House member

Voting members:

Name	Role on Task Force from SB 1503
Dean Sidelinger	A representative of a state public health agency
Valerie Colas	A public safety policy advisor to the Governor
Donna-Marie Drucker	A representative of a nonprofit organization focused on suicide prevention with experience in lethal means safety
Paul Kemp	A representative of a community-based firearm safety and protocols program
Kathleen Carlson	A representative of the public health research field
Vanessa Timmons	A behavioral health professional or provider
Emmy Ritter	An adult behavioral health provider
Matthew Crabtree	A medical provider who has worked with firearm violence victims
Andrew White	A psychologist who works with youth
Andy Leonard	A tribal representative from a suicide prevention program
Jerome Sloan II	A person with lived experience with community safety threats or suicidal ideation
Chris Burley	A representative of law enforcement
James R. Dixon	A professional who works in veterans' mental health

Task Force Meetings

The Task Force has its first meeting tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, October 2nd from 10am-noon. Its second meeting will be set for Monday, November 4th from 10am-noon. From that point forward, the Task Force will meet monthly. All meetings will be virtual, unless the Task Force decides otherwise.

Research

SB 1503 allocated \$250,000, which may be expended for the purpose of paying a third party for research ordered by the Task Force.

A solicitation for research proposals was sent to the following Eastern Oregon University, Oregon State University, Portland State University, University of Oregon, Oregon Health & Science University, and the Oregon Council of Presidents (Oregon's voluntary association for public universities).

Written proposals have been received from Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU) and the University of Oregon. OHSU and the University of Oregon will be given ten minutes each to present to the Task Force at its second meeting (November 4th). The Task Force will also be given time to ask questions, after which the Task Force will be given the opportunity to vote for the proposal of its choice or delay the vote for further consideration.

Coordination

SB 1503 directs the Task Force to coordinate with the Department of Justice, the Oregon Health Authority, sheriff departments that provide for voluntary storage of firearms, federally recognized Indian tribes in this state, faith-based groups in this state and the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide.

Staff has made initial contact with nearly all of the above-listed groups and will continue outreach to assist the Task Force with the required coordination. Although not listed in the bill, staff has also contacted the Department of Education and plans to reach out to the Department of Veterans Affairs, as both entities are doing work relevant to the Task Force.

Work Plan

To ensure that the Task Force is well-informed prior to the point at which it needs to make policy recommendations to the legislature, the initial work of the Task Force will be focused on learning. First and foremost, the Task Force will learn about work that is already being done related to the Task Force's mission in the State of Oregon.

Staff has reached out to a variety of entities who are doing relevant work in Oregon and are interested in presenting to the Task Force and will work with the Task Force chair to arrange for presentations from these groups.

Website

The Task Force website can be viewed at: <https://justice.oregon.gov/safety/>

Next Report(s)

The Task Force has another report due on September 15, 2025. That report will contain much more substantive information, as the Task Force will have been meeting for nearly a year by that time. It is possible that the Task Force may also decide to issue another report the following year, as the Task Force does not sunset until December 31, 2026.

Update as of October 3, 2024:

The task force held its first meeting on October 2, 2024. Donna-Marie Drucker and Andrew White were elected as co-chairs. The task force was also provided with an overview of SB 1503, discussed task force rules, public records and open meeting laws. The next task force meeting will occur on Monday, November 4, 2024 from 10am-noon.

This report was prepared by staff at the Oregon Department of Justice. If you have questions, you may reach out to Kimberly McCullough at kimberly.mccullough@doj.oregon.gov