

District of Columbia Crisis Stabilization Center Summary of November 25th, 2024 Community Meeting

District of Columbia's Stabilization Center Service

The District of Columbia Stabilization Center (DCSC) supports access to behavioral health services in a therapeutic environment for adults. The DCSC is a District-wide initiative and a vital addition to the District's behavioral health continuum of care, addressing a critical gap in crisis intervention services. Designed to provide immediate, low-barrier stabilization services for adults experiencing substance use crises, the DCSC ensures that individuals receive timely and appropriate care while reducing reliance on hospital emergency departments and avoiding law enforcement interventions whenever possible.

The DCSC planned for Park Road in Ward 1 builds upon the success of the first DCSC launched on October 31st, 2023, at 35 K Street NE. The 35K Center has served as a proven model for stabilizing individuals in crisis, providing medical screening and treatment, medication assisted treatment, peer counseling / support, and re-integrating back into the community. Services are provided at no cost to individuals, regardless of insurance status and residency.

DCSC Approach

- Providing effective harm reduction / treatment services, and ensuring a seamless transition to ongoing community treatment and supports as appropriate
- Improving public safety by reducing unnecessary interactions with law enforcement
- Alleviating pressure on emergency services by providing appropriate alternative crisis management and stabilization services to community members
 - As of March 2025, 58% of admissions to the 35K Center have been via walk-ins or family/friend drop-off
- Enhancing community well-being by ensuring those in crisis, needing appropriate care are served

Services Provided by the Center

- Medical screening, stabilization and treatment
- Bio-psycho-social assessment
- Addressing immediate personal needs: such as food, clothing, shower, and laundry services
- Peer counseling and support from staff with lived experience
- Medical and behavioral health supports from a multidisciplinary team, including nurses, peer recovery specialists, and behavioral health counselors
- Comprehensive discharge planning with referrals to treatment providers and other services as appropriate

Center's Staff

Through a competitive contracting process, DBH will select a provider to operate the Center. The Center's treatment team includes registered nurses, medical practitioners, patient care technicians, certified peer recovery specialists, and behavioral health counselors. At least 51% of staff are District residents, with language access services and Spanish-speaking team members available. Also, 24/7 security is on-site to ensure a safe, healthy environment.

Center Operations

- Hours: 24/7, 365 days a year
- Capacity: 14 short term crisis recliners and 2 long-term observation beds
- Location: 1338 Park Rd, NW in Ward 1 (renovated, historic firehouse)

Safety Considerations

The same safety measures will be employed at the Ward 1 Center as we have implemented in the 35K Center. These include:

- On-site security and safety protocols based on past successful practices
- Professional client management staff trained in de-escalation and crisis management
- Written processes and protocols outlining coordination with local emergency services
- Discreet transport practices to minimize community disruption

Community Engagement and Communication in Ward 1

DBH is committed to being an engaged and responsible neighbor. Our commitment is to ensure the Center provides critical crisis care to individuals in need while minimizing any disruptions to the community. We will continue to keep you informed and address concerns as they arise, and participate in community meetings, both before and after the Center is renovated.

Lessons Applied from 35 K St DCSC

In addition, in terms of the physical space and operations, we will include the following improvements as we finalize the design of the second Center:

- Designing a large, bright, welcoming intake area
- Ensuring efficient consumer drop-off space for Fire and EMS and providers
- Planning for adequate storage for consumers' personal belongings

Selection of the Park Road Location

The Park Road location was selected to address the urgent, District-wide need for crisis stabilization services. The identified city-owned property chosen in Ward 1, is consistent with the Mayor's policy to utilize available government properties, while providing an efficient and

cost-effective solution for serving individuals in crisis in the community, with oversight by the Department of Behavioral Health.

Addressing Concerns About Loitering and Disturbances

We are committed to working diligently with individuals to get them connected to the next stage of their recovery journey and minimize congregation around the Center. Transportation is arranged, as often as possible, to ensure a smooth transition to their next destination (treatment provider site, government support service, shelter, etc.).

Protection of Client Privacy

In compliance with HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2, Client confidentiality will be strictly maintained while ensuring transparent communication with the community about the Center's operations.

Project Timeline

- Demolition Start: April 2025
- Construction Start: July 2025
- Completion: Late Spring/Summer 2026
- Anticipated Opening: August 2026

Contact Information

Please contact Arish Narayan, DBH Project Manager, if you have any questions about the renovation at arish.narayan@dc.gov.

For additional questions or feedback, please contact DBH.ParkRoadDCSC@dc.gov.

Regular updates will be posted on DBH's website at <https://dbh.dc.gov/service/dc-stabilization-center>.