

Wake County Opioid Settlement Funding Plan FY 2025

Executive Summary

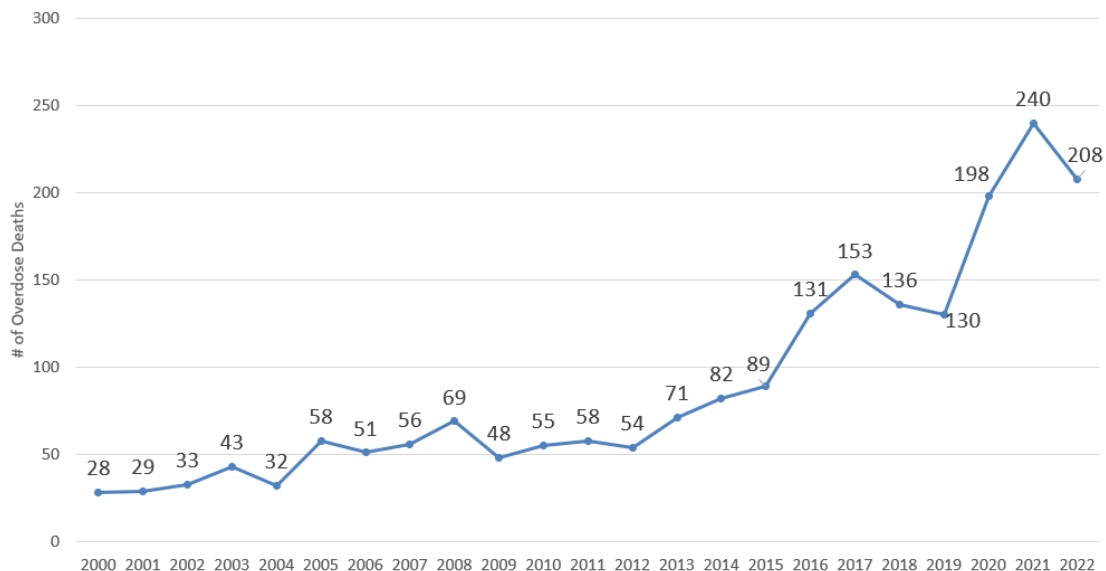
Based upon results from a community survey, insights gained from the 2024 community meeting, and local strategic plans, the Wake County Opioid Settlement Funding Plan for FY 2025 recommends allocating \$7.5 million to support the following strategies supporting a full continuum of approaches:

- Expanding treatment access
- Preventing overdose deaths
- Supporting youth and families
- Strengthening access for Historically Marginalized Populations
- Addressing the needs of the whole person
- Engaging the community throughout the process

Background

The overdose crisis is one of the worst public health emergencies our country has faced in decades. In 2022, over 107,000 people died of a drug overdose in the United States, including 219 individuals in Wake County. Opioids were involved in over three quarters of those deaths. Counties are on the front lines of this crisis, providing public health services that make it possible to survive and recover from a substance use disorder.

Overdose Deaths in Wake County, 2000-2022



North Carolina is part of a historic agreement that will bring \$1.37 billion to the state that will provide much needed relief to communities impacted by opioids. These funds will be used to support early intervention, overdose prevention, treatment, recovery support, and other life-

saving programs and services. In November 2021, Wake County agreed to participate in the national settlement and will receive approximately \$65.3 million over the next 18 years. These funds may only be used to address the opioid epidemic. Use of funds requires formal approval and authorization of an expenditure plan by the Wake County Board of Commissioners, consistent with the settlement agreement.

The Opioid Settlement Program Manager, with support of subject matter experts within the County Manager's Office and Wake County HHS, developed this plan that reflects public input gained through a community survey, a community meeting on March 15, 2024, a focus group conducted at Healing Transitions, and local strategic plans. Public participation in the planning process is critical to ensuring funds are used to address community priorities and is representative of the full county geography.

Plan Principles

The following principles were used to guide the development of this plan:

- Prevent additional lives lost to the overdose crisis.
- Develop an iterative process that is responsive to what we hear from the community and the changing nature of this crisis.
- Ensure all parts of Wake County have access to these resources and investments do not worsen disparities.
- Let data drive decision making.
- Focus investments based upon their potential impact and measurable outcomes.
- Complement and enhance existing programs while avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort.

Funding Available

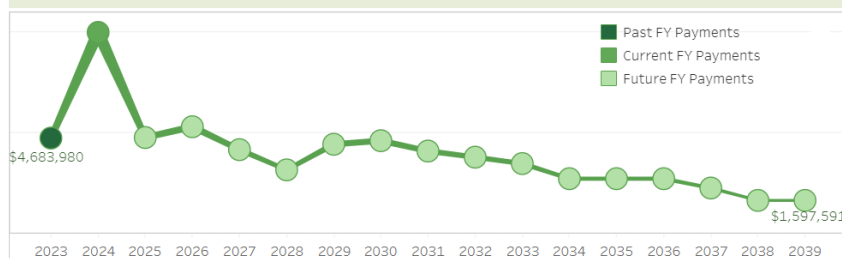
By agreement, the City of Raleigh and Town of Cary have designated Wake County to assume responsibility for their settlement funds, and for the County to administer these funds consistent with its expenditure plan. In total, the funds made available to Wake County over the 18-year period of the settlement will be \$65,334,157 (inclusive of Raleigh and Cary funds.)

According to the settlement, the funds will be made available as follows:

18 Year Payment to Wake during 2022-2038:

\$65,334,157

Payments Over Time - Wake



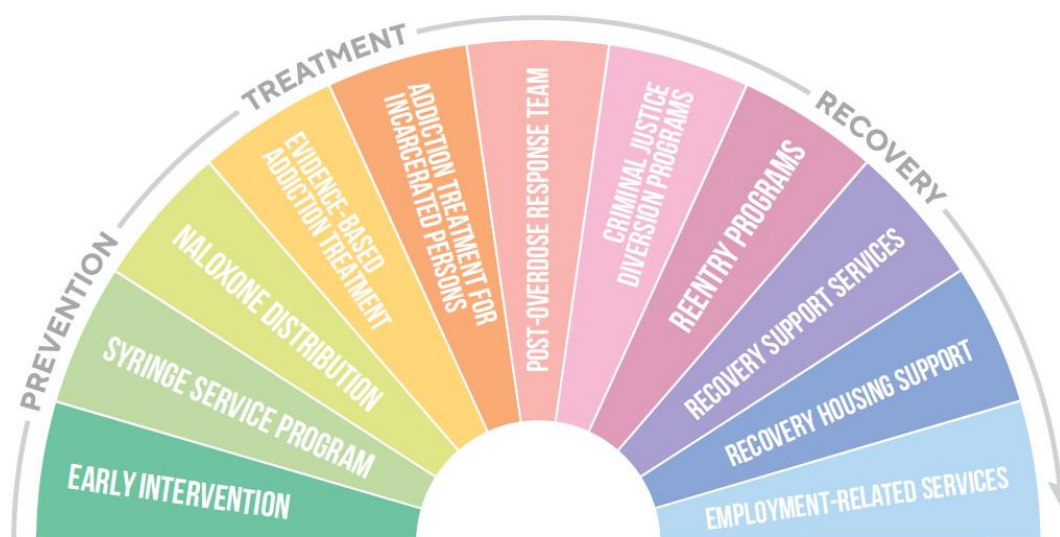
The funding amount changes as a result to fluctuations in settlements and payouts with the companies. This amount was taken on April 2, 2024. You can stay up to date with the overall funding amounts by visiting the [Core NC Dashboard](#).

Plan Period

Staff have proposed a spending plan for the next fiscal year of available funding to provide funding for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. This will include start-up funding for new programs, one-time funds for some programs and on-going costs for others. These funds provide a unique opportunity to strengthen the full continuum of services across Wake County and planning is focusing on how to disburse these funds into the community in a sustainable manner. This will also allow County leaders to monitor performance to determine impact of investments, monitor trends impacting this epidemic and leverage other funding sources. A one-year funding plan will allow Wake County to build off existing work while remaining nimble to incorporating community input through an iterative planning process. Planning for subsequent years will be based on outcomes achieved to date as well as additional community input.

Eligible Expenditure Strategies

Local governments in North Carolina that have agreed to be part of the national settlement, agreed to use the proceeds consistent with expectations outlined in the “Memorandum of Agreement between the State of North Carolina and Local Governments on proceeds relating to the Settlement of opioid litigation” (MOA). In this MOA, local governments are directed to use settlement funds on opioid remediation activities as outlined in two options. Wake County chose to follow a distribution option that defines the following strategies for funding (see attachment for a list of all eleven strategies with brief definitions and examples of existing programs in Wake County that received County funding):



Community Input

An in-person and on-line community meeting was held at the McKimmon Center on March 15, 2024. More than 150 individuals representing multiple partner interests participated in the five-hour meeting virtually and in-person. If interested in learning more about the community meeting, a video of the meeting and copy of the meeting materials can be accessed at www.wakegov.com/opioidsettlement.

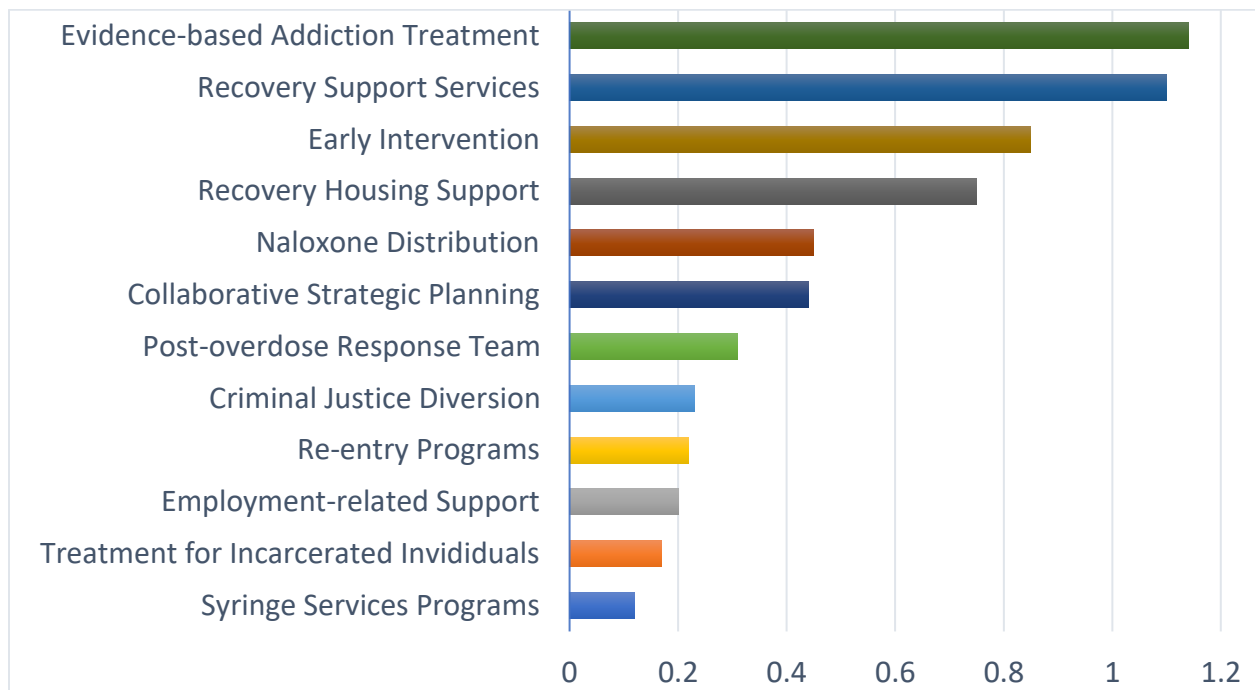
Commissioner Cheryl Stallings and Opioid Settlement Program Manager Alyssa Kitlas welcomed participants and provided the objectives and overview for the meeting. Dr. Joel Lutterman from Wake HHS and Dr. Christopher Thompson from Wake Med made presentations about the opioid epidemic and its impact in Wake County as well as available resources. Nidhi Sachdeva from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners provided an overview of the North Carolina Memorandum of Agreement that provides the framework for Opioid Settlement Funds. Alyssa Kitlas provided an overview of Wake County's current spending plan and opportunities through the Opioid Settlement that are on the horizon. Program partners highlighted existing work through the settlement such as the partnership between SouthLight Healthcare and the Sheriff's Office to provide Medication Assisted Treatment at the Wake County Detention Center and Healing Transition's Rapid Responder Program. In the afternoon, participants used a World Café model to discuss each of the 12 settlement strategies and identify needs throughout the County which informed the prioritization process.



Survey

Following the community meeting, a web-based survey provided an opportunity for the public to vote and rank for their top three priorities to be included in the funding plan. The survey was open March 22 through the close of business, April 3 and received 220 responses.

The following methodology was used to analyze the survey data. Community residents and advocates were asked to prioritize their top three approaches when using opioid settlement funds. Respondents who rated an approach as their highest priority was given a score of three (3), the second priority was scored two (2), and the third priority was scored one (1). Any priority that was not ranked was assigned a score of zero (0). The scores were averaged for each approach and reflected in the chart below.



Some of the key learnings from the community meeting and survey responses include:

- It is critical to offer support across the continuum. We should ensure we are making connections along the way.
- The workforce is understaffed and burning out, so we need to invest in them.
- Peers provides invaluable support so efforts should be made to invest meaningfully in this part of the workforce.
- Too many people are dying. We need to invest in life-saving tools such as naloxone and make it available for free throughout Wake County.
- We need more support for young people and their families.
- Ongoing engagement around the opioid settlement throughout the county is critical to the success of these resources.

Plan Recommendations

Based upon the survey results, insights gained from the community meeting, and local strategic plans, the plan recommends allocating \$7.5 million over FY 2025 to support the following strategies supporting a full continuum of approaches:

1. Expanding treatment access
2. Preventing overdose deaths
3. Supporting youth and families
4. Strengthening access for Historically Marginalized Populations
5. Addressing the needs of the whole-person
6. Engaging the community throughout the process

To support these top strategies, the funding plan recommends funding the following:

Expanding Treatment Access

Evidence-Based Addiction Treatment = \$2,000,000

Support evidence-based addiction treatment consistent with the American Society of Addiction Medicine's national practice guidelines for the treatment of opioid use disorder including Medication Assisted Treatment. This includes funding for MAT programs with a specific emphasis on the uninsured and underinsured populations with medication approved by the FDA for this purpose.

Addiction treatment for incarcerated individuals = \$450,000

Provide Medication-Assisted Treatment in Wake County Detention Centers.

Preventing Overdose Deaths

Naloxone Distribution = \$300,000

Support programs or organizations that distribute naloxone to persons at risk of overdose or their social network such as post-overdose response teams, the Wake County Detention Center, EMS, and other community-based organizations.

Supporting Youth and Families

Early Intervention = \$1,000,000

Fund programs, services or training to encourage early identification and intervention for children or adolescents who may be struggling with problematic use of drugs or mental health conditions. Training programs may target parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health or human service professional or others in contact with children or adolescents.

Strengthening Access for Historically Marginalized Populations

Criminal Justice Diversion = \$500,000

Support pre-arrest, post-arrest, or pre-trial service programs that connect individuals involved or at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system to addiction treatment, recovery support, harm reduction services, primary healthcare, prevention, or other services or supports they need.

Addressing the Needs of the Whole Person

Recovery Support Services = \$1,950,000

Provide evidence-based recovery support services such as care navigators and peer support specialists to support people in treatment, recovery, or who currently use drugs, in accessing addiction treatment, harm reduction services, primary healthcare or other services or supports they need to improve their health or well-being. This strategy will also support employment-related services and peer support for the post-overdose response program.

Recovery Housing Support = \$1,000,000

Support programs offering recovery housing support to people in treatment or recovery, or people who use drugs, such as assistance with rent, move-in deposits, or utilities.

Engaging the Community Throughout the Process

Collaborative Strategic Planning = \$300,000

Support collaborative strategic planning such as community engagement events and town halls that increase strategic use of the Opioid Settlement Funds.

Wrap-Up

This plan responds to significant community need and builds on the existing infrastructure developed under the FY 2023-2024 settlement spending plan. Wake County will continue to seek opportunities for community engagement throughout the planning process and is looking to develop an advisory group structure to inform the process.

An equity lens was utilized during the creation of this draft plan and all attempts have been made to be as inclusive as possible in the proposed implementation of its strategies. Wake County remains consistent in its resolve to promote and support the well-being of all residents.

For more information, please find additional information at www.wakegov.com/opioidsettlement.