



Utilizing Opioid Settlement Funds: Proposals in Response to Vital Strategies' Recommendations Presented to the Local Governing Coordinating Commission

February 20, 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Albuquerque proposes a set of interventions designed to address the systemic inequities and public health challenges exacerbated by the opioid epidemic. These proposals are aligned with the recommendations from the Vital Strategies report and the priorities identified in Exhibit E of the opioid settlement agreement.

The City's initiatives prioritize critical areas including prevention, community revitalization, harm reduction, treatment access, and sustained recovery support. With interagency collaboration, including partnerships with Bernalillo County and Albuquerque Public Schools, the City aims to establish long-term, sustainable solutions that have a measurable impact on opioid-related mortality, substance use disorder, and community wellbeing. Among the prioritizations, the City is focusing on the expansion of naloxone access to prevent opioid overdoses, increasing educational outreach to at-risk youth, enhancing recovery housing ability, and scaling peer recovery support systems. These proposals seek dedicated funding to expand current services and introduce new programs—particularly in underserved communities—geared towards prevention, trauma-informed support, and building robust community resilience against opioid misuse. Through these strategies, Albuquerque is setting the groundwork for systemic change, long-term impact, and a significant reduction in opioid-related fatalities. This report outlines a collective vision for responding to immediate public health needs while investing in programs with enduring value across the City of Albuquerque.

To ensure the long-term sustainability, the City of Albuquerque proposals emphasize diversified funding strategies—including Medicaid reimbursement, federal and state grants, and public-private partnerships—to ensure these critical programs are sustainable beyond the initial opioid settlement funding period. With transparency, accountability, and ongoing community engagement at the core of our efforts, this report serves as a strategic blueprint for the City Council to adopt and implement a cohesive, sustainable response to the opioid epidemic, ultimately saving lives and strengthening the fabric of our community.

CABQ Opioid Settlement Fund Workplan

Vital Strategies Recommendation	City Department	Collaborators	Implementation Timeline	Projected Start Date	Projected Cost	Page #
Vital Strategies Recommendation 16: Comprehensive Education 1. Using the Restorative Justice Program and other city programming, train APS personnel on trauma-informed approaches to youth substance use 2. Integrate prevention curricula at community centers & enhance programming for families 3. Culturally Relevant Opioid Prevention & Tribal Outreach	YFS	APS, Bernco	0-24 Months	July 2025	\$ 400,000.00	5
	DSA	Non-profits	0-24 Months	July 2025	\$ 200,000.00	7
	OEI	Non-profits	0-24 Months	July 2025	\$ 300,000.00	8
Vital Strategies Recommendation 17: Connecting Disconnected Youth 1. Expand School-Based Violence Intervention Program to include substance use treatment and additional schools served. 2. Partner w/ community organizations to offer mentorship, re-engagement, and job training to youth disconnected from education and work	City Department	Collaborators	Implementation Timeline	Projected Start Date	Projected Cost	Page #
	ACS	APS	0-24 Months	July 2025	\$ 1,300,000.00	9
	EDD	APS, CYFD, Non-profits	0-24 Months	July 2025	\$ 765,000.00	11
Vital Strategies Recommendation 15: Leveraging the Sobering Center 1. Support crisis stabilization centers that serve as alternative to emergency department by integration into medical sobering services, medication-assisted treatment (MAT), 24-hour first responder dropoff, medical respite, case management, and wrap around services.	City Department	Collaborators	Implementation Timeline	Projected Start Date	Projected Cost	Page #
	HHH	Bernco, Non-profit providers, peer support workers, partner agencies	0-6 Months	December 2024	\$ 5,354,357.00	14
Vital Strategies Recommendation 19: Naloxone Access Expansion 1. Equipping all responder vehicles and maintain backstock	City Department	Collaborators	Implementation Timeline	Projected Start Date	Projected Cost	Page #
	ACS, AFR, APD		0-6 Months	January 2025	\$ 400,000.00	16
Vital Strategies Recommendation 23: Community-Based Treatment Access & Quality 1. Community-Oriented Recovery (COR) Program 2. Expand Albuquerque Fire & Rescue Personnel for Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)	City Department	Collaborators	Implementation Timeline	Projected Start Date	Projected Cost	Page #
	HHH	State of NM Healthcare Authority, Providers, BernCo	0-24 Months	July 2025	\$ 400,000.00	18
	AFR	BernCo FR, Abq Ambulance Services	0-24 Months	March 2025	\$ 2,008,959.00	19
Vital Strategies Recommendation 25: Recovery Housing 1. Expand recovery housing options for IOPs and provide housing for people w/ OUD and any co-occurring SUD & mental health conditions	City Department	Collaborators	Implementation Timeline	Projected Start Date	Projected Cost	Page #
	HHH	Non-profit providers, peer support workers, partner agencies	0-24 Months	January 2025	\$ 13,497,766.00	20
Vital Strategies Recommendation 27: Peer Support Expansion 2. Expand peer support programs through HHH & ACS for persons w/ OUD and any co-occurring SUD & mental health conditions	City Department	Collaborators	Implementation Timeline	Projected Start Date	Projected Cost	Page #
	ACS, HHH	Peer Support Specialists	0-24 Months	January 2025	\$ 2,520,000.00	21
Total CABQ					\$ 27,146,082.00	

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE PROPOSAL RESPONSES

Prevention and Community Revitalization: 40%

Pursuant to the direction of the LGCC subcommittee, a range of up to 40% of opioid settlement funds are to be allocated to ‘Prevention and Community Revitalization.’ Furthermore, the subcommittee has identified Recommendations 16 and 17 from the Vital Strategies Report as aligning with this category. Below are the City of Albuquerque’s proposals in response to these recommendations.

Recommendation 16: Comprehensive Education

Vital Strategies recommended implementing comprehensive education programs on substance use prevention, harm reduction, and recovery, emphasizing early intervention, trauma-informed practices, and restorative justice alternatives.

Proposal Overview

The opioid crisis has had devastating effects on youth, families, and communities throughout Albuquerque, with underserved and tribal populations disproportionately affected. Studies show that Native American communities experience opioid-related overdose deaths at rates over 15% higher than the national average.¹ Disparities in access to culturally competent prevention and treatment programs have exacerbated the crisis, highlighting the urgent need for targeted, equity-centered intervention strategies. Studies indicate that young people exposed to trauma and adverse childhood experiences are at a significantly higher risk for substance use disorders and opioid misuse.²

Recognizing the need to equip students, educators, parents, and caregivers with culturally relevant tools to prevent opioid misuse and promote recovery, the City of Albuquerque proposes a multi-departmental education initiative. This initiative is designed to foster opioid awareness, harm reduction strategies, and trauma-informed restorative justice practices, while ensuring cultural inclusivity for Native communities and underserved populations.

This proposal aligns with Recommendation 16 from the Vital Strategies Report, which calls for comprehensive education on substance use prevention, harm reduction, and recovery. Additionally, it meets the opioid remediation funding priorities outlined in Exhibit E of the opioid settlement agreement, prioritizing school-based prevention

¹ Opioid Overdose Prevention in Tribal Communities, CDC, September 6, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/budget-funding/opioid-overdose-prevention-in-tribal-communities.html#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20on%20average%2C%20over.any%20racial%20or%20ethnic%20group.>

² Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), CDC, October 8, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html>

programs, intergenerational education, and early intervention efforts for historically underserved populations.

The City of Albuquerque's initiative will be implemented through three primary components:

1. Youth and Family Services – Restorative Justice Program
2. Department of Senior Affairs – Intergenerational Programs at Multigenerational Centers
3. Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) – Culturally Relevant Opioid Prevention & Tribal Outreach

By integrating evidence-based education, peer support, trauma-informed training, culturally inclusive outreach, and intergenerational engagement, this initiative will ensure that youth, families, and professionals across all demographics have the resources they need to prevent opioid misuse and support recovery efforts.

1. Youth and Family Services – Restorative Justice Program

The Youth and Family Services (YFS) Restorative Justice Program provides an alternative to punitive disciplinary measures, addressing the root causes of substance use, violence, and behavioral challenges among youth. The program works with the Bernalillo County Juvenile Justice Continuum Board to support at-risk youth through prevention, intervention, and alternative programming and currently operates in collaboration with a Community School within Albuquerque Public Schools.

Beyond intervention, the program also emphasizes accountability and rehabilitation. Rather than relying solely on punitive measures, it holds individuals accountable while offering essential support and resources to address root causes such as substance use, mental health challenges, and social barriers. This holistic approach aims to reduce recidivism and promote long-term behavioral change.

To make restorative justice more accessible, the City of Albuquerque provides training and sessions at no cost to individuals, schools, and organizations. These trainings equip participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to create safer, more inclusive communities by fostering restorative dialogue and conflict resolution skills.

Expansion Proposal

To further enhance restorative justice efforts and opioid prevention efforts, YFS proposes expanding its reach by providing specialized training for APS staff on best practices and trauma-informed approaches to youth substance use. The targeted APS personnel for this training would include Community School Coordinators, counselors, social workers, disciplinarians, and Family Coordinators. By equipping APS staff with these skills, the program aims to strengthen early intervention efforts and create a supportive school

environment that prioritizes prevention, positive behavioral change, and restorative outcomes.

Expected Impact and Outcomes

- Reduction in school-based disciplinary referrals for substance use.
- APS personnel trained in trauma-informed intervention strategies.
- Increased access to harm reduction education for at-risk students.
- Reduction in school-based suspensions for opioid-related infractions.

By embedding these initiatives within APS and community programming, this approach will create long-term, sustainable prevention strategies that reduce youth substance misuse and promote restorative solutions.

2. Department of Senior Affairs – Intergenerational Programs at Multigenerational Centers

The opioid crisis is not only a public health emergency but a family and community crisis, affecting multiple generations within households and neighborhoods. Research shows that family-based prevention efforts are among the most effective strategies in reducing youth substance use, with intergenerational mentorship programs improving protective factors against opioid misuse.³

To strengthen the role of families in prevention and recovery efforts, the Department of Senior Affairs (DSA) proposes the integration of opioid prevention curricula and trauma-informed programming at Albuquerque’s multigenerational centers. This initiative will provide education, mentorship, and community-based support to ensure that families—particularly those in high-risk communities—are equipped with the knowledge and resources to prevent opioid misuse and support loved ones in recovery.

To maximize impact and ensure that services reach the most vulnerable populations, the program will partner with local nonprofits, healthcare providers, and community-based organizations specializing in youth substance use prevention, harm reduction, and family support. These partnerships will help expand access to naloxone training, peer support networks, and culturally relevant prevention materials, ensuring that the initiative is inclusive and accessible to diverse communities across Albuquerque.

Expected Impact and Outcomes

- Increase in community-wide awareness of opioid prevention strategies.
- At least 500 parents, caregivers, and community members trained annually.
- Expanded access to harm reduction and recovery resources for families.

³ Family-based Treatments for Adolescent Substance Use, National Library of Medicine, January 28, 2020 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6986353/pdf/nihms-1058992.pdf>

- Strengthened intergenerational mentorship programs in at least three multigenerational centers.

By utilizing a multigenerational approach, this initiative will engage parents, grandparents, youth, and community leaders in evidence-based opioid prevention and harm reduction strategies, bridging generational gaps and fostering stronger community resilience.

3. Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) – Culturally Relevant Opioid Prevention & Tribal Outreach

The opioid crisis has disproportionately impacted Native American communities, where historical trauma, barriers to healthcare access, and systemic disparities have contributed to higher rates of opioid misuse and overdose deaths. Recognizing this reality, the City of Albuquerque’s Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) is committed to ensuring that opioid prevention education is culturally responsive, inclusive, and accessible to Native communities and other historically underserved populations.

By incorporating traditional healing practices, tribal community engagement, and culturally relevant harm reduction strategies, OEI will lead efforts to bridge gaps in prevention education and expand outreach beyond Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) into tribal and non-traditional education settings. This initiative aligns directly with Vital Strategies' emphasis on equity-centered interventions and supports Exhibit E of the opioid settlement agreement, which prioritizes funding for prevention efforts tailored to high-risk and underserved communities.

The opioid epidemic cannot be addressed through a one-size-fits-all approach. For prevention education to be effective, it must be culturally relevant, community-driven, and tailored to the lived experiences of the populations it serves. By investing in equitable, culturally responsive opioid prevention strategies, the City of Albuquerque will expand access to life-saving education and harm reduction services for Native youth, families, and underserved communities.

This initiative aligns with the opioid settlement agreement’s priorities by ensuring that prevention efforts reach high-risk communities through culturally competent strategies. Furthermore, it supports the City’s broader commitment to equity, inclusion, and health justice, ensuring that all Albuquerque residents, regardless of background, have access to effective opioid prevention resources.

Total Opioid Settlement Funding Request: \$900,000

- YFS – Restorative Justice Expansion: **\$400,000**
- DSA – Intergenerational Programs: **\$200,000**
- OED – Tribal Outreach & Cultural Curriculum Development: **\$300,000**

Long-Term Sustainability & Funding Strategy

This initiative directly supports Vital Strategies’ Recommendation 16 by expanding comprehensive, family-based opioid prevention education in high-risk communities. Furthermore, it aligns with the opioid settlement agreement’s Exhibit E priorities, ensuring that funds are strategically allocated to evidence-based prevention efforts that engage families and communities in long-term solutions.

To sustain these programs beyond opioid settlement funding, the City of Albuquerque will:

- Pursue funding from the Marijuana Equity and Community Reinvestment Fund, which supports community-based prevention and family-focused intervention efforts.
- Seek partnerships with local and national health foundations to expand trauma-informed training for families impacted by opioid misuse.
- Work with state and federal agencies to secure opioid prevention grants that specifically fund intergenerational mentorship and family-based intervention programs.

Recommendation 17: Connecting Disconnected Youth

Vital Strategies recommended engaging disconnected youth (ages 16-24) who are not in education or employment, as they face high risks of substance misuse.

Proposal Overview

The City of Albuquerque recognizes that youth disconnection is both a public health crisis and an economic challenge, with direct ties to the opioid epidemic. Young people aged 16-24 who are not in school or working are five times more likely to experience substance use disorders and become involved in the criminal justice system.⁴ Currently, Albuquerque has one of the highest youth disconnection rates in the nation, with 13.9% (12,800 youth) identified as “opportunity youth”—young people disengaged from both education and employment.⁵

The opioid crisis disproportionately impacts disconnected youth, who often face trauma, unstable housing, and barriers to treatment access. Without targeted intervention, these young people remain at risk of substance misuse, overdose, and long-term economic instability. Recognizing this urgent need, the Vital Strategies Report recommends engaging

⁴ The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth, Anne E. Casey Foundation, January 2012
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED528650.pdf>

⁵ *Who are opportunity youth?*. The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions. (2023, May 2).
<https://www.aspencommunitysolutions.org/who-are-opportunity-youth/>

disconnected youth as a strategy to reduce substance use and support prevention efforts. Likewise, Exhibit E of the Opioid Settlement Agreement prioritizes funding for youth prevention, peer support, school-based interventions, and workforce reengagement programs—all of which are central to this proposal.

To address these challenges, the City of Albuquerque proposes a multi-agency strategy to reconnect disconnected youth through education, employment pathways, and behavioral health support. This initiative expands evidence-based programming and aligns with national best practices for youth reengagement and opioid prevention.

The City of Albuquerque's initiative will be implemented through two components:

1. Expansion of the School-Based Violence Intervention Program through Albuquerque Community Safety
2. Implementation of the Economic Development Department – Opportunity Youth Reengagement Pilot Program

Together, these initiatives will reduce youth disconnection, increase access to substance use prevention, and provide economic stability for young people at high risk of opioid misuse.

1. Albuquerque Community Safety – Expansion and enhancement of SBVIP Program

The School-Based Violence Intervention Program (SBVIP), led by Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS), provides mentorship, intervention, and trauma-informed support to at-risk youth, addressing the root causes of violence in Albuquerque Public Schools. The program deploys full-time specialists at each participating campus to assist students and families in navigating challenges, ensuring they have the resources needed to achieve long-term success.

In addition to violence prevention, the program incorporates opioid education and prevention by providing peer-led education, overdose follow-up support, and connections to recovery services. SBVIP expands naloxone access, offering training for community members and equipping students, staff, and families with life-saving resources. By supporting families impacted by overdose, the program also plays a crucial role in breaking cycles of addiction and substance misuse among Albuquerque's youth.

ACS has continued its third school year (and second full school year) of SBVIP in collaboration with Albuquerque Public Schools (APS). The program is currently operating at:

- West Mesa High School
- Atrisco Heritage Academy
- Robert F. Kennedy Middle & High School

Recognizing the importance of this partnership, an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) was signed in July 2024, further strengthening the relationship between ACS and APS.

Expansion Efforts & Future Growth

The SBVIP program is set to expand to its fourth APS school made possible by funding through the Byrne Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, which will fund Intervention Specialists to facilitate the program’s expansion to Manzano High School.

Data analysis has identified three more APS schools as ideal candidates for future expansion based on community needs and student risk factors:

- Cibola High School
- Valley High School
- Rio Grande High School

By expanding to these schools, ACS aims to increase opioid awareness and intervention, enhance violence prevention efforts, and provide comprehensive mentorship and support services to more at-risk youth throughout Albuquerque.

Funding Sources

General Fund Appropriation: \$ 373,000.00
Byrne Grant Funding: \$ \$2,050,000.00
Opioid Funding Request: \$1,300,000.00

2. Economic Development Department – Opportunity Youth Reengagement Pilot Program

Albuquerque faces a significant challenge with youth disconnection, ranking among the highest in the United States. Currently, 13.9% of youth aged 16-24—approximately 12,800 individuals—in the Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Area⁶ are considered opportunity youth, meaning they are disconnected from both school and work. This disconnection is a risk multiplier, as research shows that opportunity youth are five times more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system and experience higher rates of substance abuse compared to their connected peers.⁷

⁶ (MoA), M. of A. (2024, November 19). *Broad recovery, persistent inequity: Youth Disconnection in America*. Measure of America: A Program of the Social Science Research Council. <https://measureofamerica.org/youth-disconnection-2024/>

⁷ Mendelson, T., Mmari, K., Blum, R. W., Catalano, R. F., & Brindis, C. D. (2018). Opportunity youth: Insights and opportunities for a public health approach to reengage disconnected teenagers and young adults. *Public Health Reports*®, 133(1_suppl). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033354918799344>

The long-term consequences of youth disengagement extend far beyond individual hardships. A growing population of undereducated and economically inactive young people slows economic growth, reduces tax revenues, and increases government spending. A 2017 report from the Forum for Youth Investment estimated that successfully reconnecting opportunity youth could result in nearly \$220 million in annual savings for New Mexico’s Congressional District 1,⁸ underscoring the economic imperative for action.

Disconnected youth are at high risk of opioid use, economic hardship, and justice system involvement. To address this crisis, the City of Albuquerque’s Economic Development Department proposes the creation of a Workforce Reengagement Pilot Program to reconnect opportunity youth to education, employment, and long-term career pathways.

This initiative aligns with Exhibit E’s priorities, which include:

- Job training for individuals impacted by substance use
- Paid workforce reentry programs
- Partnerships with educational institutions and employers

The City will leverage evidence-based reengagement strategies to support young people who are at risk of opioid misuse due to economic instability and social disconnection.

Reengagement Strategy

To address this urgent issue, the City of Albuquerque proposes a pilot initiative to launch a one-year reengagement strategy aimed at reconnecting disconnected youth to education and employment opportunities. The program will focus on building a sustainable reengagement system through three key components:

1. Building a Sustainable Reengagement System
 - Create a validated list of organizations that provide education & job placement services
 - Develop a data reporting platform to track youth engagement and employment success
 - Leverage external funding to expand workforce pathways
2. Expanding Outreach & Direct Youth Engagement
 - Target high-need zip codes with high rates of youth disconnection
 - Provide direct referrals to job training, education programs, and apprenticeships

⁸ ROI for Reconnecting Opportunity Youth in Each Congressional District, Forum for Youth Investment, March 28, 2017 <https://forumfyi.org/knowledge-center/roi-for-reconnecting-opportunity-youth-in-each-congressional-district/>

- Implement case management and follow-up support to ensure long-term success
3. Integrating a Trauma-Informed Approach
- Conduct qualitative research to gather input from disconnected youth
 - Design services that reflect their lived experiences
 - Prioritize mentorship and peer support models

This initiative is strengthened by Albuquerque’s selection as one of six cities in the National League of Cities Reengagement Network, providing access to technical assistance and national best practices.

Expected Outcomes & Long-Term Impact

By applying evidence-based reengagement strategies, this initiative aims to reduce the number of disconnected youth by at least 10% in targeted zip codes within one year. The program will provide a structured pathway for youth to return to education or secure stable employment, reducing the likelihood of substance use, justice system involvement, and long-term economic instability.

This effort is strengthened by the City’s selection as one of six cities to participate in the National League of Cities Reengagement Network, which provides technical assistance and access to national best practices in youth reengagement. Through this partnership, the City has engaged a broad network of internal and external stakeholders to strengthen the reengagement ecosystem, including:

- Albuquerque Public Schools (APS)
- Bernalillo County
- Goodwill Industries
- A New Day
- NMCAN
- Central New Mexico Community College (CNM)
- Other local and regional partners

With a collaborative, data-driven approach, this program will serve as a critical first step in reversing youth disconnection trends and positioning Albuquerque as a national leader in reengagement efforts. By investing in prevention, intervention, and recovery-focused workforce pathways, the City is laying the foundation for long-term economic growth and community resilience.

This proposal is a strategic investment in breaking the cycle of youth disconnection and opioid use—providing young people with the tools, education, and opportunities needed to succeed.

Total Opioid Settlement Funding Request: \$2,065,000

- ACS – Expand and enhance SBVIP Program: **\$1,300,000**
- EDD – Opportunity Youth Reengagement Program: **\$765,000**

Long-Term Sustainability & Funding Strategy

The City of Albuquerque’s comprehensive reengagement and workforce initiative represents a long-term investment in youth, workforce development, and opioid prevention. By leveraging opioid settlement dollars as a launchpad, this initiative will create a permanent infrastructure for education, employment, and behavioral health support, ensuring that disconnected youth have access to opportunities that prevent substance use, enhance economic mobility, and reduce long-term system involvement.

By diversifying funding sources through federal grants, employer partnerships, Medicaid reimbursement, and reinvestment funds, the City will ensure that these programs continue well beyond the settlement funding period.

Intervention and Treatment: 60%

Pursuant to the direction of the LGCC subcommittee, a range of up to 60% of opioid settlement funds are to be allocated to ‘Prevention and Community Revitalization.’ Furthermore, the subcommittee has identified Recommendations 15, 19, 23, 25, and 27 from the Vital Strategies Report as aligning with this category. Below are the City of Albuquerque’s proposals in response to these recommendations.

Recommendation 15: Leveraging the Sobering Center

Vital Strategies recommended utilizing the Sobering Center to expand medical support, harm reduction, and overdose prevention services.

Proposal Overview

The opioid epidemic continues to devastate Bernalillo County, with an opioid-related overdose rate of 66.3 per 100,000 in 2021—the highest in New Mexico.⁹ As the crisis intensifies, hospitals and emergency departments (EDs) have become the default response for individuals experiencing opioid overdoses and behavioral health crises. However, EDs are not designed to provide long-term stabilization, medication-assisted treatment (MAT), or comprehensive recovery services, resulting in high rates of repeat overdoses, re-hospitalization, and preventable deaths.

⁹ Albuquerque Peer to Peer: Opioid Coordination and Outreach Project, UNM Center for Applied Research and Analysis, September 2023 <https://isr.unm.edu/reports/2023/albuquerque-peer-to-peer-opioid-coordination-and-outreach-project.pdf>

Emergency responders in Albuquerque are increasingly overwhelmed by opioid-related emergencies. Moreover, emergency department visit rate for non-fatal opioid overdoses in Bernalillo County stands at 82.7 per 100,000, among the highest in the state.¹⁰

Without specialized crisis stabilization services, individuals experiencing acute opioid-related crises face repeated cycles of emergency care, incarceration, and overdose risk—rather than pathways to treatment and recovery. To break this cycle, the City of Albuquerque’s Health, Housing, and Homelessness (HHH) Department proposes a strategic investment in crisis stabilization centers, leveraging the newly constructed Sobering Center, 24-hour First Responder Center, and Medical Respite Center to provide immediate, evidence-based care for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and co-occurring mental health conditions.

Expanding Access to Crisis Stabilization & Reducing Hospital Strain

The funding requested will support the City’s newly constructed Sobering Center, 24-hour First Responder Center, and Medical Respite Center, ensuring that these facilities provide comprehensive, low-barrier care that stabilizes individuals in crisis, connects them to treatment, and reduces reliance on overburdened emergency departments and the criminal justice system.

By integrating medical sobering services, MAT, peer recovery support, and wraparound care, the City of Albuquerque will be able to:

- Reduce emergency department visits related to opioid overdoses and behavioral health crises in targeted areas.
- Provide immediate access to evidence-based treatment and recovery pathways, addressing the root causes of addiction rather than relying on short-term stabilization.
- Reduce repeat overdose rates by ensuring individuals receive peer support and harm reduction services at the point of crisis intervention.
- Alleviate first responder burden, freeing up EMS and law enforcement resources by diverting individuals to specialized crisis care rather than jails or hospitals.

Capacity to Serve Patients in Crisis

The City’s investment in crisis stabilization services will provide a 24-hour, high-capacity system for individuals experiencing opioid-related crises:

- First Responders Center (20 beds): Capacity to serve 7,300 patients per year with 24-hour occupancy, reducing the burden on law enforcement and EMS personnel by providing an immediate crisis drop-off site.

¹⁰ Albuquerque Peer to Peer: Opioid Coordination and Outreach Project, UNM Center for Applied Research and Analysis, September 2023 <https://isr.unm.edu/reports/2023/albuquerque-peer-to-peer-opioid-coordination-and-outreach-project.pdf>

- Medical Sobering Center (50 beds): Capacity to serve 18,250 patients per year, offering less than 24-hour stays for individuals experiencing acute intoxication or overdose.
- Medical Respite (50 beds): Capacity to serve 600 patients per year, with an average stay of 30 days, allowing individuals time to stabilize and transition to long-term treatment or housing.

With targeted investment through opioid settlement funds, this comprehensive, community-based stabilization model will allow Albuquerque to transform its crisis response system, ensuring that individuals experiencing opioid-related crises are met with care, treatment, and long-term recovery support—rather than repeated cycles of emergency department visits, incarceration, and overdose risk.

Funding Sources

General Fund Appropriation: \$165,000.00

SAMHSA Grant Funding: \$1,800,000.00 (expires 09/29/2025)

Centene Grant: \$1,051,263

Opioid Funding Request: \$5,354,357.00

Long-Term Sustainability & Funding Strategy

The City of Albuquerque’s investment in crisis stabilization, recovery housing, peer support expansion, and overdose prevention is a crucial step in reshaping the local response to the opioid crisis. While opioid settlement funds will provide the foundation for these initiatives, long-term sustainability is essential to ensuring that these life-saving programs continue beyond the initial allocation. This strategy outlines a multi-pronged funding approach designed to integrate state, federal, and private resources to sustain and expand these programs in the years to come.

To ensure that the City’s crisis stabilization and prevention programs remain viable over the long term, Albuquerque will leverage a combination of Medicaid reimbursement, federal grant funding, private partnerships, and city appropriations. This diversified funding strategy will reduce dependence on a single source and enhance program stability.

Recommendation 19: Naloxone Access Expansion

Vital Strategies recommended increasing naloxone access in high-risk areas and integrating it into emergency responses.

Proposal Overview

Harm reduction is a critical strategy in combating the opioid epidemic, with expanded naloxone distribution identified as an essential intervention for preventing overdose fatalities. Despite the proven effectiveness of naloxone, barriers to access remain,

particularly among uninsured individuals and those denied coverage for naloxone prescriptions. Additionally, data from the New Mexico Department of Health indicates that a significant portion of overdose deaths occur in locations where naloxone was not immediately available, underscoring the urgent need for expanded public access.

To address this pressing public health crisis, the City of Albuquerque’s Albuquerque Community Safety, Health, Housing, and Homelessness Department, Albuquerque Fire Rescue, and Albuquerque Police Department propose a multi-agency initiative to expand naloxone access and overdose prevention efforts across the city. This initiative aligns with Vital Strategies’ recommendations and the opioid settlement agreement’s Exhibit E priorities, which explicitly support broad naloxone distribution, overdose prevention, and first responder training.

Funding for this initiative would support a coordinated expansion strategy, including:

- Deploying naloxone on all first responder vehicles (ACS, AFR, APD) to ensure immediate administration in emergency situations.
- Expanding naloxone training for APD officers and emergency personnel, equipping them with overdose response skills and ensuring naloxone is widely carried among frontline responders.
- Distributing naloxone kits to community-based organizations that work with vulnerable populations, ensuring those most at risk have direct access to life-saving resources.

The evidence supporting naloxone’s effectiveness is overwhelming—studies show that increasing naloxone distribution can reduce overdose deaths by up to 46% in communities with widespread availability.¹¹

In Albuquerque, first responders report an increase of overdose calls highlighting the urgent need for proactive distribution strategies that prevent overdoses before they become fatal. By ensuring naloxone is available in first responder vehicles, public spaces, and directly within at-risk communities, this initiative will fill critical service gaps, reduce preventable opioid-related fatalities, and support a comprehensive harm reduction approach that aligns with national best practices.

Total Opioid Settlement Funding Request: \$400,000.00

Long-Term Sustainability & Funding Strategy

To sustain and expand naloxone distribution efforts, the City of Albuquerque will collaborate with the New Mexico Human Services Department to integrate Medicaid reimbursement for naloxone programs. This initiative will ensure that Medicaid-eligible

¹¹ Medications to Treat Opioid Use Disorder Research Report, National Institute on Drug Abuse, <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-to-treat-opioid-addiction/naloxone-accessible>

individuals can access naloxone at no cost through pharmacies and community-based organizations. Additionally, the City will work with the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) to secure ongoing state funding dedicated to harm reduction efforts, including grants that support naloxone procurement for uninsured individuals.

To further support sustainability, the City will actively pursue federal funding opportunities such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Harm Reduction Grant Program, which funds overdose prevention strategies, including naloxone distribution. Public-private partnerships will also be leveraged, engaging healthcare institutions, private foundations, and pharmaceutical companies to secure donations of naloxone kits and training resources.

Recommendation 23: Community-Based Treatment Access and Quality

Vital Strategies recommended expanding access to community-based treatment with a focus on integrated, person-centered care. This approach aims to transition from institutionalized settings to community-oriented treatment environments, increasing accessibility and quality of services for individuals with substance use disorders.

Proposal Overview

The City of Albuquerque recognizes the urgent need for expanding community-based treatment options to ensure that individuals experiencing opioid use disorder (OUD) and co-occurring conditions receive immediate, evidence-based care. To align with Vital Strategies' recommendations and the opioid settlement agreement (Exhibit E), this proposal presents a two-pronged approach to strengthen local treatment capacity and ensure long-term recovery outcomes:

1. Community-Oriented Recovery (COR) Pilot Program – A comprehensive community-based recovery model providing case management, supportive housing, and structured care arrangements to prevent individuals from cycling through emergency services.
2. Albuquerque Fire and Rescue (AFR) MOUD Expansion – An emergency response initiative that equips first responders with Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD), ensuring that individuals revived from an overdose receive immediate treatment and direct transport to recovery services.

This integrated approach bridges the gap between crisis response and long-term recovery, reducing emergency department admissions, repeat overdoses, and justice system involvement.

1. HHH Community-Oriented Recovery (COR) Pilot Program:

Modeled on the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver program, the COR pilot program is designed to facilitate community-based recovery by offering case management,

supportive housing, and structured care arrangements within a local setting. Tailored to the individualized needs of individuals with substance use disorders, the program aims to "meet people where they are," prioritizing community care over institutional care. The COR pilot program supports individuals in recovery by fostering connections to stable environments and professional support tailored to their unique recovery needs.

Projected Impact & Outcomes

- Decrease in hospitalization rates and repeat overdoses.
- Increased housing stability for individuals in recovery.
- Enhanced accessibility to community-based treatment, reducing reliance on emergency services.

The COR program will work closely with community-based treatment providers, housing organizations, and behavioral health specialists to ensure that participants receive ongoing recovery support, mental health care, and workforce training.

2. Albuquerque Fire and Rescue (AFR) Expanded MOUD Program:

In October 2024, AFR implemented a program to deliver Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) on-scene and provide immediate transport to service providers. In collaboration with Bernalillo County Fire Rescue (BCFR) and Albuquerque Ambulance Services (AAS), AFR also introduced a specialized Medic response unit to address substance use and behavioral health emergencies.

To further expand these services, AFR proposes additional training for EMT Intermediates and Paramedics, enabling more personnel to administer MOUD treatments in the field. This expansion would significantly increase access to immediate, life-saving treatment for patients encountered through the 911 system.

The combined efforts of the COR pilot and AFR's MOUD expansion provide a robust response to the recommendation for community-based treatment access and quality. By offering immediate, on-scene care through AFR and structured community recovery through COR, the City is building a comprehensive support system that prioritizes accessible, person-centered treatment for individuals with substance use disorders.

Total Opioid Settlement Funding Request: \$2,408,959

- HHH – Community-Oriented Recovery (COR) Pilot Program: **\$400,000.00**
- AFR – Expanded MOUD Program: **\$2,008,959.00**

Long-Term Sustainability & Funding Strategy

To ensure the long-term sustainability of Albuquerque's community-based treatment programs, the City will leverage a combination of Medicaid reimbursement, federal and

state grant funding, and private-sector partnerships. Expanding Medicaid-approved providers and maximizing reimbursement for Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) and peer support services will create a self-sustaining model. Additionally, the City will pursue federal and state funding sources such as SAMHSA’s State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant and HRSA’s Harm Reduction Grant to scale harm reduction and treatment programs. Private-sector partnerships with hospitals, employers, and philanthropic organizations will further diversify funding streams, enabling continued investment in crisis stabilization, workforce reintegration, and wraparound services.

Recommendation 25: Recovery Housing

Recommendation Overview:

Vital Strategies recommended expanding recovery housing options for individuals in intensive outpatient programs.

Proposal Overview

HHH proposes partnerships with Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOPs) to provide low-barrier, evidence-based recovery housing options and expand rental assistance through programs such as the Fresh Start initiative. Given that a City-commissioned report found only 800 recovery housing beds available in Albuquerque, and that 64.9% of surveyed individuals in the VOICES New Mexico study reported housing instability, there is an urgent need for long-term, stable housing options that support those in recovery.

As a first step, the City launched the Recovery Gateway micro-community, which is financed with \$5 million in opioid settlement funds and will provide wrap-around behavioral health, housing navigation, and workforce training services for individuals in early recovery. Lessons from Recovery Gateway will inform the City's broader effort to expand recovery housing partnerships with IOPs, ensuring individuals have at least 18 to 24 months of stable housing to increase their likelihood of long-term sobriety.

Additionally, HHH will work to ensure housing meets the diverse needs of Albuquerque’s most impacted communities, including individuals in all stages of recovery, and housing assistance for individuals transitioning from incarceration. To reduce barriers, housing providers will receive training on anti-discrimination policies related to MAT (Medication-Assisted Treatment) and substance use disorders, to better meet specific needs of individuals in recovery. Furthermore, the City will explore Medicaid reimbursement opportunities to sustain case management and housing navigation services in recovery housing programs and assess the feasibility of leveraging long-term funding mechanisms beyond opioid settlement dollars to support the continued expansion of recovery housing.

Total Opioid Settlement Funding Request: \$13,497,766.00

Recommendation 27: Peer Support Expansion

Vital Strategies recommended increasing peer support roles across harm reduction and recovery programs.

Proposal Overview

The City of Albuquerque is committed to expanding peer support across programs, leveraging individuals' lived experience to enhance recovery and harm reduction services. To ensure peer support is integrated into high-impact settings, The Health Housing and Homeless Department (HHH) proposes expansion of the peer recovery workforce, embedding specialists at throughout the gateway system of care, jail reentry, family housing, and other key intercept points. Peers will provide intensive case management, wraparound navigation, and high-frequency engagement (2-3 meetings per week, with a limited caseload of 10-12 clients) to ensure sustained recovery support.

Research from the Strategic Plan's VOICES New Mexico study highlights the vital role of peer recovery services in fostering long-term sobriety. To address this, HHH will develop a peer workforce expansion plan, and launch a new initiative to train and deploy 100 additional peer recovery specialists. In partnership with the State of New Mexico Office of Peer Recovery and Engagement, the City will ensure trauma-informed, culturally responsive peer training is available, expanding workforce capacity.

The Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) department proposes an expansion of the peer-led Opioid, Education, and Prevention (OEP) program under the Violence Prevention and Intervention (VPI) division. The OEP team offers support to individuals experiencing substance use disorder (SUD) through their own lived experience by guiding and assisting in the navigation of systems of care and treatment services towards a path of recovery and stable, healthy living. The OEP team introduces clients to recovery by building a rapport and connecting to similar struggles through a harm-reduction strategy. This peer team provides emergency follow-up, critical case management services following crisis situations or appropriate calls for service, particularly providing immediate support for the golden opportunity initiative.

This peer-led team also partners with the Violence Intervention Program (VIP) peer support workers that provides a unique approach to addressing cases with a combination of substance abuse disorder and engagement in a cycle of violent crimes or involvement with the criminal justice system. Currently, the VIP and OEP peer teams are receiving direct referrals of potential clients that have a combination of substance use, violent crime charges, and potential to recidivate and/or relapse. Referrals are received from the United States Attorney's Office, Federal Re-entry Court (RIO) program, US Veteran Affairs (VA), State of New Mexico Department of Corrections, New Mexico State Penitentiary, Federal and State Probation and Parole Offices, and the District Attorney's Office. These entities have requested partnership with the VIP and OEP peer teams due to this particular clientele have violent criminal backgrounds with substance abuse disorders requesting assistance

with recovery and re-entry into society. These individuals are often rejected due to violent background or feel unwelcomed by supportive programs that do not understand their struggles. This is a perfect opportunity for OEP expansion to join efforts with VIP peer team to intervene and prevent those at highest risk of engaging in the cycles of violent crime in the City.

The expansion of peer-led teams will increase the capacity to provide support and guidance in specialty areas allowing for a robust peer team. The peer-led programs compliment ACS’s trauma-informed public health approach to public safety. The overall model of ACS is enhanced by the peer-led programs acting as connectors to community-based resources and recovery treatment services. To increase accessibility, the Albuquerque Community Safety Department proposes to expand peer recovery support to 7 days a week, from 8 AM to 7 PM, ensuring that individuals can access peer services at any stage of their recovery journey. Additionally, an On-Call Peer Support Team will provide emergency after-hours support, filling a critical service gap for individuals in crisis, post-overdose situations, and emergency department discharges.

Impact

Since January 2024, the OEP program received 595 referrals from AFR, ACS, VIP, CORA, self-referrals, community partners, and from community outreach events. Currently most referrals are received from AFR as these are direct follow-ups after the administration of NARCAN during an overdose call for service. There has been an increase of referral candidates proactively seeking treatment. Also, the increased engagement of candidates after a referral is due to the hiring of additional peer support workers for the OEP team leading to an increase of program capacity.

OEP Referrals, Candidates Engaged (Made Contact and Conversed), and Candidates Seeking Treatment (those requesting detox/substance use treatment/medicated assisted treatment, determined by Case Notes)

	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
OEP Referrals	31	36	44	58	22	28	45	40	65
Candidates Engaged	6	9	10	15	16	21	23	23	42
Candidates Seeking Treatment	2	5	4	7	1	5	6	2	12

Funding Source:

SAMHSA: \$500,000—ends 9/29/2026

- 4 peers: \$320,000.00 (\$80k per peer)
- Narcan: \$100,000.00
- Community engagement events: \$80,000.00

Total Opioid Settlement Funding Request: \$2,520,000.00

- HHH – Peer Support Expansion: **\$1,500,000.00**
- ACS – Peer Support Expansion: **\$1,020,000.00**

To ensure sustainability, the City will explore Medicaid reimbursement opportunities to sustain peer recovery coaching and harm reduction navigation services. By ensuring peer support services are eligible for Medicaid billing, the City aims to establish a sustainable funding model that allows for long-term expansion beyond opioid settlement funds.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

Total Payments Per Year

Year	Bernalillo County	Albuquerque
2022	\$20,483,287.34	\$25,035,129.00
2023	\$1,798,482.72	\$2,198,145.54
2024	\$1,809,116.86	\$2,211,142.84
2025	\$1,772,377.84	\$2,166,239.58
2026	\$1,346,126.74	\$1,645,266.02
2027	\$1,404,757.83	\$1,716,926.24
2028	\$1,792,087.48	\$2,190,329.11
2029	\$3,313,467.44	\$4,049,793.51
2030	\$4,098,966.68	\$5,009,848.13
2031	\$3,927,702.83	\$4,800,525.65
2032	\$3,927,702.83	\$4,800,525.65
2033	\$3,927,702.83	\$4,800,525.65
2034	\$3,927,702.83	\$4,800,525.65
2035	\$3,927,702.83	\$4,800,525.65
2036	\$3,702,394.97	\$4,525,149.38
2037	\$3,702,394.97	\$4,525,149.38
2038	\$903,170.53	\$1,103,875.06
Total	\$ 65,765,145.52	\$80,379,622.02

Payments Per Settling Company

Settling Company	Bernalillo County Share	Albuquerque Share	Year(s) of Payment
Amneal	\$44,169.83	\$53,985.35	2023-2025
Hikma	\$30,461.95	\$37,231.27	2023
KVK-Tech	\$54,069.96	\$66,085.51	2023-2025
Walgreens	\$28,089,411.42	\$34,331,502.85	2023-2037
Kroger	\$5,091,497.44	\$6,222,941.32	2022
CVS	\$1,175,949.97	\$1,437,272.19	2022
Albertsons	\$1,305,512.17	\$1,595,625.98	2022
Walmart	\$8,981,923.70	\$10,977,906.74	2022
J&J	\$3,200,772.11	\$3,912,054.81	2022
Teva	\$2,489,651.82	\$3,042,907.78	2023-2035
Allergan	\$1,483,216.05	\$1,812,819.62	2023-2029
Distributors (Cardinal, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen)	\$13,818,509.10	\$16,889,288.60	2022-2038
Total	\$ 65,765,145.52	\$80,379,622.02	

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There are administrative costs associated with the above settlement amounts. After deducting these fees, the City of Albuquerque estimates it will receive approximately \$75 million in opioid settlement funds.

Before distributing the Local Share to local governments, the settlement administrator will first set aside 15% of the Local Share into the New Mexico Backstop Fund (NMBF) for pertinent settlements.

¹² As provided by outside legal counsel to LGCC on August 23, 2023

CONCLUSION

The City of Albuquerque’s proposal responses represent a comprehensive, community-driven strategy designed to address the multifaceted challenges of the opioid crisis. By aligning our initiatives with the recommendations of the Vital Strategies report and the priorities outlined in Exhibit E of the settlement agreement, we have established a robust framework that prioritizes life-saving interventions, systemic equity, and sustainable pathways to recovery. Our proposals span a range of interventions—from expanding naloxone access and integrating culturally responsive education programs to reconnecting disconnected youth and enhancing community-based treatment and recovery housing—each underpinned by evidence-based practices and a commitment to interagency collaboration. These initiatives not only address immediate public health needs but also lay the foundation for long-term resilience and community revitalization.

Moving forward, the City is committed to refining these proposals in partnership with Bernalillo County, Albuquerque Public Schools, state agencies, and community organizations. Our approach emphasizes diversified funding strategies—including Medicaid reimbursement, federal and state grants, and public-private partnerships—to ensure these critical programs are sustainable beyond the initial opioid settlement funding period. With transparency, accountability, and ongoing community engagement at the core of our efforts, this report serves as a strategic blueprint for the City Council to adopt and implement a cohesive, sustainable response to the opioid epidemic, ultimately saving lives and strengthening the fabric of our community.