

Date: 12/17/2024

**City of Augusta, Maine
Opioid Settlement Money Allocation Policy**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the priorities and procedures for the allocation of opioid settlement funds received by the City of Augusta. This policy outlines how funds will be distributed in alignment with the goals of addressing the opioid crisis through prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery initiatives. It also creates a committee to review and score grant applications and make recommendations for final approval by the City Council.

2. Background

On June 24, 2024, Councilor Gary-Allen requested an informational meeting with the Augusta City Council to discuss the allocation of opioid settlement funds. As of September 6, 2024, the City of Augusta has received \$734,890 in opioid settlement funds. To date, the City has allocated \$10,000 to the Augusta Homelessness Taskforce, \$88,000 for a Community Support Specialist at the Augusta Police Department, and \$10,000 in flexible funding for individuals in or seeking recovery. The remaining balance of \$626,890 is available for further allocation, with additional funds to be deposited at a later date.

These funds are a result of legal settlements related to the widespread marketing of opioids and are governed by the terms of the settlement agreements and the Maine Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

3. Scope

This policy applies to the allocation of a portion of the opioid settlement funds received by the City of Augusta for programs or initiatives focused on preventing, reducing harm from, and supporting recovery from opioid use disorder. This portion is limited to one-time funding for projects within the City of Augusta.

4. Funding Priorities

The City of Augusta will prioritize funding under the following four pillars, each targeting a different aspect of the opioid crisis:

A. Prevention Priority: Evidence-Based Programs for Young People

- **Objective:** Provide one-time funding to expand access to evidence-based programs for youth, led by community organizations and educational institutions, to prevent substance use before it begins.

B. Harm Reduction Priority: Reducing Overdose and Infection Risks

- **Objective:** Provide one-time funding to increase access to clean syringes, ensure safe disposal of syringes, expand access to overdose reversal medications, and provide drug testing strips.

C. Treatment Priority: Flex Funding for Basic Necessities

- **Objective:** Provide flexible one-time funding to individuals with substance use disorder to help them access basic necessities such as housing, transportation, treatment, and employment resources.

D. Recovery Priority: Increasing Access to Housing

- **Objective:** Provide one-time funding to increase access to transitional and short-term housing for individuals impacted by substance use disorder.

5. City Council Authority

The City Council shall be responsible for approving any allocation or distribution of opioid settlement funds received by the City of Augusta. The City Council shall have the right to allocate and distribute opioid settlement funds on its own initiative or in response to requests received from the City Manager or recommendations received from the ad hoc committee described in this policy. The City Council may approve, modify, or deny any proposed or recommended allocation or distribution of opioid settlement funds. The City Council will endeavor to allocate and distribute opioid settlement funds in accordance with the funding priorities identified in this policy.

6. Ad Hoc Committee

A. Committee Composition

An ad hoc committee will be formed to receive and review grant applications for \$400,000 of the opioid settlement funds. The committee will consist of the following members:

- City Councilor (Chair of the Committee);
- Individual with personal experience of substance use disorder;
- Individual who has lost a partner, spouse, or loved one to an opioid overdose;
- Professional with experience in the treatment of substance use disorder;
- City of Augusta Community Support Specialist (Police Department);
- Individual with experience providing recovery housing;
- Individual with experience in prevention-focused youth programming;
- Individual with experience in harm reduction; and
- City Manager or their designee (ex officio member).

Committee members must reside or work within the State of Maine, with preference given to Augusta residents. No more than three members may be non-residents of Augusta. All committee members will be appointed by the Mayor.

B. Committee Responsibilities

- Review and score grant applications based on the priorities outlined in this policy;
- Make funding recommendations to the City Council based on scoring results; and
- Ensure that the allocation process is transparent, fair, and equitable.

C. Conflict of Interest

Committee members shall disclose and abstain from scoring or voting on any grant application presenting an actual or potential conflict of interest. An actual or potential conflict of interest arises when a committee member has a financial interest or a personal interest in the applicant or application, either of which impairs or could be seen to impair the independence or objectivity of the member in discharging their duties. A financial interest includes, but is not limited to, an employment relationship with or receipt of compensation from the applicant. A personal interest includes, but is not limited to, serving as a board member or volunteer for the applicant or otherwise supporting the applicant's activities. If a committee member is uncertain whether a relationship constitutes a conflict of interest, the committee member shall disclose the relationship to the committee and may request the committee vote on whether the member should abstain. Violations may result in removal from the committee.

D. Funding Allocation and Disbursement

The City of Augusta will allocate \$400,000 from the opioid settlement fund to one-time funding grants. These funds may be distributed to one or multiple projects based on the applications received. The funding will be used to support initiatives that align with the City's opioid crisis response priorities and address immediate community needs while promoting long-term, sustainable solutions.

The funds will be distributed in a manner that ensures the projects become self-sustaining, reducing reliance on ongoing City funding.

E. Grant Application Process

- **Eligibility:** Grants will be available to organizations or initiatives that serve residents of the City of Augusta and align with the priorities outlined in this policy.
- **Application Review:** The committee will review and score grant applications based on their alignment with the City's priorities, feasibility, impact, and sustainability.
- **Funding Recommendations:** After reviewing and scoring the applications, the committee will make recommendations for funding to the City Council for final approval.

F. Implementation and Monitoring

- **Disbursement:** Grants will be disbursed once the City Council has approved the committee's funding recommendations.
- **Evaluation:** Grant recipients will be required to report on the progress and outcomes of their projects, ensuring that funds are used effectively and in alignment with the intended goals. The committee may monitor the implementation of funded projects and evaluate their success in meeting the objectives set forth in this policy.
- **Reporting.** The City Council may request a report from the committee regarding any project that is funded at any time. The committee shall provide the requested report within 60 days.

G. Sustainability Considerations

Given the limited and one-time nature of the opioid settlement funds, this policy emphasizes the importance of sustainability. Projects that receive funding are encouraged to leverage other resources or adopt strategies that ensure long-term viability without continuous reliance on City funds.

7. Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the City Council and may be modified or amended by vote of the City Council.