



---

# **STATUS REPORT ON OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS**

*Published August 2026*

---

# Introduction & Overview

The City of Medford received its first payment through the Massachusetts Opioid Abatement Settlement in 2023. Before spending any of these funds, the City developed a community-informed plan to ensure the funding addressed the community's greatest needs and achieved the greatest possible impact.

Over the course of a year, the Office of Prevention & Outreach gathered input from family members who lost loved ones to overdose, people with lived experience of substance use and recovery, treatment and recovery providers, prevention professionals, healthcare partners, first responders, and other community stakeholders. Their feedback helped shape Medford's priorities for investing opioid settlement funds. A summary of the community's recommendations is included on page 5 of this report.

The Opioid Abatement Plan was then presented to the City's Behavioral Health Commission in June 2024, and implementation began the following month.

As of July 2026, the City has received **\$457,725.97** through the Massachusetts Opioid Abatement Settlement Program. Medford is expected to receive approximately **\$1,400,000** over the **15-year** life of the settlement.

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, the City invested **\$71,062** in opioid abatement initiatives. These investments were strengthened by two **RIZE Foundation grants totaling \$75,000**, which funded sober home scholarships, transportation assistance, and primary prevention initiatives. By leveraging outside funding, the City expanded services while preserving opioid settlement dollars for additional community priorities.

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, the City invested approximately \$90,000 in opioid abatement strategies. A detailed report outlining FY2026 expenditures and program outcomes will be published in October 2026.

Based on current projections, Medford expects to spend approximately \$80,000–\$100,000 annually in opioid settlement funding over the coming years. Guided by the priorities identified through the community planning process, funding has and will continue to be generally allocated as follows:

- **65% – Recovery Services and Harm Reduction**
- **15% – Mental Health and Family Support**
- **20% – Prevention and Early Intervention**

Since implementation began in July 2024, the City has focused on using opioid settlement funds strategically to address service gaps while leveraging state, federal, and philanthropic grants whenever possible. By combining funding sources, Medford has maximized the impact of these investments, expanded services beyond what settlement funding alone could support, and strengthened a comprehensive response to substance use prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery. This long-term approach also helps ensure that successful programs are not dependent on a single funding source and can continue serving the community well into the future.

The following report highlights how opioid settlement funds have been invested over the past two years and the progress made toward implementing the community's priorities. It also demonstrates how strategic partnerships and additional grant funding have helped the City stretch these resources to serve more residents and strengthen Medford's continuum of care.

# Medford Opioid Abatement Settlement Funds Timeline



# Community-Informed Plan

Community feedback played a key role in shaping Medford's approach to opioid settlement funding. Through a community survey, 145 residents, individuals with lived and living experience, family members, service providers, City staff, and other stakeholders shared their perspectives on substance use concerns and priorities for future investments.

When asked to rank broad funding strategies, respondents identified support for people in recovery as the highest overall priority, followed by connecting people to care, prevention of opioid misuse, opioid use disorder treatment, and support for pregnant or parenting people. These strategies consistently ranked as the community's top priorities and provided the framework for Medford's approach to its opioid settlement investments.

The survey also identified the specific initiatives residents believed should receive funding. The highest levels of support were for expanding access to mental health services and supports for young people (78.62%), implementing evidence-based youth substance use prevention programs (77.93%), strengthening early identification and intervention for individuals and families affected by substance use (76.55%), supporting EMS and post-overdose response efforts that connect individuals to treatment and recovery services (76.55%), and expanding recovery support programs for parents in recovery (73.79%).

Based on these community-identified priorities, Medford developed a funding plan that directed opioid settlement dollars toward the areas residents and stakeholders identified as most critical to addressing the opioid crisis.

The largest portion of funding was designated for **Recovery & Harm Reduction (65%)**, supporting efforts such as expanded recovery coaching, post-overdose outreach, housing and transportation assistance, recovery support groups, and harm reduction services.

**Mental Health Supports (15%)** were allocated to enhance resources for individuals and families affected by substance use and to increase mental health and substance use education for City staff and community members.

**Prevention (20%)** funding was directed toward evidence-based youth programs, school-based interventions, early identification initiatives, community education, and collaborative efforts to reduce substance use before it begins.

By aligning fund allocation with needs identified through community feedback, Medford invested in initiatives focused on prevention, recovery, access to treatment, and long-term community wellness.

Massachusetts and national settlement agreements require that Opioid Settlement Funds be used only for opioid abatement activities, meaning evidence-based programs and services designed to address the opioid crisis. These funds support strategies to prevent opioid misuse, reduce overdose deaths, expand access to treatment and recovery, strengthen harm reduction efforts, and connect individuals and families with needed services. Settlement funds are intended to expand and strengthen existing programs and services rather than replace existing funding.

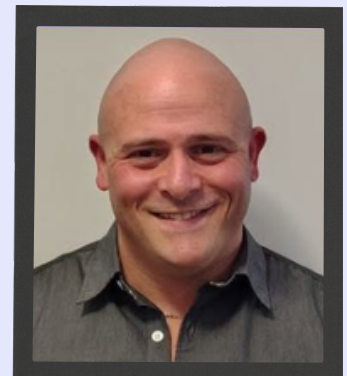
Approved opioid abatement strategies include but are not limited to the following: ➤ **Prevention** ➤ **Harm Reduction** ➤ **Treatment** ➤ **Recovery Support** ➤ **Connections to Care** ➤ **Community Education & Outreach**

# 2025 Fund Usage

\$71,062 was expended in FY2025 to support the following initiatives:

## Recovery Coaching Services

Through a contract with North Suffolk Community Services, Medford has invested funds towards a part-time Recovery Coach. Chris Summa remains committed to providing direct peer support, post-overdose follow-up, treatment referrals, and recovery planning while working closely with the Medford Police Department, Social Services Coordinator, and other community partners to connect individuals with timely resources and support. The program also supports weekly recovery meetings that foster connection, accountability, and long-term recovery, with funding providing food to encourage attendance, engagement, and participation.



## Youth Substance Use Prevention & Intervention Strategies

Funding for Medford Middle and High Schools in implementing the evidence-based iDECIDE early intervention program. Facilitated by school counselors, iDECIDE provides structured after-school sessions for students identified as using or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs during the school day. These sessions provide an opportunity for early intervention by increasing awareness of substance use risks, building healthy decision-making and coping skills, and connecting students with additional supports when appropriate.



Additional funding supported professional development for Medford health teachers and the expansion of evidence-based youth prevention initiatives. Investments included the Medford High School Youth Action Team, a student-led, peer-to-peer prevention program facilitated by a School Adjustment Counselor that promotes healthy decision-making, positive social norms, protective factors, and connections to trusted adults to help prevent substance misuse.



Settlement funding also supported parent and caregiver education through Medford's Outreach and Prevention events, equipping families with information, communication strategies, and community resources to support healthy decision-making and prevent youth substance use.



## Harm Reduction & Outreach

Medford expanded harm reduction efforts by purchasing supplies such as Narcan distribution materials and other harm reduction resources to support residents at risk of overdose. Additional outreach supplies, including tents, sleeping bags, and socks, were purchased to engage and assist unhoused individuals experiencing substance use disorder.



## Recovery Support Services

Funding for sober home scholarships and transportation assistance, including MBTA passes and rideshare services to help residents access treatment, recovery housing, behavioral health services, and employment opportunities.



## Community Engagement, Recovery Resources & Remembrance Initiatives

In addition to weekly recovery meetings, resources, including printed recovery guides, phones, and phone cards, were purchased to improve outreach and residents' access to services.

Medford also used funding to organize the Pathways To Hope And Healing event at City Hall in September to encourage and celebrate recovery, support families, and raise awareness about substance use and overdose. Highlights:

- 154 purple flags planted in honor of the 154 Medford residents who have lost their lives to overdose since 2015.



## Future Plans: Fall 2026 & Beyond

### Prevention and Intervention

The City of Medford will continue expanding substance use prevention and early intervention efforts in partnership with Medford Public Schools. Parent and caregiver education will continue through Medford Caregiver University, with workshops based on topics identified by more than 150 caregivers through a community survey. The City will also update the Navigating the Teen Years guide and develop elementary and middle school versions to help parents begin conversations about substance use, mental health, and other challenges at an earlier age.

Opioid Settlement Funds will support the implementation of a student support curriculum for use during Medford High School advisory periods. Funding will also provide ongoing training for school nurses, adjustment counselors, health teachers, and other school staff on evidence-based substance use prevention, mental health, and early intervention strategies.

Building on the successful launch of the Medford High School Youth Action Team and its expansion to Andrews Middle School in spring 2026, the program will be introduced at McGlynn Middle School in 2027. The evidence-based iDecide early intervention program, which has successfully provided support to Medford High School students identified as using substances, will also be adapted for Andrews and McGlynn Middle Schools to reach students earlier and provide support before substance use becomes more serious.

## **Recovery Supports**

Recovery support services will continue to reduce barriers to treatment and recovery while supporting individuals and families affected by substance use disorder. The City's Recovery Coach will continue providing one-on-one recovery coaching, facilitating the weekly City Hall Recovery Group, and connecting residents to treatment, recovery supports, employment, housing, and other community resources.

In partnership with Learn to Cope, the Family Support Group launched in 2026 will continue providing peer support and education for families. The group's facilitator will also offer one-on-one guidance, resources, and assistance navigating available services for family members seeking support.

In addition to sustaining the Sober Home Scholarship Program, the City will launch a new Recovery Support Mini-Grant Program. Grants of up to \$1,000 will be available to Medford residents directly impacted by substance use disorder and families who have lost loved ones to overdose. Funding may be used for work clothes, rent, transportation, phone service, funeral expenses, summer camp scholarships, and other needs that reduce barriers to recovery and promote family stability.

Transportation assistance will remain available through MBTA passes and rideshare services, helping residents access treatment, behavioral health appointments, recovery meetings, job training, employment, and other essential services.

The City will also continue investing in harm reduction efforts, including naloxone (Narcan) distribution, overdose prevention education, and expanded needle disposal opportunities, including a new public sharps disposal kiosk at the Medford Public Library. Together, these efforts will improve access to lifesaving resources while helping residents stay connected to treatment and recovery supports.

## **Technical Assistance**

[Mosaic Rize Partnership](#)

[Mass Opioid Settlement Funds](#)

[Guidance for Municipalities Utilizing Opioid Settlement Abatement Payments](#)