



CITY OF CLEVELAND
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Cleveland Department of Public Health - OMHAR

Opioid Settlement RFP Technical Assistance Session

February 20, 2026



Welcome

- Today's session will:
 - Review the RFP focus areas
 - Clarify eligibility requirements
 - Explain scoring and evaluation
 - Review budget and reimbursement rules
 - Outline reporting expectations
 - Provide tips for a strong proposal



Funding Overview

Funding Opportunity

- Supported by Opioid Settlement Funds
- Up to \$250,000 per award
 - CDPH may fund more than 4 organizations (award amounts may vary)
- Funding period: July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

(See Section 1, pages 3–4)



Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants must:

- Be a nonprofit, school, or community-based organization
- Serve Cleveland residents only
- Have experience serving opioid-impacted communities
- Align with one or more domains

(Section 2, page 5)



Focus Areas (Domains)

Applicants may select up to 2 focus areas:

1. Prevention, Intervention & Education
2. Family Support & Engagement
3. Recovery Supports, Health & Wellness
4. Provider Support & Workforce Development
5. Stabilizing Support & Basic Needs

Each domain is scored separately. However, the maximum total request per applicant may not exceed \$250,000, even if applying under two focus areas.



DOMAIN AREA 1: Prevention, Intervention & Education

Domain Goal: Reduce opioid-related harm and prevent future misuse through awareness, early intervention, and community education.

What This Domain Funds

- Programs that:
 - Provide overdose prevention education
 - Conduct harm reduction outreach
 - Distribute naloxone & safety supports
 - Deliver youth prevention programs
 - Conduct public awareness campaigns
 - Provide care coordination and referrals
 - Address stigma and risk perception



Prevention, Intervention & Education

Key Characteristics of Strong Proposals

- ✓ Multi-level approach (education + intervention)
- ✓ Direct community engagement strategy
- ✓ Clear outreach to high-risk populations
- ✓ Formal partnerships (schools, providers, community groups)
- ✓ Measurable behavior change or awareness outcomes
- ✓ Plan to sustain prevention beyond funding



Prevention, Intervention & Education

Examples of Measurable Outcomes

- _ of individuals trained in overdose prevention
- _ of naloxone kits distributed
- Increased knowledge scores (pre/post)
- Increased referrals to treatment
- Reduced stigma or risk behaviors



DOMAIN AREA 2: Family Support & Engagement

Domain Goal: Strengthen family systems and provide stabilization resources for those supporting loved ones impacted by substance use or loss.

What This Domain Funds

- Programs that:
 - Provide financial or stabilizing support (food, housing, transport)
 - Offer family-based counseling or support groups
 - Provide grief support services
 - Assist with legal documents (IDs, birth certificates)
 - Offer caregiver education and skill-building
 - Support kinship and chosen family networks



Family Support & Engagement

Key Characteristics of Strong Proposals

- ✓ Family-centered and culturally responsive
- ✓ Engagement strategy for caregivers & loved ones
- ✓ Partnerships with schools, shelters, and health providers
- ✓ Clear evaluation of family stability & well-being
- ✓ Sustainability and long-term support plan



Family Support & Engagement

Examples of Measurable Outcomes

- _ of families served
- Improved caregiver well-being scores
- Increased engagement in parenting programs
- Reduced family stress or isolation
- Improved housing or service stability



DOMAIN AREA 3: Recovery Supports, Health & Wellness

Domain Goal: Foster holistic recovery and long-term wellness for individuals healing from substance use impacts.

What This Domain Funds

- Programs that:
 - Provide peer recovery support
 - Offer housing stabilization
 - Integrate Community Health Workers (CHWs)
 - Provide grief counseling
 - Support alternative therapies (art, music, equine)
 - Offer harm reduction supplies & safety resources



Recovery Supports, Health & Wellness

Key Characteristics of Strong Proposals

- ✓ Holistic, person-centered recovery model
- ✓ Integration of care coordination + wellness
- ✓ Strong recovery network partnerships
- ✓ Clear recovery stability outcomes
- ✓ Long-term sustainability strategy



Recovery Supports, Health & Wellness

Examples of Measurable Outcomes

- % of individuals connected to peer support
- Improved recovery stability indicators
- Reduced relapse or emergency visits
- Improved quality of life scores
- Engagement in wellness programming



DOMAIN AREA 4: Support to Providers & Workforce Development

Domain Goal: Strengthen the capacity and resilience of providers delivering opioid-related services.

What This Domain Funds

- Programs that:
 - Train CHWs, peer supporters, and frontline staff
 - Provide certification pathways
 - Offer supervision & technical assistance
 - Build workforce pipelines
 - Support provider resilience & burnout prevention
 - Create youth-to-career certification pathways



Support to Providers & Workforce Development

Key Characteristics of Strong Proposals

- ✓ Clear training structure & curriculum
- ✓ Measurable workforce skill development
- ✓ Partnerships with educational institutions
- ✓ Staff retention and capacity-building goals
- ✓ Sustainability through credentialing pathways



Support to Providers & Workforce Development

Examples of Measurable Outcomes

- % of staff trained or credentialed
- Increased provider retention
- Expanded CHW or peer roles
- Improved referral systems
- Enhanced service quality indicators



DOMAIN AREA 5: Stabilizing Support & Basic Needs

Domain Goal: Provide essential supports that promote stability, safety, and access to basic needs for individuals impacted by the opioid crisis.

What This Domain Funds

- Programs that:
 - Provide food, housing, utilities, and hygiene
 - Offer transportation assistance
 - Provide childcare support
 - Offer emergency stabilization funds
 - Support burial/funeral costs
 - Assist with legal documentation
 - Connect individuals to long-term resources



Stabilizing Support & Basic Needs

Key Characteristics of Strong Proposals

- ✓ Immediate stabilization + transition plan
- ✓ Strong case management process
- ✓ Formal partnerships (housing, social services)
- ✓ Clear tracking of stabilization outcomes
- ✓ Plan for continuity of support



Stabilizing Support & Basic Needs

Examples of Measurable Outcomes

- _of households stabilized
- Reduced eviction or displacement
- Improved food security
- Increased service connection
- Crisis prevention indicators



Choosing the Right Domain

Ask yourself:

- Are we focused on prevention? → Domain 1
- Are we supporting families? → Domain 2
- Are we supporting individuals in recovery? → Domain 3
- Are we training providers? → Domain 4
- Are we meeting urgent basic needs? → Domain 5

Remember: Each domain is scored separately.



Structure of Domain Questions

Each selected domain requires 5 narrative responses:

- Scope of Services
- Target Population & Engagement
- Partnerships & Coordination
- Outcomes & Impact Measurement
- Sustainability & Continuity

(Section 3, pages 6–12)

Each response:

- 800 characters (~130 words)
- 5 points each
- 25 points total per domain



Scoring Overview

Each domain scored separately:

- 25 points per domain
- Reviewed against other submissions in the same domain
- Advisory Group makes final decision

(Section 7, pages 18–21)

Scoring evaluates:

- Alignment
- Feasibility
- Community Impact
- Organizational Capacity
- Budget Efficiency



What High-Scoring Proposals Include

25-point proposals demonstrate:

- ✓ Clear, detailed service plan
- ✓ Strong engagement strategy
- ✓ Formal partnerships
- ✓ Measurable outcomes
- ✓ Sustainability beyond funding

(See scoring tables, pages 19–21)



Program Implementation Requirements

Applicants must include:

- Service delivery model
- Staffing structure (CHWs, peer navigators, etc.)
- Timeline & milestones
- Participant engagement plan
- Partnership roles
- Sustainability strategy

(Section 5, pages 15–16)



Budget Overview

Allowable categories include:

- Basic Needs
- Care Coordination
- Recovery Supports
- Provider Development
- Emergency/Crisis Care
- Printing
- Personnel

Administrative costs:

- Not to exceed 15% of the total
- Overhead:
 - Not to exceed 10% of direct expenses

(Section 11, pages 26–27)



Budget Narrative Requirements

Must include: (Line Item + Narrative)

Personnel:

- Titles
- Salaries
- Fringe calculation
- Non-Personnel:
- Consultants
- Supplies
- Transportation

Overhead:

- Rent
- Utilities
- Insurance
- Technology

(Appendix C, pages 46–47)



Reimbursement-Based Funding

⚠ Important: This is reimbursement-based

Organizations must submit:

- Receipts
- Payroll documentation
- Service logs
- Attendance sheets
- Proof of payment
- Narrative linking expenses to activities

(Section 4, pages 13–14)



Reporting Requirements

Quarterly Reports:

- Activities
- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Barriers & Adjustments

Monthly Financial Reports:

- Due by the 15th

Final Report:

- Outcomes
- Financial summary
- Deliverables

(Section 8, page 22)



Evaluation & Outcomes

All projects must:

- Submit an evaluation plan
- Track process indicators
- Track outcome indicators
- Use approved templates and tools

Domain-specific required outcomes listed in Section 9 (pages 23–24)



Key Dates

- RFP Released: February 1, 2026
- Pre-TA Questions Due: February 17, 2026
- TA Session: February 20, 2026
- Responses Posted: February 27, 2026
- **Proposal Deadline: March 27, 2026 (5:00 pm)**
- Awards Announced: May 15, 2026
- Implementation Begins: July 6, 2026

(Section 6, page 17)



Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- ✗ Over word limits - adhere to the character count/word limits in the application submission document
- ✗ Weak engagement strategy
- ✗ No measurable outcomes
- ✗ No sustainability plan
- ✗ Budget not aligned to activities
- ✗ Indirect cost over cap
- ✗ Lack of documentation readiness
- ✗ Failure to submit all documents as one PDF file



Proposal Checklist

Before submitting, confirm:

- ✓ All 5 domain questions for your selected domain(s) completed
- ✓ Word limits followed
- ✓ Budget completed & aligned
- ✓ Required attachments included
- ✓ Saved as a single PDF
- ✓ Submitted by deadline:

March 27, 2026, by 5:00 pm to LWills@ClevelandOhio.gov

(Appendix A, pages 29–31)



Next Steps

- Questions regarding this RFP close on February 20, 2026
- Responses & slides will be posted by February 27, 2026
- **Complete RFP and submit by March 27, 2026, by 5:00 pm**
- Late submissions will not be accepted



Questions



Submitted Questions

“The grant specifically says it will cover salaries for employees directly involved in delivering the funded program and lists examples, but nurses, providers, and counselors are not included. Can you clarify whether other roles are allowed?”

- Generally, no, not for services that are typically billable to insurance.
- This funding is intended to address service gaps and support activities that are not otherwise reimbursable under Medicaid or commercial insurance. Clinical services provided by licensed nurses, therapists, or counselors are usually covered by insurance and should not be supplanted by these funds.
- However, if such staff is performing non-billable, program-specific activities (e.g., outreach, education, care coordination), those costs may be considered if clearly justified and cannot be reimbursed elsewhere.
- Grant funds may not replace insurance revenue.



Submitted Questions

“How is it scored if you are applying across 2 domains?”

- Each domain is treated as a separate submission and scored independently (Section 7).
 - This means:
 - 25 points per domain
 - Domains are scored against other applicants within that domain
 - You could score higher in one domain than another
 - Funding decisions may vary by domain
 - If you apply for two domains:
 - You must fully respond to all five narrative questions for each domain
 - Each will be evaluated independently
 - Funding may be awarded for one, both, or neither



Submitted Questions

“Funding for this program might support Cleveland residents only.”- If funding a role that will largely interact with Cleveland residents but may interact with people outside of Cleveland, is that permitted?”

- The RFP states that funding must support only Cleveland residents (Section 2).
 - This means:
 - Funds must be used for services benefiting Cleveland residents
 - Expenditures must be allocable to Cleveland participants
 - If a staff role:
 - Primarily serves Cleveland residents
 - Occasionally interacts with non-Cleveland individuals
 - You must:
 - Ensure grant-funded time is proportionally allocated
 - Maintain documentation showing Cleveland-specific service delivery
 - Best practice:
 - Track participant residency
 - Allocate staff time proportionally if needed



Submitted Questions

“Is there an Incumbent associated with this RFP? Is this RFP open to S-Corp private practice entities?”

- The RFP does not indicate an incumbent provider.
- This is a competitive, open solicitation.
- All eligible applicants meeting the criteria may apply.
 - For clarity, under this RFP, “community-based organization” refers to nonprofit entities that are rooted in and serving Cleveland communities. For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply as the applicant. However, they may participate as subcontractors under an eligible nonprofit applicant.



Submitted Questions

“Are for-profit agencies serving the Cleveland community eligible? We are certified by the Department of Behavioral Health and CARF to render Peer Support Services?”

- Eligibility (Section 2) specifies:
 - Nonprofit organizations
 - Schools
 - Community-based organizations
- For-profit entities are not listed as eligible applicants.
 - Unless operating under:
 - A nonprofit organization as a subcontractor
- S-Corp private practices would not be eligible as the direct applicant.

Certification or licensure status (e.g., CARF, state certification) does not override eligibility requirements.



Submitted Questions

“Why is eligibility limited to nonprofit organizations?”

This funding supports public health infrastructure and community-based recovery efforts using Opioid Settlement Funds.

Limiting eligibility to nonprofits ensures that:

- Funds are reinvested into community services, not profit.
- Resources prioritize equity and public health impact.
- Organizations are mission-driven and rooted in Cleveland communities.
- There is transparency and public accountability in the use of funds.
- For-profit entities may participate as subcontractors or partners, but are not eligible to apply as applicants.



Submitted Questions

“I see allowable costs includes purchasing syringes; what about purchasing pipes for smoking and wound care supplies like bandages, disinfectant, gauze, etc? Part 1

- The RFP explicitly allows: Syringes, Safety supplies, Naloxone, Harm reduction strategies and resources (Domain 3 & 5 examples)
- While pipes are not explicitly listed, allowable costs include harm reduction safety supplies.
- Wound care supplies such as Bandages, Gauze, and Disinfectant would reasonably fall under harm reduction and safety supports if directly tied to the program’s goals.
- However, all supplies must align with local and state regulations
- Applicants should clearly justify how these supplies reduce harm and promote stabilization
- When in doubt, provide a strong justification in your narrative and budget narrative

Syringe exchange initiatives must be conducted by organizations that are properly certified or authorized as syringe service providers in accordance with applicable state and local regulations.



Submitted Questions

“Is postage for mailing harm reduction resources to program participants an allowable cost?” Part 2

Postage may be considered an allowable cost if it is directly tied to approved program activities and complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Federal law and the state of Ohio prohibit the mailing of drug paraphernalia.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that:

- Any harm reduction materials distributed are legally permissible under Ohio law.
- Their organization is authorized to distribute those materials.
- All activities align with state and local public health regulations.

The City of Cleveland and CDPH cannot provide legal guidance on mailing specific harm-reduction supplies. If an applicant proposes mailing supplies such as sterile syringes or pipes, they must ensure compliance with applicable laws and licensing requirements before including postage or shipping costs in their budget for these items.

Syringe exchange initiatives must be conducted by organizations that are properly certified or authorized as syringe service providers in accordance with applicable state and local regulations.



Submitted Questions

“Does a separate line-item budget need to be created for each domain, if applying for more than one domain, or would they be combined into one budget? If separate budgets for each domain are needed, and you receive funding for more than one domain, during implementation if you spend down one domain more than the other due to program needs, can the budget be revised at some point?”

If applying under more than one domain, applicants should submit one combined line-item budget that clearly identifies how funds are allocated across the selected focus areas.

Because each domain is scored separately, the budget narrative should clearly describe how costs align with each domain’s activities.

If awarded funding for more than one domain:

- Funds must be spent in alignment with the approved scope of work.
- Budget revisions may be requested if the program needs shift.
- Any reallocation of funds must receive prior written approval.
- All changes must remain within allowable cost categories and total award limits.

Budgets are not automatically flexible across domains without formal approval.



Submitted Questions

“Who comprises the Advisory Group that is reviewing the applications, and what are their backgrounds?”

The Advisory Group includes representatives from diverse sectors with expertise in:

- Youth advocacy and policy
- Behavioral health services
- Mental health systems
- Community development
- Kinship care and family support
- Faith-based service delivery
- Public health and epidemiology

This multidisciplinary structure ensures applications are reviewed through a public health, equity, and community-impact lens.

Conflict of Interest Policy

If a member of the Advisory Group is affiliated with an organization that submits an application:

- That member will formally recuse themselves from reviewing or scoring that application.
- They will not participate in discussions or funding decisions related to that proposal.

This process ensures fairness, transparency, and integrity in the review process.



THANK YOU!

Application submission deadline: **March 27, 2026, by 5:00 pm**

Submit applications to: **LWills@ClevelandOhio.gov**

