

Michigan County Opioid Settlement Funds: Steering Committee Development & Tips for Processing Requests for Funds



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Summary

- Counties now in possession of settlement funds are advised to create and utilize a steering committee or advisory panel to guide spending choices.
- Meaningful inclusion of stakeholders across a variety of sectors and those with lived experience are critical to ensuring funds are spent meeting critical needs of the community.
- Utilization of an equity lens, an intentional process by which to assess the expected and actual impacts of policies and practices on marginalized communities and individuals, in all decision-making processes is crucial to understand who is most affected and how to include those voices in planning and spending efforts.
- Steering committee or advisory panel practices and policies should be formalized to ensure sustainability of the process over the eighteen (18) years of the settlement spending.
- Requests for proposals are a recommended and equitable approach to distribution of funds. Development of request for proposal review committees should be created prior to release of the request and processes should also be formalized to ensure continuity over the length of the settlements.
- Focus efforts on developing a [fair and transparent process for use of funds](#).

MAC Opioid Settlement Planning Process Tools

- [Michigan Opioid Settlement Funds Toolkit: A Guide for Local Spending](#)
 - Roadmap for local governments to assist with planning for, and utilization of, opioid settlement funds. The toolkit is intended to provide direction on process and linkage to existing resources provided by local and national entities and to assist with creation of targeted efforts from any starting place.
- [Public-facing Planning Process Template](#)
 - Document created to share publicly for counties looking to inform community members of the planning process undertaken by the county. This document is also intended to inform the community of anticipated stakeholder engagement and request for proposals processes.
- [Annual Report Template](#)
 - Word file outlining information that counties can share publicly on an annual basis through their website and with community partners that includes key questions to answer to increase public understanding, process and transparency.

Steering Committee Considerations

- Establish a foundational understanding of opioid settlements, allowable uses and reporting requirements.
 - Utilize MAC [presentation template](#) or [request technical assistance](#) for a presentation, consultation or discussion to those engaged in planning for the steering committee and the developed steering committee.
- Clearly outline the charge of the committee.
 - Develop a resolution, guiding document or charter outlining the role of the committee.
 - Ensure information to clarify that the committee is not a decision-making body, the charge is to develop recommendations to be shared with the County Commission.
 - Consider which parts of the planning and spending processes the steering committee is engaged in and responsible for.

Areas for Steering Committee Leadership and Facilitation

- Assisting in understanding of local data
- Assisting in understanding of local needs (i.e., landscape analysis, needs assessment, etc.)
- Development of county-level strategic plan
- Development of county-level action plan
- Outlining of priority areas for funding
- Development of request for proposal process and document (or to be completed by a separate request for proposal review committee)
- Determination of strategies/activities to fund (or to be completed by a separate request for proposal review committee)
- Development of recommended spending plan
- Development of public-facing reporting and transparency tools (i.e., planning process documents, dashboard, website, reports, etc.)
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact of funded programs and strategies (or to be completed by a separate internal or external group)

- Ensure inclusion of membership information.
 - Outline the length of term for members (if applicable).
 - Outline which entities or sectors will be consistently represented as members on the committee over the duration of the settlements.
 - Consider if the members involved are representative of the broader community.
 - Consider if members are present from communities most profoundly impacted by the drug overdose crisis.

Stakeholders and Sectors to Consider for Steering Committee Membership

- Government
- Public health
- Health care providers
- Public safety
- Criminal-legal system
- Prevention coalition
- Harm reduction providers
- Recovery support providers (peer supports, recovery housing, etc.)
- Schools and universities
- Behavioral health providers
- Treatment providers
- Medical examiner/Coroner
- Individuals with lived experience (persons in recovery, persons who use drugs, etc.)
- Family and friends of those with lived experience
- Tribal citizens and governments

- Outline a process by which members are added or removed from the committee, including:
 - Timelines or frequency of when members are added or removed
 - How and when committee members will be replaced if their there is a change in role or membership

- Exceptions to timeline for specific reasons (i.e., new service provider, service provider expanding services, emerging needs in a sector not represented, etc.)
- Ensure information related to conflicts of interest is included, especially highlighting how requests for funding from members on the committee will be handled (i.e., may not preclude funding, but will not translate to priority for funding).
- Outline if members of the steering committee are barred from also serving on the request for proposals review committee. It is recommended that members of the steering committee do not serve on the proposal review committee.
- If steering committee members serve on the request for proposals review committee, outline how conflicts of interest will be addressed (i.e., members will not be allowed to score proposals from their own organization or other organizations which provide comparable services.

Requests for Proposals Review Committee Considerations

- Develop a request for proposals and associated scoring document with inclusion of identified community priorities and needs.
 - Customize MAC [request for proposals template](#), [associated budget template](#) and [request for proposals scoring template](#) to align with local needs.
- Ensure inclusion of formal process if utilizing a request for proposals process.
 - Identify which entities and individuals will sit on a request for proposals review team.

Suggested Request for Proposal Review Committee Members

- Neutral parties who do not intend to request funding from the local unit of government
- Subject matter experts on substance use and mental health conditions
- Individuals with lived experience (persons in recovery, persons who use drugs, etc.)
- Individuals or entities representing communities most profoundly impact by the drug overdose crisis

- Outline processes by which the committee will review proposals.
 - Processes may include:
 - Timeline when requests for proposals are released to the community, when proposals will be scored and when awards will be made (i.e., annually during specific months or rolling throughout the year)
 - Formal process for exceptions to the outlined timeline, including:
 - How requests can be made outside of identified timeline
 - How special proposal review sessions may be called
 - What instances allow for special review of a proposal (i.e., emerging or novel substances, overdose spikes, new service provider, etc.)

Technical Assistance and Additional Support

- No-cost technical assistance provided by MAC includes a variety of support, including but not limited to:
 - Assistance developing steering committees, determining activities, facilitation of meetings or serving as a steering committee member
 - Providing presentations on opioid settlement funds
 - Serving as a request for proposals review committee member or providing analysis of requests for funds
 - Providing support on recommendations for allowable uses of funds
- For support, please complete the [assistance request form](#) or reach out to MAC's Technical Advisor on Opioid Settlement Funds at dolinky@micounties.org.