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2026 Opioid Settlement Funding

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This FAQ answers common questions about the City of Worcester's 2026 Opioid Settlement Fund Request for Proposals (RFP).

1. Eligibility and Application Requirements

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

Eligible applicants must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations or have a fiscal sponsor. Applicants must serve Worcester residents, have experience working with substance use disorder (SUD) and/or opioid use disorder (OUD) populations, meet all applicable federal, state, and local requirements, and be current on their financial obligations to the City.

Can organizations located outside Worcester or Massachusetts apply?

The City is seeking to fund organizations based in Massachusetts that serve Worcester residents and have the capacity to provide services within the Worcester community. Applicants should review the RFP to ensure they meet all eligibility requirements before applying.

Can an organization submit more than one application?

Organizations should submit one application. Applicants must identify a primary focus area with an option to choose up to two (2) secondary priority areas. If your work spans multiple focus areas, clearly identify the primary area of need and specify how the requested funding will support that priority in your application.

Can a single project address multiple funding priority areas?

Yes. Applicants must select one primary priority area and may identify up to two additional priority areas relevant to their project.

Are woman-owned or minority-owned businesses given additional consideration during the review process?

Applications are not scored or prioritized based solely on whether an organization is women-owned, minority-owned, or holds any particular business certification.

The City is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and encourages applications from organizations that reflect and serve Worcester's diverse communities. As outlined in the RFP, applicants should describe how diversity, equity, and inclusion are incorporated into the design, delivery, and accessibility of their proposed services, particularly for populations disproportionately impacted by substance use disorder and overdose. Funding decisions will be based on the overall strength of the proposal, alignment with funding priorities, demonstrated community need, organizational capacity, and the anticipated impact on Worcester residents.

What should proposals include?

Proposals should incorporate evidence-based practices, Worcester-specific data to support the initiative, strong community partnerships, lived experience, and commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Applicants should strongly demonstrate an understanding of the needs of the Worcester residents they intend to serve.

Will selected applicants need to collect proof of Worcester residency for the individuals served by their proposed project?

Organizations that receive funding may be required to submit demographic data such as self-reported zip codes, to demonstrate that services are reaching Worcester residents. Any additional residency verification or reporting requirements will be outlined in the grant agreement. Organizations should be prepared to explain how their program or project primarily serves Worcester residents.

Do partnering organizations need to provide data showing that those served have had substance use issues? Or is it implied through the nature of the work the applicant does? The organization partnering with the applicant does not collect that data to respect the individual's privacy.

There is no requirement for partner organizations to provide individual-level data demonstrating a participant's substance use history. Applicants should clearly describe how the proposed project serves individuals, families or communities affected by substance use disorder or Opioid Use Disorder using key best practices as identified in the RFP. Any reporting or data requirements for selected applicants will be outlined in the grant agreement and should be consistent with the project's scope of work and evaluation requirements.

Can funding be used to train recovery coaches? Can funding be used to pay the coaches?

Yes, funding can be used for applicable training. Organizations can work with the city to determine eligibility.

2. Funding Amounts and Project Duration

How much funding is available?

Funding amounts vary by priority area. Please refer to 2026 Opioid Settlement RFP Guidelines & Application Questions on the City website.

How long is the funding period? Can funding be renewed?

The initial funding period is one year, with the potential for renewal for up to three years. Renewals depend on evolving data and best practices, funding availability program and performance data.

When would funded projects begin?

Applicants selected for funding are tentatively expected to be notified by **December 18, 2026**. Following the review process, the City anticipates working with selected applicants to finalize project scopes, budgets, and grant agreements before services begin. At this time, a specific project start date has not been established. Additional information will be provided to successful applicants during the award and contracting process.

3. Letters of Support

What information should a letter of support include?

Letters of support should come from organizations, agencies, coalitions, municipalities, providers, or other partners that have worked with the applicant or will be involved in the project. The letter should describe the relationship between the organizations, explain the partner's knowledge or involvement in the applicant's work, and outline how the partnership supports the proposed initiative. Letters should also speak about the applicant's capacity, commitment and ability to serve the target population and successfully carry out the proposed activities.

How many letters of support are required?

Two letters of support from collaborating partners are required. Examples include healthcare providers, coalitions, and community organizations.

Can an organization submit more than two letters of support?

Yes. Organizations may submit more than two letters of support. If the application portal only permits one file upload, combine the letters into a single PDF before submitting.

Can a letter of support come from an individual, or must it come from an organization?

Letters of support should generally come from organizations, agencies, coalitions, municipalities, healthcare providers, or other partners that are familiar with the applicant's work or will play a role in the proposed project. The purpose of this letter is to demonstrate community support, partnerships, and the applicant's capacity to successfully perform the proposed activities.

Can a municipality other than Worcester provide a letter of support if the applicant already provides similar services using opioid settlement funding?

Another municipality may provide a letter of support if it is familiar with the applicant's work and can speak to the organization's experience, capacity, and impact. However, the RFP application should exhibit how their organization is supporting primarily Worcester residents.

4. Allowable Costs and Administrative Expenses

What expenses can be covered by grant funding?

Allowable costs may include personnel, program operations, supplies, training, equipment, and contracted services. Expenses must comply with applicable opioid settlement funding requirements. Organizations receiving funding from multiple sources must ensure that opioid settlement funds supplement, rather than supplant, existing resources. Settlement funds shall not be used to support a position or service that is already covered by another available funding sources.

Funding cannot be used to duplicate services already reimbursed by MassHealth or the Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS).

Are applicants eligible to use funds to purchase fentanyl-screening supplies with the local organization running distribution and education?

Such products may be allowable at the City’s discretion. The city will also determine whether the proposed vendor or purchasing source is acceptable for this initiative.

Can a portion of the funding be used for food, food store gift cards, or similar gift care incentives?

Such products may be allowable at the City’s discretion. The city will also determine whether the proposed vendor or purchasing source is acceptable for this initiative.

Are administrative costs allowable?

Yes. Administrative costs are allowable up to the 15% cap and must comply with opioid settlement allowable-cost requirements.

Can indirect costs be included in the budget?

Yes. Indirect costs may be included within the 15% administrative cost cap, subject to City review and approval

Would naloxone distribution boxes qualify as an eligible equipment purchase under this funding opportunity?

Naloxone distribution boxes qualify as an eligible equipment purchase under this funding opportunity at the city's discretion when used to increase community access to naloxone and support overdose prevention.

What does "necessary for treatment" mean under the "Support People in Treatment and Recovery" focus area?

The Massachusetts State-Subdivision Agreement describes this focus area as supporting programs and services that help people with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) engage in treatment and sustain recovery. This includes both direct treatment and supportive services that address barriers to recovery. Examples include peer support, counseling, case management, transportation to treatment or recovery services, housing assistance, employment and educational support, and connections to community-based resources.

Would targeted community outreach and program marketing materials be an allowable cost?

Yes. These costs may be allowable when directly related to the proposed opioid abatement initiative, subject to City review and approval.

Does the "Support People in Treatment and Recovery" focus area apply only to opioid use disorder, or can it support people experiencing other substance use disorders?

This focus area is primarily intended to support people with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), including those with co-occurring substance use or mental health conditions. Eligible programs may provide services such as housing assistance, peer support, case management, counseling, and other recovery supports. Projects serving individuals with other substance use disorders may be eligible when their services align with the purposes and allowable uses outlined in the Massachusetts State Subdivision Agreement. For more information, please refer to this document: Massachusetts State-Subdivision Agreement for Statewide Opioid Settlements.

5. Reimbursement and Payment

Is funding provided exclusively through reimbursement?

Yes. Funding is provided through reimbursement unless otherwise determined by the City. The payment structure will be outlined in the grant agreement. Payments are typically processed within 45 days of receiving complete and accurate invoices.

How long do payments take to process?

Payments are typically processed within 45 days after the City receives correct invoices.

Are reimbursements calculated on a per-person basis, as they were under ARPA-funded programs?

Reimbursement will be based on approved expenses incurred in carrying out the funded initiative, unless otherwise determined by the City. Payment and invoicing requirements will be discussed during the contracting process and outlined in the grant agreement.

6. Program Delivery and Evaluation

Can project activities be conducted remotely?

Yes. Projects may use remote, hybrid, or in-person delivery models. Applicants should explain how their proposed approach meets community needs and project goals.

Who determines the project's delivery method?

Applicants should propose a delivery method that aligns with the service provided, supports project goals, and best meets the needs of Worcester residents. The delivery method can be further discussed during the contracting process and is subject to City approval.

Is knowledge of Worcester required?

Local knowledge is not listed as a mandatory eligibility requirement, but it is highly beneficial. Proposals should reflect Worcester-specific data and an understanding of the communities the project will serve.

What evaluation and reporting requirements apply to funded projects?

Awardees must track program reach and outcomes, submit midpoint and final reports, and participate in City-led evaluation activities. Specific evaluation and reporting requirements will be discussed further during the contracting process.

Can reports and other required documents be submitted electronically?

Yes. All required reports and documents may be submitted electronically.

Will the City print or distribute program materials for funded organizations?

No. Applicants should include printing and distribution costs in their proposed budget. Some materials are also available on Mass.gov.

7. Application Submission and City Requirements

How do applicants submit their proposals?

Applications must be submitted through the City's online application portal with all required attachments. Applicants should review the RFP carefully to ensure that their submissions are complete.

What happens if an applicant owes money to the City?

Outstanding obligations must be resolved before the RFP is submitted.

What requirements apply to organizations that receive funding?

Awardees must enter into a grant agreement and comply with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements.

Can the City change application deadlines or award amounts?

The City may extend certain deadlines, adjust award amounts, or issue partial awards or no awards based on application quality, funding availability, and public interest. The RFP application deadline remains November 4, 2026 at 11:59PM EST.

8. Application Review and Award Decisions

Who reviews applications and determines which organizations receive funding?

The Community Review Committee reviews eligible applications using a standardized scoring rubric. Final awards are subject to City approval and applicable City procedures and agreements.

9. Where to Find More Information

Where can I find the application and additional information about the Opioid Settlement Fund?

Visit the City of Worcester Division of Public Health's Opioid Settlement Funding webpage:

https://www.worcesterma.gov/public-health/opioid-settlement-funding

Applicants should review the official RFP and application materials for complete requirements, eligibility criteria, funding priorities, and submission instructions.

This FAQ is intended to clarify common application questions. The official RFP, application materials, and executed grant agreement govern program requirements. Additional guidance may be provided as questions are reviewed and answered by the City.