



ADDRESSING THE OPIOID CRISIS

'Addressing the Opioid Crisis' Effort Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 7.22.2022

The following questions and answers provide additional information regarding the Rocky Mountain Partnership's ['Addressing the Opioid Crisis' Effort](#). *In the spirit of continuous improvement, this is a working document, and as additional questions are lifted it will be updated.*

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Scope of this Effort

How did this work come about?

Attorney General Phil Weiser and local government leaders unveiled a first-of-its-kind [joint framework](#) for **distributing statewide over \$400 million of opioid settlement funds** that Colorado will receive from [litigation settlements](#) reached with companies that fueled the opioid crisis.

The joint framework's three core principles are to **maximize settlement funds for Colorado communities, utilize existing infrastructure to the extent possible, and ensure regions hardest hit by the crisis get adequate funding**. For more information on the joint framework and litigation settlements click [HERE](#).

Adams County is [one of 19 regions](#) across Colorado that was allocated litigation settlement funds. RMP is supporting Adams County Government and the region to address issues impacting the community as a result of the opioid epidemic in alignment with a state-wide joint framework and ensuring funding from these settlements are invested in the region in a way that will have the most impact.

What is the joint framework?

Attorney General Phil Weiser and local government leaders unveiled a first-of-its-kind joint framework for distributing statewide over \$400 million that Colorado stands to receive from litigation settlements to address the opioid crisis.

The joint framework is structured according to a memorandum of understanding between the Colorado Department of Law and all counties, municipalities, and towns that agree to the framework even if they have not filed lawsuits against opioid manufacturers, drug distributors, or others for their role in creating and fueling the opioid epidemic. All participants in the framework must use the funds they receive for opioid abatement

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purposes such as drug treatment, recovery, prevention and education, and appropriate harm reduction programs, as well as addressing the epidemic's impact on the criminal justice system.

For more information on the joint framework, click [HERE](#).

What were the litigation settlements?

Under the leadership of Attorney General Phil Weiser, the Department of Law has led critical opioid litigation matters, including a nationwide action against McKinsey & Company for their role in turbocharging the opioid epidemic, a better settlement with the Sackler family and Purdue Pharma, and a multibillion-dollar settlement with Johnson & Johnson and the nation's three largest drug distribution companies that fueled the crisis.

For more information on the litigation settlements, click [HERE](#).

Why is this effort focused on Adams County? What about the other counties and municipalities in the RMP region?

State litigation settlement dollars are being distributed to 19 identified regions, local governments, the state, and infrastructure needs. The RMP Team, which supports the overall network, was specifically contracted by the Adams County Government to facilitate and serve as the backbone to the effort for region number 8, which is focused on Adams County.

The City and County of Broomfield, Arapahoe County (which holds much of the City of Aurora's boundaries and population), and Jefferson County (which includes portions of the City of Westminster) have been identified as part of other distinct regions receiving their own funds and setting up their own infrastructures for the disbursement of those funds. RMP is committed, however, to working in alignment with these regions, and the state overall, as part of this regional effort.

View all 19 regions across Colorado that were allocated litigation settlement funds [HERE](#).

Rocky Mountain Partnership (RMP)'s Role in this Effort

What is the Rocky Mountain Partnership's role?

The Rocky Mountain Partnership is supporting the Adams County Government and the region to address issues impacting the community as a result of the opioid epidemic. RMP's support is in alignment with a state-wide joint framework and will ensure funding awarded to the state from litigation settlements are invested in the region in a way that will have the most impact.

What is the role of the RMP Team in this work?

The RMP Team, which supports the overall network, has been contracted by Adams County Government to facilitate and serve as the backbone to this regional effort. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Supporting the Regional Council to convene
- Facilitating the Regional Council
- Ensuring alignment with the state-wide joint framework
- Ensuring funding awarded to the state from litigation settlements are invested in the region in a way that will have the most impact
- Development and maintenance of data dashboard
- Distribution of funds

- Ensuring voice and perspective in the form of qualitative data from those who have been most impacted by, and have lived experience related to the opioid crisis is available to the Regional Council to inform what work is needed to abate the opioid crisis

Learn more about the role of the RMP Team [HERE](#).

What is Adams County's role in this work?

The Adams County Government has been designated as the fiscal agent for the region. This means that once the Regional Council submits its intended uses for these funds in the form of a two year plan and they are approved by the state abatement council, the Adams County Government receives those funds for disbursement.

Data and Impact for this Effort

What is the region working to accomplish through this effort?

Through this effort, RMP is working to address the opioid crisis by supporting a Regional Council that distributes funding from state litigation settlements in a way that will have the most impact and prioritizes additional action.

As the Regional Council sets specific targets, they will be reflected in the [interactive Regional Impact Dashboard](#) (detailed below).

Learn more about the specific goals and targets RMP has set to hold RMP and the region accountable to impact by visiting RMP's website [HERE](#).

Where can I view regional data and information tied to this effort?

RMP has developed an interactive Regional Impact Dashboard that paints a holistic and comprehensive picture of what's currently happening in the region related to the opioid crisis, how the community is being impacted at all levels, and progress and the impact of the regional work underway to address it.

Learn more about this dashboard and access it by visiting RMP's website [HERE](#).

How can we tell if this effort is actually having an impact on the opioid crisis?

The Regional Council will set concrete targets to ensure funding from these settlements are invested in work that will have a measurable impact on the opioid crisis. Progress towards these targets will be tracked in RMP's interactive Regional Impact Dashboard referenced above.

Learn more about this dashboard and access it by visiting RMP's website [HERE](#).

The Action Plan and Timeline

How were the action and milestones on the timeline informed?

The action and milestones outlined in the timeline have been informed by the [Colorado Opioids Settlement Memorandum Of Understanding \(MOU\)](#).

More details about the action, including information about the sections and page numbers in the MOU that they are tied to, can be found [HERE](#).

What is the Colorado Opioids Settlement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and why does it matter?

The Colorado Opioids Settlement Memorandum of Understanding is a legal document that provides guidance for the distribution of litigation settlement funds across 19 identified regions, local governments, the state, and infrastructure needs. It specifically includes the joint framework, requirements, guidance, and recommendations around how funds are able to be allocated.

In order for the state to receive the maximum share of funding from legal settlements, all local governments with over 10,000 population and any litigating local governments were required to sign by January 6, 2022. This has happened, and all but 20 small municipalities in the state have signed as of April 6, 2022.

This MOU directly informs the action and milestones for this regional effort.

View the Colorado Opioids Settlement Memorandum of Understanding [HERE](#).

This timeline is very high level - where can I find more details about these action and milestones?

View a more detailed timeline for this effort [HERE](#).

Establish a Regional Council and Prioritizing Where Work is Most Needed to Address the Opioid Crisis

What is the Regional Council's role?

The Regional Council is designed to determine what approved purposes to fund with that region's allocation from the Regional Share of litigation dollars and ensure collaboration within the region. The council serves two main functions:

- To communicate and approve uses for funds with the state abatement council, and
- Determine the most effective distribution of funds within its region.

The council will review proposals for the dollars allocated to its region and distribute so long as those uses are in accordance with its two year plan. The council should also be responsible for taking a holistic view of the region and identifying opportunities for alignment of funds.

Who gets to decide who gets a seat on the Regional Council?

The MOU provides requirements and recommendations for the types of stakeholders who should serve as voting members on the Regional Council. ***Voting members must be city or county staff or elected officials.*** These include at least one representative from:

- County
- City
- Public Health Department
- Human Services
- Law Enforcement
- Municipal/County Court

Within these guidelines it is up to the participating municipalities and counties to determine who will fill these roles. Every region will operate differently within the guidelines in the MOU. The Regional Council in Adams County has identified the following structure:

- 2 City Representatives (and 2 alternates)
- 2 County Representatives (and 2 alternates)
- 1 Municipal or County Court Representative (and 1 alternate)
- 1 District Attorney Representative (and 1 alternate)
- 1 Local Law Enforcement (and 1 alternate)
- 1 Human Service Representative (and 1 alternate)
- 1 Public Health Representative (and 1 alternate)

Who is currently serving on the Regional Council?

A Regional Council is currently in the process of being confirmed. **As members are confirmed, they will be listed on RMP's website [HERE](#).**

What is the Advisory Committee, and what role do they play?

The voting members of the Regional Council will work alongside content experts, individuals with lived experience and other community members/stakeholder groups as deemed necessary to robustly inform the Council's decision-making. In the Adams County Region, these stakeholders will participate on the Regional Council as an Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee will provide critical insight into where the greatest needs currently exist, and will help identify improvements that can be made in real time to funded abatement strategies to ensure funding allocations achieve their intended impact.

They will not be voting members of the Regional Council due to the requirements outlined in the MOU, and the fact that they may apply to and receive funds to address the opioid crisis. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to:

- Community Members with lived experience
- Health Care Experts
- Recovery/Treatment Experts
- Additional City/County Representatives
- Attorney General's Office Representation
- Harm Reduction Experts

Advisory Committee members are currently in the process of being confirmed. **As members are confirmed, they will be listed on RMP's website [HERE](#).**

Distributing Litigation Settlement Funds

Who gets to decide how litigation settlement dollars are distributed across the region?

The voting members of the Regional Council. They will develop a two year plan that outlines how the region intends to use those funds within the scope of uses outlined by the MOU. Once this plan is approved by the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council, individual organizations within the region will be able to apply for funds.

What is the Two Year Plan?

In order to receive opioid settlement funds, each Regional Council must submit a 2-year plan annually to the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council detailing how the Region intends to spend its settlement funds. See [MOU, Section F.7](#). It is recommended that when developing a Regional 2-year plan:

- Coordinate with local and regional providers
- Identify potential partnerships with neighboring regions
- Utilize knowledge base and existing resources within the State and the region
- Identify other complimentary funding streams
- Leverage ARPA funded programs

What can funds be used for?

According to the joint framework that is outlined in the MOU, all participants must use the funds they receive for opioid abatement purposes such as:

- **Drug treatment:** Evidence-based treatment models
- **Recovery:** Evidence-based recovery models
- **Prevention and education:** Widespread prevention and education efforts among communities
- **Appropriate harm reduction programs:** Strategies for reducing or mitigating the negative consequences associated with substance abuse
- **Addressing the epidemic's impact on the criminal justice system:** Innovative treatment, diversion strategies, and wrap around services
- **Opioid Abatement in Rural Colorado**

You can find more details in the MOU Exhibit A: Potential Opioid Abatement Purposes [HERE](#).

In addition to the approved uses outlined in the MOU, Attorney General Phil Weiser has drafted an [Opioid Crisis Response Plan](#) which outlines guiding principles for the use of opioid funds in the state. These guidelines have been gathered from “feedback and ongoing public discussion with communities around Colorado” and have been carefully crafted to ensure that funds are distributed equitably and have an immediate and sustained impact across the state.

The response plan discusses, in depth, and has prioritized using the settlement funds along three principal lines:

1. Ensuring there are sufficient evidence-based strategies to expand access to treatment and recovery services for those affected by an OUD and co-occurring SUDs or mental health conditions
2. Supporting robust prevention and education efforts to protect future generations from falling victim to OUD and co-occurring SUDs
3. Providing effective oversight of those who prescribe, dispense, distribute, and administer opioids.

Please see the response plan, linked above, for in-depth detail around how these funds might be used in both cities and rural communities.

How will litigation settlement dollars be distributed across the region?

Adams County Government is the fiscal agent for the region and will distribute funds directly to organizations according to decisions made by the Regional Council.

Will there be an RFP process organizations can go through to apply for funds? If so, when will this RFP be made available?

The Regional Council is currently in the process of forming and confirming its structure and governance (including drafting bylaws). Part of this process will be to outline requirements for organizations within the region to draft and submit Letters of Intent (LOI's) to receive funds. Once this process is finalized, it will be made publicly available. The council anticipates receiving its first LOI's in Quarter 3 of 2022.

Advocating for and/or Making Policy and System-Level Improvements

What action did RMP take during the 2022 State Legislative Session related to this effort?

During the 2022 legislative session, the Partnership constantly monitored introduced legislation to see what they wanted to collectively advocate for related to addressing the opioid crisis. The network decided to monitor [HB22-1326 Fentanyl Accountability & Prevention](#), which passed during the session. Now that session has concluded for 2022, the RMP Team is monitoring the implementation and impact of HB22-1326, as well as other relevant bills that passed. This impact will be reflected in our Regional Impact Dashboard for the opioid crisis.

View progress on action underway [HERE](#).

Where does this effort show up in RMP's 2022 policy priorities?

RMP's 2022 policy priorities were identified to address the most pressing issues impacting our community's overall well-being. This includes the opioid crisis, which poses a serious threat to our community's public health, safety, and economy. While many of RMP's policy priorities may ultimately impact the opioid crisis, there are a couple of priorities that directly advance work to address the opioid crisis in the region:

- Increase access to mental health care
- Increase access to healthcare

Learn more about RMP's 2022 policy priorities [HERE](#).

How Were These Priorities Determined?

The 2022 policy priorities for the network were compiled by the [Policy and Legislative Action Network \(PLAN\)](#) and Rocky Mountain Partnership's Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy, Kayah Swanson.

The Policy & Legislative Action Network is a leadership table composed of policy leaders from investing partner organizations working to drive policy and advocacy strategy for the network. They focus on shifting policies, legislation, and funding at all levels of government (organizational, municipal, county, regional, state, and federal) to eliminate inequities that were amplified due the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve social and economic mobility for all community members, specifically those marginalized because of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, zip code or circumstance.

Learn more by viewing the Policy and Advocacy FAQ Document [HERE](#).

Is policy work around the opioid crisis just limited to the state legislative sessions?

Not at all. The Regional Council leading this work will continue to identify opportunities for policy action, based on the collective targets they set. This will be done alongside the [Policy & Legislative Action Network](#), and is not just about what opportunities there are at the state level. Future policy work could include improvements at the organizational, local, state, and national levels as needed.

Who's Involved

Who comprises the Regional Council?

View the Regional Council roster on RMP's website [HERE](#).

Who comprises the Advisory Committee?

View the roster on RMP's website [HERE](#).

How will community members who are impacted by the opioid crisis be included in this work?

The Advisory Committee will be composed of not just content experts, but community members most impacted by the opioid crisis such as individuals who have suffered from opioid abuse/addiction or are in recovery, friends/family members who have lost loved ones.

They will inform decisions on how funds are allocated based on current needs and will play an integral role in the continuous improvement process of ensuring that funds are having the intended impact in real time. Funding recipients will report Key Performance Indicators that will be tracked on the [interactive dashboard](#), and this group will help identify improvements to strategies when needed.

The dashboard will also include qualitative data in the form of existing voice and perspective findings, videos, etc. The RMP Team gathers and visualizes additional perspectives when needed, and will continue to elevate community voice and perspective as opportunities arise.

In addition to ensuring that those most impacted by decisions are being empowered to work alongside practitioners by serving on an Advisory Committee, **voice and perspective** of those **with lived experience** and those who have been **most impacted by the opioid epidemic is elevated** in the form of qualitative data which is being included in the interactive dashboard which informs what work is needed to abate the opioid crisis. The RMP Team gathers and visualizes additional perspectives when needed, and will continue to elevate community voice and perspective as opportunities arise.

Who comprises the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council?

View the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council roster on the Attorney General's website [HERE](#).

Contact for Additional Questions

Who do I contact with additional questions about this effort?

Jody Nowicki, RMP Senior Director of Stakeholder Impact, serves as the project manager for this effort. Contact Jody at JodyNowicki@RMPBackbone.org with additional questions or to learn more.