



Notice of Intent

Upcoming Funding Opportunity for Opioid Remediation Research and Evaluation (Local Government Partnership Required)

March 22, 2024

Contact

Questions regarding this Notice of Intent should be sent via email to the North Carolina Collaboratory at collaboratory@unc.edu.

Key Dates

Estimated RFP release date	April 15, 2024
Estimated application deadline	June 30, 2024
Estimated award start date	November 1, 2024

Purpose

This is a Notice of Intent to inform eligible applicants that the Collaboratory intends to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) titled “**Enhancing the Effectiveness of Opioid Remediation Activities in North Carolina (Local Government Partnership Required)**”. This Notice is being provided to allow applicants time to develop eligible partnerships with local governments and competitive proposals.

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to provide local governments or their subrecipients across North Carolina with research and evaluation support to enhance the effectiveness of opioid remediation activities as authorized by the North Carolina Memorandum of Agreement that governs national opioid settlement funds, described in more detail below.

Award recipients will be expected to work with a local government or subrecipient partner throughout the performance period to ensure that all research and evaluation efforts are relevant to local governments and communities and can be translated into decisions, practices and policies that directly benefit people in North Carolina.

Research and evaluation projects that are supported through this program will be part of a statewide network that aims to improve the effectiveness, sustainability and scalability of local government opioid remediation activities. A coordinating center will support awarded projects by helping to establish effective partnerships between local governments and academic researchers, facilitating information sharing across the network, raising awareness of the network across stakeholder audiences, and translating project findings into practical information for use by policymakers, practitioners and academic researchers.

Funding Types

Two types of applications will be accepted:

1. Research and/or evaluation to support local government decision-making.
2. Coordinating center to support research partnerships across the network.

All funds have been appropriated to the Collaboratory by the North Carolina General Assembly and must therefore be used in accordance with State laws. Indirect (F&A) costs will not be permitted by this funding program, as set forth in NC General Statute 116-255(c)(2).

Type 1: Research and evaluation proposals

Maximum budget request per application	\$200,000
Anticipated number of awards	11
Anticipated project duration	12 months
Application details	Applicants should be prepared to propose a research project that aims to generate new knowledge and/or an evaluation study that directly addresses local government needs. Ideally, applicants should propose deliverables (e.g. best practices, methodologies, models) that can be used by their local government partners to enhance or continue the evaluation of opioid remediation activities beyond the award performance period.
Award requirements	No-cost extensions (NCEs) will not be permitted Partnerships with local governments or their subrecipients are required

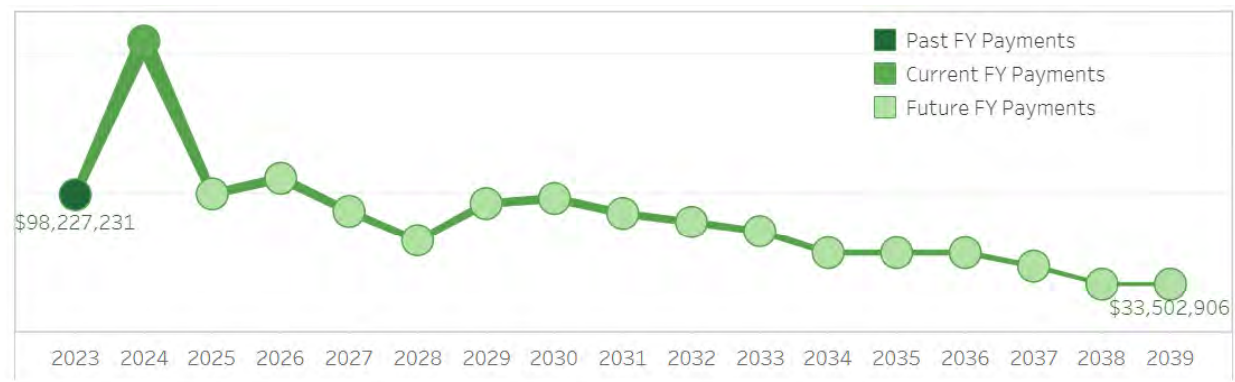
Type 2: Coordinating center proposals

Maximum budget request per application	\$200,000
Anticipated number of awards	1
Anticipated project duration	18 months
Application details	Applicants should be prepared to propose a scope of work that provides support to 11 research/evaluation partnerships, engages with a wide variety of stakeholders across North Carolina, and partners closely with CORE-NC to ensure alignment with ongoing opioid remediation efforts (more information provided below). Support provided by the coordinating center should ensure that all projects fulfill each partner's needs and partnerships are ethical and mutually beneficial. Ideally, applicants should propose deliverables that can be used by future coordinating centers to implement and support large partnership-based networks and disseminate the network's findings to public audiences.
Award requirements	A partnership with CORE-NC will be required (more information provided below). Prior experience with the following is required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hosting and moderating events ▪ Serving as brokers and facilitating conversations ▪ Supporting ethical and mutually beneficial cross-sector research partnerships ▪ Implementing network-wide data management and sharing strategies ▪ Generating policy briefs and recommendations ▪ Stakeholder engagement and public communication

Background

The goal of this initiative is to help enhance the impact of national opioid settlement funds that are being distributed to local governments across North Carolina by supporting local government financial decision-making and the implementation of related programs and policies.

In the wake of national settlements and bankruptcies involving opioid manufacturers, distributors, and retailers, North Carolina is receiving \$1.4 billion over 18 years to address the opioid epidemic. Under the North Carolina Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governing these funds, 85% of the funds are distributed to local governments and the remaining 15% is distributed to the State of North Carolina.



Summary of payments to State and local governments in North Carolina, which will total \$1.4 billion across 18 years (2022-2038). Available from <https://ncopioidsettlement.org/data-dashboards/payment-schedule/> (accessed March 21, 2024).

Any local government that receives opioid settlement funds must spend the funds on opioid remediation activities authorized under Option A or Option B as detailed in the MOA.

Under Option A, a local government may fund one or more strategies from MOA Exhibit A, which is a shorter list of high-impact strategies to address the epidemic. This option allows for but does not require specific planning activities at the local level.

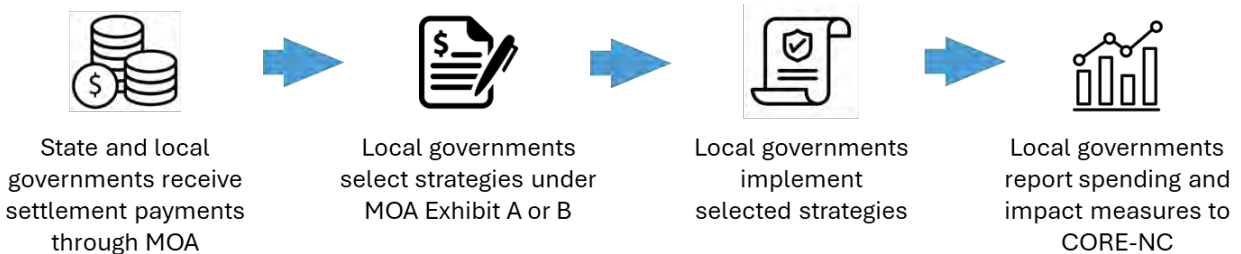
Under Option B, a local government engages in the collaborative strategic planning process, drafts a report and recommendations (R&R); presents the R&R to its local governing body; and submits the R&R to the State. The local governing body may then decide to fund one or more strategies from the shorter list of high-impact strategies listed in MOA Exhibit A or the longer list of strategies from the national settlement agreements in MOA Exhibit B.

Based on local government spending plans available through March of 2024, as well as actual spending from July 2022 through June 2023 (during the 2022-2023 fiscal year), it is apparent that local governments are investing more opioid settlement funds in Exhibit A strategies than Exhibit B strategies.

To read the Exhibit A and B strategies and learn more about the national opioid settlements and North Carolina MOA, visit [MorePowerfulNC](#) and the [Community Opioid Resources Engine \(CORE-NC\)](#).

To comply with the MOA, local governments submit several reports to the Community Opioid Resources Engine (CORE-NC), a collaborative partnership between the North Carolina Department of Justice (NCDJJ), Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and the UNC Injury Prevention Research Center. CORE-NC was established to encourage an environment of

transparency and accountability in the use of opioid settlement funds by the municipal and county governments across North Carolina that are receiving these funds. Together, the CORE-NC partners coordinate the national settlements while providing education and technical assistance to local governments and facilitating timely and accurate reporting of how local governments receive and choose to invest their settlement funds. The data collected by CORE-NC is publicly available via the [CORE-NC website](#).



To support local government decision-making, applications to this funding opportunity must encompass proposals for research to generate new knowledge or the evaluation of existing local government efforts related to Exhibit A or B strategies. All applications should seek to advance data-driven solutions that positively impact policy and practice while aligning with local governments' obligations under the MOA.

Partnership Principles

The Collaboratory was established by the North Carolina General Assembly for the purpose of supporting research that leads to direct benefits for people in the State. To achieve this, the Collaboratory strives to support researchers who uplift their partners from communities and governments as experts and key contributors throughout the research process, from ideation and study design to data analysis and interpretation.

Through this funding initiative, Collaboratory awards are intended to help academic researchers develop mutually beneficial, long-term research and evaluation partnerships with local governments and their subrecipients in North Carolina. In addition to partnering with a local government, all recipients of research/evaluation awards will be required to engage with the coordinating core and participate in network-related activities, such as research-practice partnership capacity building workshops, throughout the award performance period. The coordinating core will also be required to engage regularly with the Collaboratory and CORE-NC partners during the performance period.

Eligible Applicants and Partnership Requirements

Any institution of higher education within the UNC System will be eligible to apply. Applications from institutions with a core mission to serve underrepresented or underserved groups impacted by the opioid crisis and associated health disparities are strongly encouraged. The core mission of an institution may be demonstrated by the existence of a dedicated program or activities focused on the unique needs of these groups.

Due to the purpose of this funding opportunity, only proposals that demonstrate active collaboration with local governments or their subrecipients will be considered for funding. Proposals will be expected to provide detailed descriptions of the roles of local government or subrecipient partners throughout the project, as well as letters of support to demonstrate each partner's approval of the proposed project.

For proposals describing new partnerships that have not existed before this funding opportunity, applicants must demonstrate a willingness to amend their research/evaluation questions, study designs and anticipated deliverables through discussions with their local government or subrecipient partners before project activities begin and adjust their 12-month scope of work accordingly.

All proposals must also incorporate sufficient time, budget and other resources to allow for in-person and virtual partnership meetings throughout the award performance period, both independently and facilitated by the coordinating core, as well as flexibility in the proposed scope of work and budget to adapt as needed to ensure all partners' needs are met.

Acknowledgments

The Collaboratory wishes to acknowledge the assistance and input of multiple entities during the development of this research and evaluation initiative, including the North Carolina Department of Justice, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, UNC Injury Prevention Research Center, Dogwood Health Trust and Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, as well as the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and their thought partners from communities, governments and academic institutions across the State.