



## Request for Proposals

# Opioid Remediation Research and Evaluation (Local Government Partnership Required)

**Application Deadline: 5:00pm, July 1, 2024**

## Contact

Questions regarding this opportunity should be sent to the North Carolina Collaboratory at [collaboratory@unc.edu](mailto:collaboratory@unc.edu).

## Opportunity Overview

Eligible applicants	Constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina (UNC) System.
Maximum budget request	Up to \$200,000 in direct costs
Application types	Type 1: research or evaluation Type 2: coordinating center
Award performance period	Type 1 projects may not exceed 12 months Type 2 projects may not exceed 18 months
Earliest award start date	November 1, 2024
Funding source	These funds constitute State appropriations and must be used in accordance with North Carolina State law and policies of the recipient institution.

## Purpose

The Collaboratory is requesting proposals from constituent institutions of the UNC System that can provide local governments or their subrecipients in North Carolina with research and evaluation support to enhance the effectiveness of opioid remediation activities as authorized by the North Carolina Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that governs the use of national opioid settlement funds.

Research and evaluation projects may request up to \$200,000 for 12 months. A single award of up to \$200,000 for 18 months will be made to a coordinating center that will support all awarded research and evaluation projects.

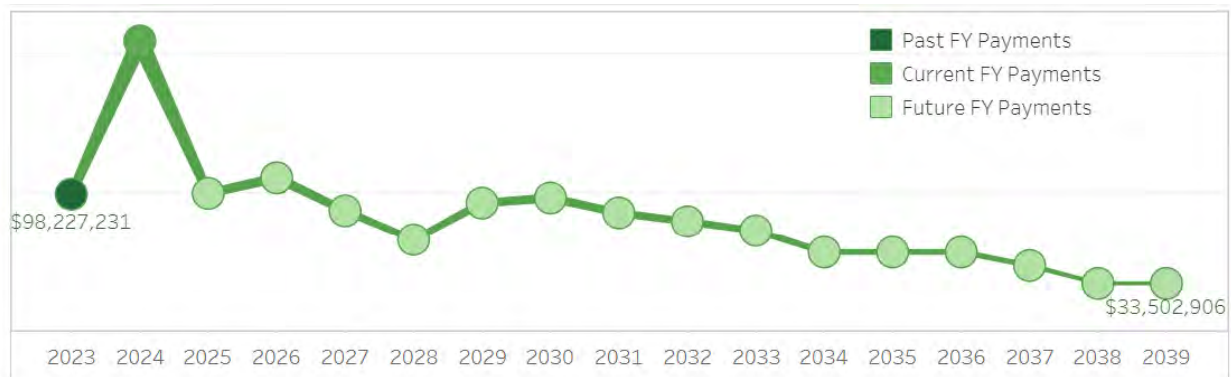
### Priority will be given to proposals that aim to:

- Support local government or subrecipient efforts related to Exhibit A or B strategies of the MOA (see below).
- Align with the work of the Community Opioid Resources Engine (CORE-NC) (see below).
- Advance data-driven solutions that positively impact policy and practice.
- Uplift partners from communities and governments as experts and key contributors throughout the research process, from formation of research questions and study design to data analysis and interpretation.
- Promote engagement with rural communities, persons with lived experience and those impacted by substance misuse or substance use disorder, persons being released from incarceration, or underrepresented or underserved groups impacted by the opioid crisis and associated health disparities.
- Build long-term partnerships that can be sustained beyond the award period.

## Background

The goal of this funding opportunity is to help enhance the effectiveness of national opioid settlement funds that are being distributed across North Carolina by supporting local government 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 at least \$1.4 billion over 18 years to address the opioid epidemic. Of these funds, 85% is distributed to local governments and the remaining 15% is distributed to the State of North Carolina.



Summary of anticipated payments (subject to modification) to State and local governments in North Carolina, which will total at least \$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, evidence-based strategies to address the epidemic. This option allows for but does not require specific planning activities at the local level.

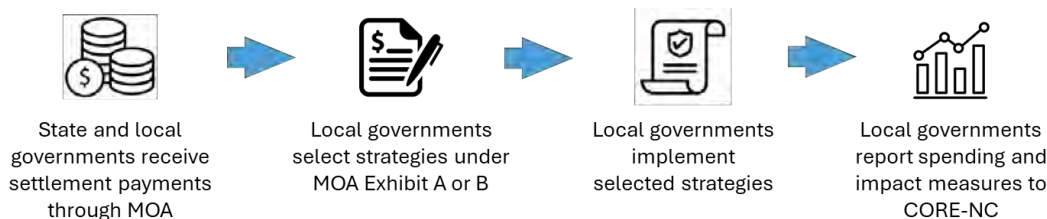
**Under Option B**, a local government engages in the collaborative strategic planning process, drafts a report and recommendations (R&R); presents the R&R to its local governing body; and submits the R&R to the State. The local governing body may then decide to fund one or more strategies from the shorter 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 presently 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 reports to the Community Opioid Resources Engine (CORE-NC), a collaborative partnership between the North Carolina Department of Justice, Association of County Commissioners, and Department of Health and Human Services, as well as 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, as summarized below:



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 choose to invest their settlement funds. The data collected by CORE-NC is publicly available via the [CORE-NC website](#).

## Application Types

Two types of applications will be accepted:

1. Research or evaluation
2. Coordinating center

### Type 1: Research and evaluation applications

Maximum budget request per application	\$200,000 in direct costs
Anticipated number of awards	11
Anticipated project duration	12 months
Award requirements	Partnerships with local governments or their subrecipients are required

The Collaboratory was established by the North Carolina General Assembly to support research that directly benefits people in the State. Accordingly, the Collaboratory is requesting research and evaluation proposals that can help academic researchers develop mutually beneficial partnerships with local governments and their subrecipients that can last beyond the award period and, through joint work, enhance the effectiveness of opioid remediation activities over the 18-year lifespan of the national opioid settlements.

For this reason, the Collaboratory encourages applicants to consider using the 12-month award to prepare for a partnership that continues beyond the performance period. Both new and pre-existing partnerships may be included in proposals, but applicants embarking on new partnerships should incorporate planning and partnership building into their application.

Applicants should propose a research project that aims to generate new knowledge or an evaluation study that addresses local government needs. Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) projects are encouraged, and applicants should ensure study designs are rigorous with well-powered analytical plans.

Ideally, applicants should propose deliverables (e.g. best practices, methodologies, models) that can be used by local government or subrecipient partners to enhance or continue the evaluation of opioid remediation activities beyond the award period. However, applicants with new partnerships should consider the time and effort needed to establish a partnership and be prepared to adjust their work and deliverables as they learn about their partners' needs. By the end of the award, practical deliverables and strong partnerships will be considered equally important outcomes.

### Type 2: Coordinating center applications

Maximum budget request per application	\$200,000
Anticipated number of awards	1
Anticipated project duration	18 months
Award requirements	A partnership with CORE-NC is required

The goal of this funding opportunity is to establish a statewide network of partnerships that can collectively improve the effectiveness, sustainability and scalability of local government opioid remediation activities. Accordingly, the Collaboratory is requesting proposals for a coordinating center that can support awarded projects by:

- Helping to establish effective cross-sector partnerships.
- Identifying and implementing best practices for cross-sector partnerships.
- Ensuring projects fulfill each partner's needs and all partnerships are ethical and mutually beneficial.

- Helping local governments, subrecipients and researchers share insights, lessons learned and best practices across the network.
- Engaging with external stakeholders to expand network partnerships, particularly with organizations associated with surrounding social factors that impact opioid use (e.g. transportation, housing).
- Collating the network's data and findings to establish a public repository for future use.
- Translating project findings into practical information for use by policymakers, practitioners and academic researchers.
- Developing metrics to assess the health and performance of individual partnerships and the network.
- Using project outcomes to help network members envision future efforts over the 18-year lifespan of the national opioid settlements, and beyond.

All research and evaluation award recipients will be required to work with the coordinating center throughout the award period. Applicants should propose a scope of work that supports approximately 11 research/evaluation partnerships and collaborates with CORE-NC to ensure alignment with ongoing opioid remediation efforts and the MOA.

To effectively support these partnerships, prior experience with the following is preferred:

- Hosting and moderating events
- Serving as brokers and mediating conflict
- Assessing partnership and network health and performance
- Building capacity in ethical and mutually beneficial partnerships
- Implementing network-wide data management and sharing strategies
- Generating policy briefs and recommendations
- Engaging stakeholders and communicating with the public

**Applicants may propose a consortium approach to the coordinating center if multiple entities are needed to fulfill all coordinating center responsibilities.** If a consortium approach is pursued, a prime applicant should be identified within the proposal, and additional entities should be described as subawards.

## Eligible Applicants and Partnership Requirements

Any institution of higher education within the UNC System is eligible to apply. Any individual with the resources, skills, and knowledge required to carry out the proposed activities may serve as principal investigator in accordance with their institutional policies.

**Due to the purpose of this funding opportunity, only proposals (Type 1) that demonstrate active collaboration with local governments or their subrecipients will be considered for funding.** Type 1 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.

Since local governments are in the early stages of using their opioid settlement funds, **Type 1 proposals may include partnerships with potential subrecipients** that have not yet received (but could receive in future) opioid settlement funds via an agreement with a local government in North Carolina. Applicants should clearly describe a) how this project and partnership with a potential subrecipient would address the purpose of this funding opportunity and b) the relationship between this partner and the local government to demonstrate why this partner is a potential candidate for receiving opioid settlement funds.

## Allowable Direct Costs

Budgets may include the following costs:

- Salary and fringe/benefit costs for personnel who are directly contributing to project activities
- Consultants and contracted services
- Travel expenses (e.g. mileage, airfare, accommodation, per diem)
- Equipment
- Materials and supplies
- Publication fees
- Student tuition

- IRB costs
- Venue rental fees for meetings/events
- Gift cards for study subject reimbursement (*State institutions must have a mechanism for purchasing gift cards for study subjects with non-State funds before reconciling against State funds*)

In addition to adhering to all applicable State laws, regulations and policies, the recipient institution is not permitted to use funds for indirect (F&A/overhead) costs (Article 31A, NCGS §116-255(c)(2)). Costs for administrative personnel who are directly involved in supporting the project may be included as direct costs.

Food costs are not permitted unless associated with travel as per diem.

## Application and Submission

Applicants should download and complete the application template for their chosen application type from the funding opportunity webpage, as well as a separate detailed budget template. Applications should be written to suit an audience with diverse backgrounds who may not be subject matter or scientific experts.

Applicant institutions are responsible for a) ensuring all proposals submitted to the Collaboratory have been reviewed and approved by appropriate institutional officials and b) overseeing the compliance of awarded projects with their institutional policies and State laws.

**The deadline for submissions is 5:00pm on July 1, 2024.** Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Final application materials should be submitted via the Collaboratory's application portal: <https://projects.collaboratory.unc.edu/applications/>. The main application template should be uploaded as a single PDF, and a separate detailed budget spreadsheet should be uploaded as an Excel file.

## Funding Source

The Collaboratory is supported by non-reverting State appropriations (NCGS §116-255(c)), and therefore all awards constitute State appropriations and must be used in accordance with North Carolina State law and the policies of the recipient institution. State institutions must carry funds forward until the project end date; carryforward of these funds will not apply to the carryforward limitation imposed on constituent institutions of the UNC System by NCGS §116-30.3.

### UNC System Applicants (non-UNC-Chapel Hill)

UNC System institutions will receive the full award amount at the start of the performance period as a cash transfer via the North Carolina Finance System (NCFS). Offices of Sponsored Research should coordinate with the appropriate institutional budget/finance offices to prepare for the receipt of funds and ensure all project spending and activities comply with State laws and institutional policies.

### UNC-Chapel Hill Applicants

The Collaboratory is headquartered at UNC-Chapel Hill. Consequently, Collaboratory awards to UNC-Chapel Hill applicants are considered internal awards, and an IPF submission in RAMSeS is not required. If selected for funding, UNC-Chapel Hill applicants will receive guidance on RAMSeS procedures from the Collaboratory during the post-award phase.

## Acknowledgments

The Collaboratory wishes to acknowledge the assistance and input of multiple entities during the development of this 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.