

Grand Traverse County Opioid Settlement Funds Spending Principles and Plan

The opioid overdose epidemic has profoundly affected our community—not just through the devastating statistics of overdoses, hospitalizations, and incarcerations, but through lasting personal, social, economic, and medical consequences that continue to shape daily life in Grand Traverse County. Over the past three decades, this crisis has evolved, forcing communities across the country—and ours in particular—to rethink how we define and measure health and well-being. Today, we recognize that a person’s health is determined by far more than just access to medical care. Where people live, work, shop, travel, and with whom they engage—all these social determinants of health—play a crucial role in shaping individual and community outcomes. The opioid epidemic has disrupted each of these factors, often compounding existing disparities and creating new barriers to wellness and stability.

Grand Traverse County stands at the forefront of this public health crisis. With this challenge comes a powerful opportunity: to lead in developing innovative, compassionate, and practical solutions that address the root causes of opioid misuse, support recovery, and strengthen the social fabric of our region. By investing in prevention, expanding access to care, and enhancing community-based support systems, we can drive meaningful changes. Our response must be holistic, collaborative, and sustained—because the health of every resident is intertwined with the health of our entire community.

This 5-Step Spending Principles and Plan offers a collaborative and comprehensive framework to respond to the evolving challenges of substance use disorder in our community. Grounded in clear, values-based Spending Principles, the plan guides the strategic deployment of resources to ensure a full continuum of care, services, and support reaches those most affected by the crisis. The plan prioritizes both immediate and long-term solutions—supporting prevention and harm reduction efforts while also investing in upstream interventions that address the root and chronic causes of substance use and related harms. By focusing on equity, transparency, and accountability, this funding model ensures that every dollar spent moves us closer to a healthier, more resilient community.

1. Spending Principles

Mission: Implement a Spending Plan that fosters cross-sector collaboration and integration across key systems—including healthcare, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, housing, public and private partnerships, family services, and the criminal legal system.

Vision: Address the broad impacts of substance use disorder in our community while recognizing the personal, social, economic, medical, and community-based transformations that have already occurred.

Objective: To improve health outcomes for individuals most impacted by the Opioid Overdose Epidemic—and for the community as a whole—implement a decision-making process guided by a Spending Tool rooted in the 5 Core Values of the Spending Principles.

The 5 Core Values of the Spending Principles:

- i. **Spend to Save Lives** - Spending must first and foremost prioritize saving lives. This principle ensures that funds are directed toward strategies that immediately reduce harm and prevent overdose deaths, while also building a sustainable path forward.
 - a. Establish dedicated funding streams
 - b. Use dollars to supplement and sustain rather than supplant
 - c. Spend with balance and intention
- ii. **Use Evidence-Based Guides to Drive Spending** - Prioritizing proven strategies ensures that resources are used effectively and that interventions deliver measurable outcomes for individuals and the community.
 - a. Fund evidence-based programs
 - b. Invest in data capacity
 - c. Leverage existing tools and resources
- iii. **Focus on Class Inequities** - Addressing class-based inequities is essential to achieving lasting solutions. Substance use disorder disproportionately impacts individuals and communities facing economic hardship, systemic barriers, and limited access to care. Funding must be targeted to reduce these disparities.
 - a. Prioritize investment in impacted communities
 - b. Support diversion and alternatives to incarceration
 - c. Engage key community stakeholders
- iv. **Develop a Fair and Transparent Process for Determining Fund Allocation** - A clear, consistent, and inclusive process is essential to ensure that funding decisions are fair, effective, and trusted by the community.
 - a. Publish a Scoring Tool
 - b. Report Annually to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners
 - c. Incorporate community and strategic input
- v. **Invest in Youth Prevention** - Preventing substance use before it begins is one of the most effective long-term strategies for reducing harm and building a healthier future. Focused investment in youth prevention helps to disrupt cycles of substance use and promote resilience from an early age.
 - a. Fund prevention-focused programs and support systems
 - b. Address the chronic needs of those impacted most by substance use disorder
 - c. Expand education around substance use disorder

2. Spending Plan

Grand Traverse County's Opioid Settlement funds shall be allocated into two distinct categories:

- **Track A:** These funds will be designated for county departments that currently provide services to individuals affected by substance use disorder.
- **Track B:** These funds will be distributed to external community partners and action agencies offering services to those impacted by substance use disorder.

The initial distribution of opioid settlement funds held by Grand Traverse County shall strive to allocate **60% to Track A** and **40% to Track B**. For each subsequent year, the allocation percentages of funds retained by the county and intended for each track shall be determined annually. These percentages shall be identified by the **Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee** and reviewed and approved by the **Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners**.

The Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee is responsible for ensuring that all funds, in both Track A and B, are allocated appropriately, following the same **Spending Tool** and guided by the **5 Core Values** outlined in the Spending Principles.

Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee and Objectives

The Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee shall include one representative from each identified organization or entity. Advisory Committee representatives shall serve in the position for 3 years before consideration of replacement is to be made by the committee and approved by the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners.

Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee

Advisory Committee

1. Grand Traverse Health Department
2. Grand Traverse Board of Commissioners
3. Criminal, Judicial, Legal Systems
4. Grand Traverse Sheriff's Office
5. Medical Provider
6. SUD Provider
7. Prevention Specialist

Executive Sponsorship to the Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee is to be provided by a member of the **Grand Traverse County Administration**. While not a voting member of the Advisory Committee, the Executive Sponsorship of County Administration will ensure the Advisory Committee has the necessary resources to be appropriately positioned in their role of making recommendations to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners.

The objectives of the Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee are as follows:

1. Clearly define Track A and Track B, and ensure that allocations for each track are identified, and strive to meet the desired allocations.
2. Establish a shared Scoring Tool to monitor and ensure that Track A and Track B adhere to the 5 Core Values outlined in the Spending Principles.
3. Ensure all funds, in both Track A and B, are allocated appropriately, following the **Spending Tool** and guided by the **5 Core Values** outlined in the Spending Principles.
4. Identify funding priorities and develop budgets for both Track A and Track B.
5. Collaborate with the **Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD)** to assist in administering Track B funds.
6. Make recommendations to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners and obtain necessary approvals.
7. Provide an annual report to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners while ensuring proper Program Reviews are in place.

Spending Process

Track A funds shall be identified, budgeted, and implemented by the Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee. Before the distribution of funds to any county department, all Track A funds shall be reviewed by the Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee and approved by the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners.

Track B funds shall be distributed to external community partners and agencies through a grant application process conducted in partnership with the Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee and the Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD). The grant application process shall include the establishment of clear criteria of fund utilization expectations, the process for the receipt and review of applications, and the processes of support from the Advisory Committee and the Grand Traverse County Health Department.

Grant applications shall be made publicly available by the GTCHD, received by the GTCHD, and shared with the Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee. This committee shall evaluate applications and make funding recommendations to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners following the accepted Spending Tool. Final determinations regarding the distribution of Track B funds shall be presented to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners for review and approval.

3. Spending Tool

The Spending Tool (Exhibit A) is an evidence-based instrument approved by the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners. It is guided by the five Core Values of the Spending Principles. It serves as a transparent, standardized prioritization algorithm to inform and support the allocation of funds across both Track A and Track B.

The development of the Spending Tool is grounded in prior work and informed by established frameworks and community-based practices. Its design reflects a commitment to equity, accountability, and strategic impact. The tool incorporates insights and methodologies from the following sources:

1. Grand Traverse County Opioid Epidemic Task Force – Strategic Plan
2. [Grand Traverse Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
3. [State of Michigan's Opioids Crisis Response Strategy](#)
4. [Michigan Opioid Settlement Funds Toolkit – MAC](#)

The Spending Tool applies the technical assistance outlined in the referenced resources to ensure that all Five Funding Pathways align with the four Pillars of Approved Uses for opioid settlement dollars. These approved uses were first implemented through Michigan's Opioid Response Strategy (Exhibit B) and are reflected in the six Domains identified in the Grand Traverse County Opioid Epidemic Task Force Strategic Plan. The Spending Tool distills this framework into five actionable Funding Pathways, which must be followed for settlement funds to be allocated.

Funding requests—regardless of track—must align with one or more of the Funding Criteria within these Pathways. Requests that address multiple Pathways and Criteria may have a greater impact on the community and, therefore, may have a higher chance of receiving both immediate and sustained funding. All funding requests shall be evaluated against the Spending Tool using the Grand Traverse County Opioid Settlement Funds Determination Rubric (Exhibit C).

Exhibit A - Spending Tool

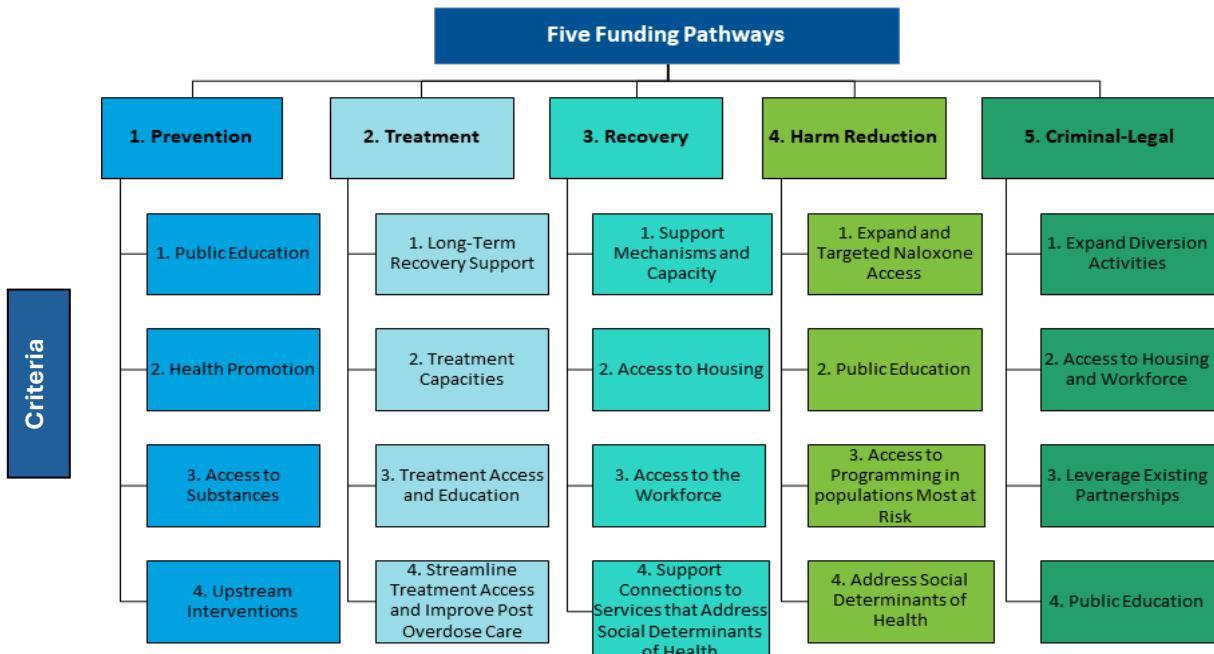
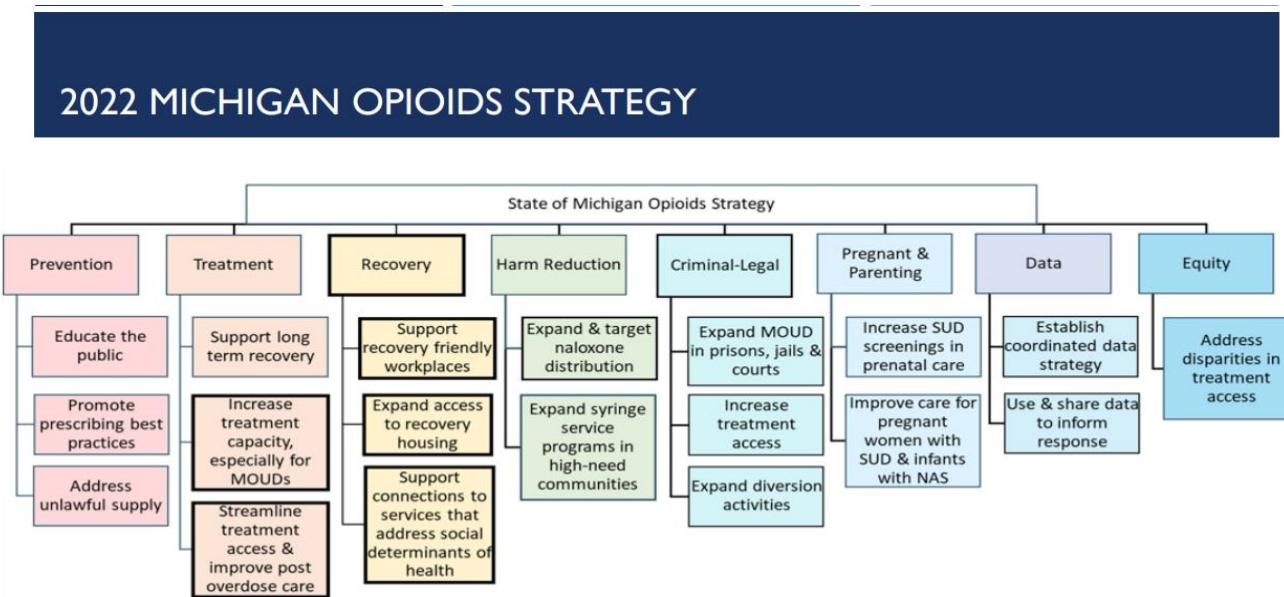


Exhibit B - State of Michigan's Opioid Response Strategy



4. Spend Monitoring & Accountability

While there are currently no formal reporting requirements for the use of opioid settlement funds, Grand Traverse County is committed to a transparent and trustworthy allocation process. As part of this strategic goal, the **Annual Spending Principles & Plan Report** will be developed by the committee and delivered to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners. Additionally, on an annual basis, the Grand Traverse County Opioid Advisory Committee will coordinate a Program Review of the services awarded Grand Traverse County Opioid Settlement Dollars. This Program Review is to be conducted by a third party with a focus on Public Health and/or substance use disorder expertise. This report will be provided to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners and Grand Traverse County Administration.

Exhibit D - Grand Traverse County Opioid Settlement Funds - Spending Timeline

Task	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Workgroup Approval of GTC Opioid Spending Principles & Plan	X								
BOC Adopts, Spending Principles and Plan				X					
Funds are distributed into each Track Fund						X			
Spend Committees convene in 1 st Public Meetings						X			
Funding Tool Adopted						X			
Track A funds made available to internal departments for deployment							X		
Track B Grant Process Adopted								X	
Track B Grant Applications opened								X	
Track B Applications begin to be shared with Track B Spending Committee for review and approvals								X	
Track B Funds may begin to be awarded									X

Exhibit C - Grand Traverse County Opioid Settlement Funds Prioritization Tool

Using the Five Funding Pathways as outlined in the Spending Tool, evaluate and score how well this opioid settlement funding request aligns with each pathway and the corresponding criteria. Scoring should reflect the degree to which the request supports the objectives of Grand Traverse County's Spending Principles and advances meaningful impact in the community.

Prevention Pathway

Emphasize and support activities that educate individuals and communities, and that proactively prevent opioid use and the onset of substance use disorders.

Criteria:

- Public Education
- Health Promotion
- Upstream Prevention
- Addresses Transportation

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>no alignment</i>		<i>very little alignment</i>		<i>average alignment</i>		<i>very good alignment</i>		<i>full alignment</i>	

Treatment Pathway

Support a comprehensive range of treatment options within the community, including both inpatient and outpatient services, as well as access to short-term and long-term therapeutic communities.

Criteria:

- Long-Term Recovery Support
- Treatment Capacities
- Treatment Access and Education
- Streamline Treatment Access and Improve Post-Overdose Care

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>no alignment</i>		<i>very little alignment</i>		<i>average alignment</i>		<i>very good alignment</i>		<i>full alignment</i>	

Recovery Pathway

Recognize that substance use disorder is a complex, chronic mental health condition that requires ongoing care across an individual's lifespan. Prioritize upstream interventions and remove barriers to care to support better individuals and communities most impacted by the opioid overdose epidemic.

Criteria:

- Support Mechanisms and Capacity
- Access to Housing
- Access to the Workforce
- Support Connections to Services that Address Social Determinants of Health

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>no alignment</i>		<i>very little alignment</i>		<i>average alignment</i>		<i>very good alignment</i>		<i>full alignment</i>	

Harm Reduction Pathway

Implement practical and transformative community- and public health–driven approaches to reduce the harms associated with drug use. This includes a range of interventions and educational efforts focused on prevention, risk reduction, and improved health outcomes.

Criteria:

- Expand and Targeted Naloxone Access
- Public Education
- Access to Programming in Populations Most at Risk
- Address Social Determinants of Health

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>no alignment</i>		<i>very little alignment</i>		<i>average alignment</i>		<i>very good alignment</i>		<i>full alignment</i>	

Criminal-Legal Pathway

Implement deflection and pre-arrest diversion strategies that connect individuals to evidence-based care and supportive services, offering alternatives to incarceration when appropriate.

Criteria:

- Expand Diversion Activities
- Access to Housing and Workforce
- Leverage Existing Partnerships
- Address Disparities in Treatment and Recovery Access

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>no alignment</i>		<i>very little alignment</i>		<i>average alignment</i>		<i>very good alignment</i>		<i>full alignment</i>	

Maximum Possible Score: 50

Proposals Score: _____