

Town of Essex
Report on Opioid Settlement Funds

January 28, 2026

Submitted by: Tammy Getchell, Town of Essex Representative of the Volunteer Community Group

Volunteer Community Group: Essex residents Lorraine Zaloom and Gina Halpin Barrett, State Representatives Rey Garofano and Leonora Dodge, ADL School Nurse Jenna Dalla Mura, Essex Junction Communications and Strategic Initiatives Director Ashley Snellenberger, Journey to Recovery Executive Director Lila Bennett, and Director of Equity & Inclusion/ Co-director Of Student Support Services at EWSD Erin Maguire.

National Opioid Settlement Funds - Background

In 2021, nationwide settlements were reached to resolve all opioids litigation brought by states and local political subdivisions against the three largest pharmaceutical distributors, McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen (“Distributors”) and against manufacturer Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and its parent company Johnson & Johnson (collectively, “J&J”). These National Settlements have been finalized, and payments have already begun. In all, the Distributors will pay up to \$21 billion over 18 years, and J&J will pay up to an additional \$5 billion over no more than nine years.

In late 2022, agreements were announced with three pharmacy chains—CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart—and two additional manufacturers—Allergan and Teva. In January 2023, each of those pharmacy chains and manufacturers confirmed that a sufficient number of states had agreed to the settlements to move forward. The 2022 National Settlements have now all been finalized.¹

[View a detailed breakdown of the allocations and projected calculations for the Town of Essex and other subdivisions of the State of Vermont](#) (National Opioids Settlement website)

[April 11, 2024 - Memo to Selectboard re: Discussion of Funding from National Opioid Settlements](#)

[May 29, 2025 - Memo to Selectboard re: Update on National Opioid Settlements funding and Community Dinner/Forum on Opioid Use Prevention](#)

The Impact of Opioids

In May 2024, the Town of Essex Selectboard committed to a long-term goal of conducting public outreach on drug and overdose issues. That commitment was later expanded in

2025 to include awareness and responsiveness to the impact of wrongdoing and opioids in the community. ([View Selectboard long-term goals](#))

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, overdose deaths remain a leading cause of injury-related death in the United States. The majority of overdose deaths involve opioids. Deaths involving synthetic opioids (largely illicitly made fentanyl) and stimulants (such as cocaine and methamphetamine) have increased in recent years. In addition, overdose deaths accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹

Addressing the Opioid Crisis Together

The [FY26 Work plan](#) includes the task to “Conduct public outreach on drug and overdose issues, and work with Police Department and Essex Westford School District to do so. Determine use(s) for opioid settlement funds”.

The Town’s website was updated to include a new initiative for “[Addressing the Opioid Crisis Together](#)”. The website has a subscription for notifications of events and other news related to the initiative, links to important resources, and information on Naloxone and where to obtain free kits. This initiative and website resource pages have been shared on the Town’s social media and in the community newsletter.



Our local communities held a forum in September 2025 to bring people together for dinner and discussion. The Town of Essex joined the City of Essex Junction, Town of Westford, the Essex Westford School District, and Voices for Inclusion in Essex and Westford (VIEW) to host a [Community Dinner and Forum on Opioid Misuse Prevention](#). Green Meadows Catering from Essex prepared a free BBQ dinner for the public. Attendees left comments on “graffiti walls” to express their concerns about opioid misuse in their community under suggested opioid remediation uses provided by the State of Vermont.

¹Statements from nationalopioidsettlement.com



Members of the Essex Police Department were in attendance as well as participants from Essex Rescue, Journey to Recovery, Spectrum, Turning Point (Chittenden and Franklin Counties), Essex Westford School District, Vermont Foundation for Recovery, and Vermont Department of Health. Several volunteers from our local communities shared personal stories. A demonstration on how to administer Naloxone was presented by Emily Truder, Vermont Department of Health and Colleen Ballard from Essex Rescue.

Resource booths were hosted during the event by Essex Community Justice Center, Steps to End Domestic Violence, Turning Point Center of Chittenden County, Howard Center, Champlain Toxicology Lab, BAART Programs, National Alliance on Mental Illness NAMI Vermont, Dismas of Vermont, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, and the Vermont Department of Health. Attendees brought home free Naloxone kits, bags, stickers and wallet cards with QR codes to links providing information on what to do if encountering a person who may have overdosed.

The Essex Reporter covered the event through personal interviews during the dinner and published the article, [“Let’s Talk About Opioids: For Far too many in Essex, this issue is personal”](#), by Ella Ruehsen, September 10, 2025.

One of the beneficial results of organizing and hosting this event was the creation and strengthening of partnerships with nearby towns, organizations, and individuals dedicated to supporting our communities in drug recovery and prevention. This also included collaboration with our local legislators and the State Department of Health.

Survey - what do you think is priority?

The volunteer group behind the Community Dinner and Forum surveyed residents of Essex, Essex Junction, and Westford to identify priorities for local opioid settlement funds. The results, attached to this report, show that supporting treatment and recovery programs is the top priority. This is followed by a focus on connecting individuals to resources through Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). Also attached are State of Vermont-approved fund use lists for these two categories.

Community member volunteers feedback

The volunteer group offered post-event feedback:

- Participation was low. Future efforts could include strategies to focus on students if another event is planned.
- Events could be more focused, like offering substance-free experiences for students like a block party. It was noted that “substance prevention” is allowable with settlement funds and the focus can include prevention of using alcohol, smoking, and vaping.
- Another idea for consideration is to hold a Parent’s Night to specifically talk about topics like signs and symptoms of teen substance use, how to talk to your kids about partying, or how to say no to your kids even if you smoke, vape or drink as an adult.
- Community service/student leader groups may be helpful to gain students’ perspectives.
- For future use of opioid settlement funding, it is recommended that more input is needed. Suggestions include holding public listening forums and more specific surveys that could include ideas for student centric events, supporting behavioral health organizations, etc.
- There is a lack of community connection – possibly somewhat due to the odd size of the Town. It’s widespread and large. A student center or community hub such as YMCA, Boys & Girls Club or Essex CHIPS are organizations that could be supported by locating such a facility in what is considered or determined to be the center of the town. A larger project is more challenging but could bring a long-term plan to prevent opioid misuse. Supporting the construction of a facility may be a consideration if the Town of Essex plans to build a future community center.

Cash Flow Forecast

The Town is projected to receive settlement funds through FY2039. See the attached Cash Flow Forecast and financial statement for detailed information about cash flow and current financial status.

State and Local Examples of use of opioid settlement funds

Many states and municipalities are using funds to support recovery or sober living homes by purchasing property, providing renovations or repairs to existing recovery residences, or supporting operating costs.

Other examples of how funds are being used include specialized employment training for individuals in recovery, expansion of residential treatment facilities, and creation of “Operation Shielding Hope”, a program that sends community paramedics to respond to overdoses and provide “warm handoffs” to treatment.

More information about how local municipalities are spending funds are included in this article from Vermont Public, [“Vermont is getting millions each year from opioid settlements. Where’s the money going?”](#) by Liam Elder-Connors, January 27, 2026.

Other considerations

The volunteer community group suggested the Town consider creating an advisory committee like the State of Vermont. The [Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee](#) was established by Vermont Legislative Act 118. This state committee makes recommendations on how to spend the state’s share of settlement money. If the Town of Essex were to consider creating an advisory committee, members could include volunteers from the community, particularly those with lived experience with opioid misuse and recovery, health professionals, representatives from Essex Westford School District, members of rescue operations such as the Police Department, Fire Department, or Essex Rescue, officials from organizations offering services and assistance like Turning Point, Journey to Recovery, Spectrum, or Vermont Foundation for Recovery, and governing officials from the Selectboard and/or local state representatives.

Attachments

1. Survey
2. Survey Results – Ranking Priorities for Opioid Settlement Funds
3. Vermont List of Opioid Remediation Uses (for 2 highest-ranked categories)
4. Town of Essex Opioid Settlement Funds Cash Flow Forecast
5. Opioid Settlement Funds Financial Statement as of 1/29/2026

How do you rank priorities for opioid settlement funds?

Place a number in the square to the left of each.

1 = top priority | 8 = least priority



Expand distribution, training and education on the use of naloxone (harm reduction)

Support programs that assist people in treatment and recovery

Connect people who need help to the help they need using Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

Assist persons with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) with transitioning out of the criminal justice system

Support programs that address the needs of pregnant or parenting women with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and their families

Support programs that prevent over-prescribing opioids and educate on best prescribing practices

Increase distribution, training and education of all forms of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs)

Support efforts for evidence-informed prevention of the misuse of opioids and other drugs

Ranking Priorities for Opioid Settlement Funds

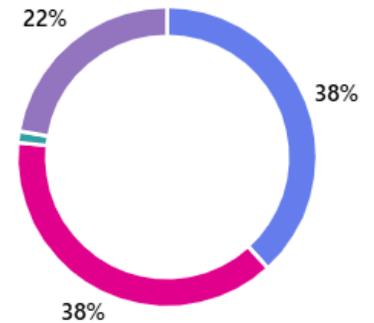
Survey for the Town of Essex, City of Essex Junction, Town of Westford

September 2025

85 Responses

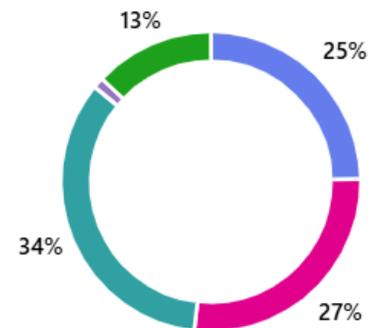
1. What town do you live in?

Town of Essex	31
City of Essex Junction	31
Town of Westford	1
Other	18



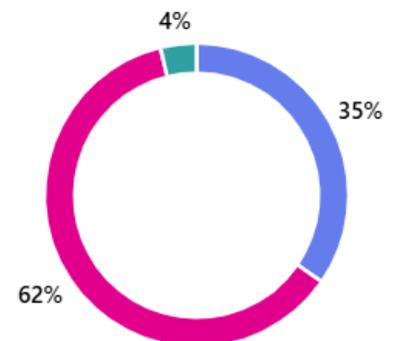
2. Have you been impacted by the opioid epidemic?

No	21
Yes, at my workplace	23
Yes, impacted close friends/family	29
Yes, at my school	1
Other	11



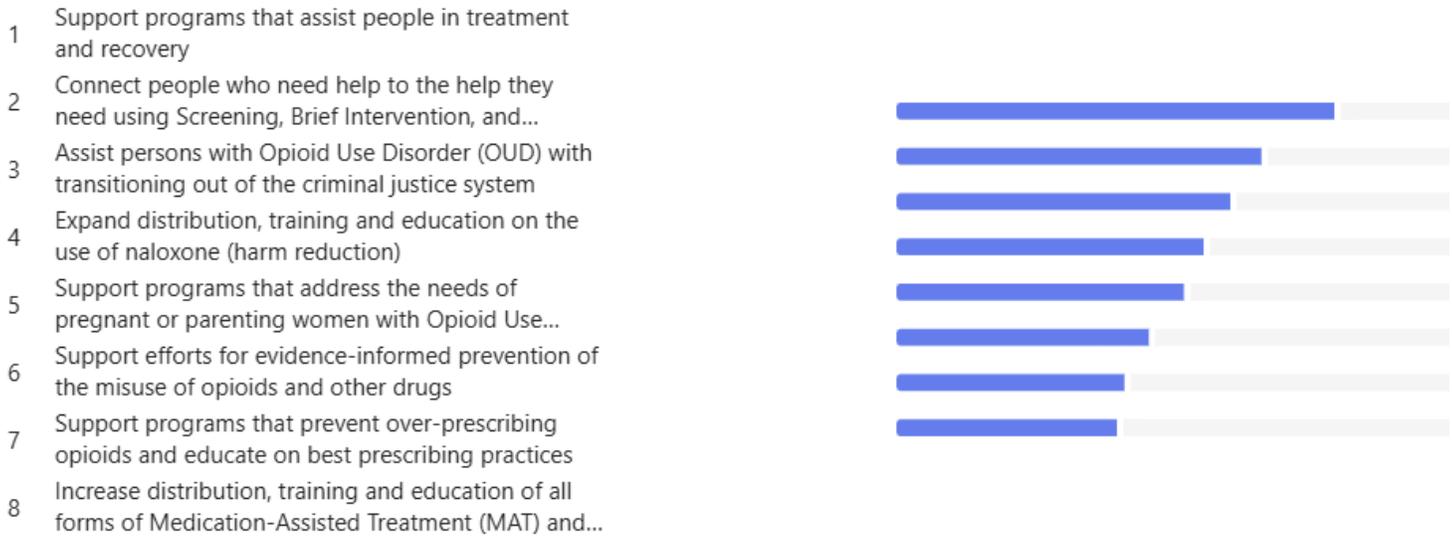
3. How much do you know about the opioid epidemic?

Very knowledgeable	27
Somewhat knowledgeable	48
Not knowledgeable	3



4. How would you rank these options for how our community should spend opioid settlement funds? (Use the up and down arrows on the side to move them in order of most important to least important).

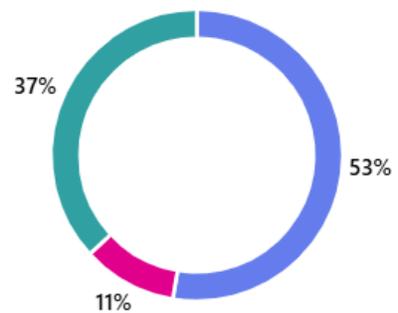
For context, opioid settlement funds are payments made by various opioid manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacies to settle lawsuits against their companies for their role in the opioid epidemic. These lawsuits were brought by states, cities, counties, and tribal governments across the U.S. seeking to hold these entities accountable for the harm caused by the crisis.



5. Would you support the idea of creating one opioid advisory committee encompassing the Town of Essex, City of Essex Junction and the Town of Westford?

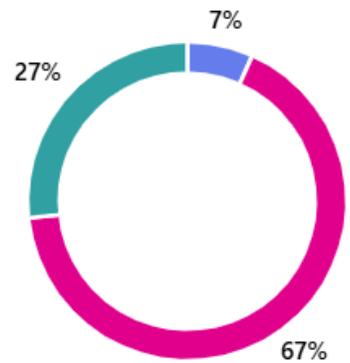
The goal of opioid settlements and the funds awarded is to help communities address the opioid crisis and mitigate the harm caused by it. An advisory committee would provide guidance on how best to use the funds for these purposes.

- Yes 40
- No 8
- Maybe 28



6. Do you have interest in serving on an opioid advisory committee?

- Yes 5
- No 50
- Maybe 20



7. Provide any other ideas or comments you would like to share.

26 Responses

ID	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Provide more programs to help with underlying causes of using drugs. Counseling available for those who seek it, job training programs, trauma assistance.
2	anonymous	Preventing use by supporting housing, medical access, community, and hope. Could help prevent some folks from using in the first place
3	anonymous	I love, love, love all the work that is happening through Jenna's Promise in Johnson. Wouldn't it be great if we could do similar work here in Essex, or team up with them to bring a satellite location here!
4	anonymous	My brother was over prescribed for nearly 10 years. I sat in his doctors office and listened to my brother admit to crushing his pills and snorting them; his Doctors suggestion was for me to give him his daily package of 10 pills. I "lost" my brother to this disease because a

ID Name Responses

		doctor wanted more money in his pocket. I want to be sure this doesn't continue to happen.
5	anonymous	Re: my ranking. I put 7 and 8 there because I think those belong in professional networks and are beyond the scope of community. Still extremely important.
6	anonymous	Moving the choices around was challenging. I probably didn't get them in the order I wanted.
7	anonymous	What about using funds to support children of opiate users/prevention/counseling
8	anonymous	Town ordinance! Shooting up in public is automatic trip to treatment facility ! This will help addicts and stop used needles been left around the community! The funds can be used for treatment!
9	anonymous	Treatment must be made available, and prescribing must be reigned in.
10	anonymous	The number one protective factor in people's mental health is connection and relationship! Thank you for hosting this imperative conversation! NAMI Vermont will be promoting this on our social media and events calendar.
11	anonymous	Society should work harder to contain this problem rather than enabling it. Housing, nutrition and other supports should be contingent on people working to end their addiction.
12	anonymous	I believe everyone has been negatively affected by the opioid epidemic. Some have died, some have lost loved ones, some still struggle, some have been victims of crime and theft by those addicted. Because of this I hope some percentage of the one time

ID Name Responses

		money is applied to the community as a whole. For example one time funds to Fire, Police and Ambulance.
13	anonymous	Start with the women and educate them. If you want to change a culture start with the women, they are more invested because of the children.
14	anonymous	It is much too hard for people to get medication-assisted treatment, especially if they are also trying to hold down a job.
15	anonymous	Provide the money to emergency services
16	anonymous	I think it should be a discussion with patients and their PCP at least once a year to see how patients are affected by opioids and to ask patients if they have any medications they no longer need or are expired in their medicine cabinets, and if they do, they should bring them to a kiosk to dispose of them. The State of VT website notes that 48% of people who misuse opioids, got them from someone they knew. A high percentage of patients save their opioids "just in case" they might need them, making it available for someone else to take them. We need to change our culture in so many ways.
17	anonymous	Thank you for doing this! Need the entire community (adults, kids, schools, doctors, etc) talking and acting on this.
18	anonymous	We need educational programs in schools for students and faculty/staff to support prevention. All age levels at appropriate levels due to home use
19	anonymous	please require all first responders are properly trained on Fentanyl as some are still sharing out that it kills on contact and reviving an overdose victim is dangerous

ID Name Responses

20	anonymous	There should be support and education in the schools
21	anonymous	Thank you for hosting the event. I did not answer questions 7-9 because I am not a resident of Town of Essex, City of Essex Junction or the Town of Westford. If I could add one piece of input it would be to ensure folks with lived experience across the spectrum of OUD are included in the opioid advisory committee.
22	anonymous	How do we help the people that don't want to use the services that are offered?
23	anonymous	More effort on prevention instead of intervention
24	anonymous	See above re buprenorphine
25	anonymous	Funding should go to support the programs that were represented at the opioid event at the high school. They are already doing the work and obviously need the support.
26	anonymous	Give to programs already in use-Howard Center, etc

Vermont List of Opioid Remediation Uses

From :[State of Vermont List of Opioid Remediation Uses](#)

Ranked Priority #1 from September 2025 survey:

SUPPORT PEOPLE IN TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

Support people in recovery from OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the programs or strategies that:

1. Provide comprehensive wrap-around services to individuals with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including housing, transportation, education, job placement, job training, or childcare.
2. Provide the full continuum of care of treatment and recovery services for OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including supportive housing, peer support services and counseling, community navigators, case management, and connections to community-based services.
3. Provide counseling, peer-support, recovery case management and residential treatment with access to medications for those who need it to persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions. E-6
4. Provide access to housing for people with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including supportive housing, recovery housing, housing assistance programs, training for housing providers, or recovery housing programs that allow or integrate FDA-approved medication with other support services.
5. Provide community support services, including social and legal services, to assist in deinstitutionalizing persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
6. Support or expand peer-recovery centers, which may include support groups, social events, computer access, or other services for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
7. Provide or support transportation to treatment or recovery programs or services for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
8. Provide employment training or educational services for persons in treatment for or recovery from OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
9. Identify successful recovery programs such as physician, pilot, and college recovery programs, and provide support and technical assistance to increase the number and capacity of high-quality programs to help those in recovery.

Vermont List of Opioid Remediation Uses

10. Engage non-profits, faith-based communities, and community coalitions to support people in treatment and recovery and to support family members in their efforts to support the person with OUD in the family.
11. Provide training and development of procedures for government staff to appropriately interact and provide social and other services to individuals with or in recovery from OUD, including reducing stigma.
12. Support stigma reduction efforts regarding treatment and support for persons with OUD, including reducing the stigma on effective treatment.
13. Create or support culturally appropriate services and programs for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including new Americans.
14. Create and/or support recovery high schools.
15. Hire or train behavioral health workers to provide or expand any of the services or supports listed above.

Ranked Priority #2 from September 2025 survey:

CONNECT PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP TO THE HELP THEY NEED (CONNECTIONS TO CARE)

Provide connections to care for people who have—or are at risk of developing—OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, those that:

1. Ensure that health care providers are screening for OUD and other risk factors and know how to appropriately counsel and treat (or refer if necessary) a patient for OUD treatment.
2. Fund SBIRT programs to reduce the transition from use to disorders, including SBIRT services to pregnant women who are uninsured or not eligible for Medicaid.
3. Provide training and long-term implementation of SBIRT in key systems (health, schools, colleges, criminal justice, and probation), with a focus on youth and young adults when transition from misuse to opioid disorder is common.
4. Purchase automated versions of SBIRT and support ongoing costs of the technology.
5. Expand services such as navigators and on-call teams to begin MAT in hospital emergency departments.
6. Provide training for emergency room personnel treating opioid overdose patients on post-discharge planning, including community referrals for MAT, recovery case management or support services.

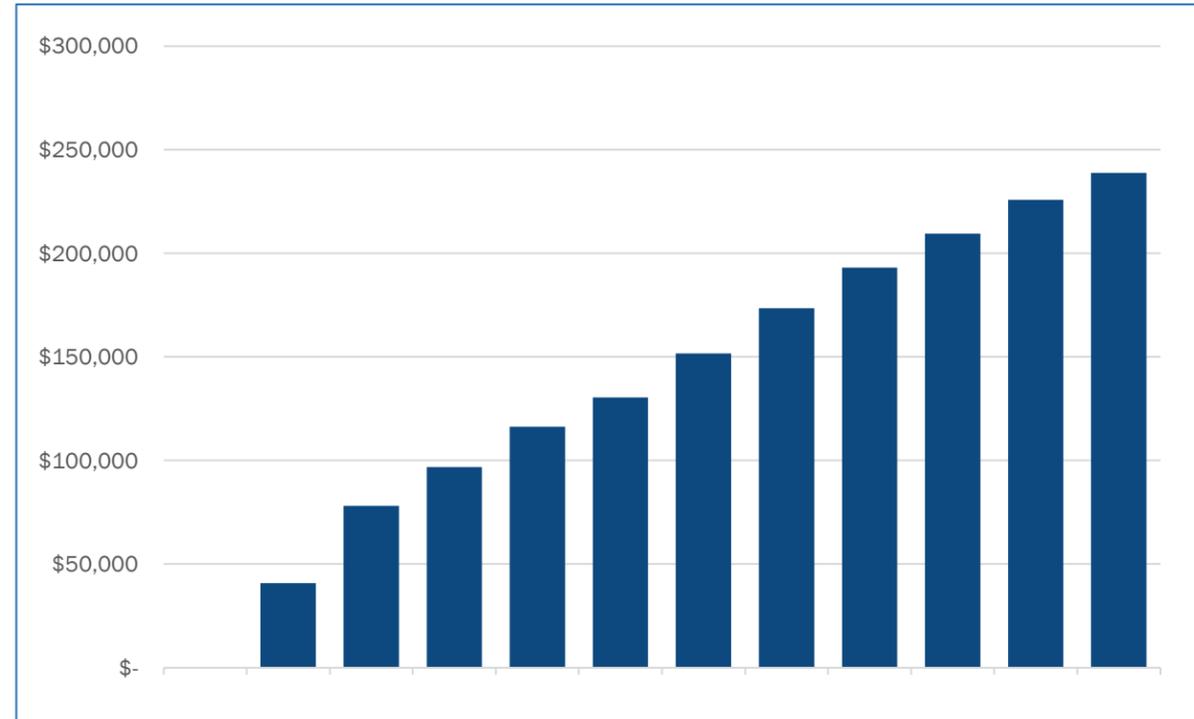
Vermont List of Opioid Remediation Uses

7. Support hospital programs that transition persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, or persons who have experienced an opioid overdose, into clinically appropriate follow-up care through a bridge clinic or similar approach.
8. Support crisis stabilization centers that serve as an alternative to hospital emergency departments for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions or persons that have experienced an opioid overdose.
9. Support the work of Emergency Medical Systems, including peer support specialists, to connect individuals to treatment or other appropriate services following an opioid overdose or other opioid-related adverse event.
10. Provide funding for peer support specialists or recovery coaches in emergency departments, detox facilities, recovery centers, recovery housing, or similar settings; offer services, supports, or connections to care to persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions or to persons who have experienced an opioid overdose.
11. Expand warm hand-off services to transition to recovery services.
12. Create or support school-based contacts that parents can engage with to seek immediate treatment services for their child; and support prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery programs focused on young people.
13. Develop and support best practices on addressing OUD in the workplace.
14. Support assistance programs for health care providers with OUD.
15. Engage non-profits and the faith community as a system to support outreach for treatment.
16. Support centralized call centers that provide information and connections to appropriate services and supports for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.

Town of Essex Opioid Settlement Funds

Cash flow forecast

Month	Cash on hand
FY2023	\$ -
FY2024	\$ 40,736.64
FY2025	\$ 78,138.96
FY2026	\$ 96,856.82
FY2027	\$ 116,192.21
FY2028	\$ 130,460.73
FY2029	\$ 151,584.86
FY2030	\$ 173,468.49
FY2031	\$ 193,022.16
FY2032	\$ 209,420.59
FY2033	\$ 225,819.02
FY2034	\$ 238,808.56
FY2035	\$ 251,798.10
FY2036	\$ 264,787.64
FY2037	\$ 275,671.67
FY2038	\$ 283,764.33
FY2039	\$ 291,860.99



TOWN OF ESSEX
 OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS CASH FLOW FORECAST
 AS OF 10/15/2025

	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031	FY2032	FY2033	FY2034	FY2035	FY2036	FY2037	FY2038	FY2039	Total
Cash on hand (beginning of month)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,736.64	\$ 78,138.96	\$ 96,856.82	\$ 116,192.21	\$ 130,460.73	\$ 151,584.86	\$ 173,468.49	\$ 193,022.16	\$ 209,420.59	\$ 225,819.02	\$ 238,808.56	\$ 251,798.10	\$ 264,787.64	\$ 275,671.67	\$ 283,764.33	

Cash Receipts

Settlement Funds	\$ 37,954.02	\$ 40,068.39	\$ 29,567.30	\$ 21,177.88	\$ 19,335.39	\$ 14,268.52	\$ 21,124.13	\$ 21,883.63	\$ 19,553.67	\$ 16,398.43	\$ 16,398.43	\$ 12,989.54	\$ 12,989.54	\$ 12,989.54	\$ 10,884.03	\$ 8,092.66	\$ 8,096.66	\$ 323,771.76
City of Essex Junction	\$ 2,993.31	\$ 668.25	\$ 4,678.40															\$ 8,339.96
Town of Westford				\$ 750.00														
Interest, other income			\$ 3,156.62	\$ 2,000.00														\$ 5,156.62
Other receipts																		\$ -
Total cash receipts	\$ 40,947.33	\$ 40,736.64	\$ 37,402.32	\$ 23,927.88	\$ 19,335.39	\$ 14,268.52	\$ 21,124.13	\$ 21,883.63	\$ 19,553.67	\$ 16,398.43	\$ 16,398.43	\$ 12,989.54	\$ 12,989.54	\$ 12,989.54	\$ 10,884.03	\$ 8,092.66	\$ 8,096.66	\$ 337,268.34
Total cash available	\$ 40,947.33	\$ 40,736.64	\$ 78,138.96	\$ 102,066.84	\$ 116,192.21	\$ 130,460.73	\$ 151,584.86	\$ 173,468.49	\$ 193,022.16	\$ 209,420.59	\$ 225,819.02	\$ 238,808.56	\$ 251,798.10	\$ 264,787.64	\$ 275,671.67	\$ 283,764.33	\$ 291,860.99	

Cash Out

Howard Center Community Outreach Program - Town	\$ 37,954.02																	\$ 37,954.02
Howard Center Community Outreach Program - City	\$ 2,993.31																	
Professional Services 125-5-00-00-330.000				\$4,375.00														\$ 4,375.00
Training, Conferences, Dues 125-00-00-500.000				\$0.00														\$ -
Advertising 125-00-00-540.000				\$85.98														\$ 85.98
Other Purchased Services 125-5-00-00-570.000				\$0.00														\$ -
Travel 125-5-00-00-580.000				\$0.00														\$ -
General Supplies 125-5-00-00-610.000				\$749.04														\$ 749.04
Total Cash Out	\$ 40,947.33	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,210.02	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 46,157.35
Cash on hand (end of month)	\$ -	\$ 40,736.64	\$ 78,138.96	\$ 96,856.82	\$ 116,192.21	\$ 130,460.73	\$ 151,584.86	\$ 173,468.49	\$ 193,022.16	\$ 209,420.59	\$ 225,819.02	\$ 238,808.56	\$ 251,798.10	\$ 264,787.64	\$ 275,671.67	\$ 283,764.33	\$ 291,860.99	

Opioid Settlement Funds
 OPERATING EXPENSES
 FY2026

1/29/2026

Receipts	Estimated	Actual	Difference
Settlement Funds	\$21,177.88	\$16,222.33	\$4,955.55
City of Essex Junction			\$0.00
Town of Westford	\$750.00	\$750.00	\$0.00
Interest, other income	\$2,000.00	\$1,564.55	\$435.45
Other receipts			\$0.00
Total Operating Expenses	\$23,927.88	\$18,536.88	\$5,391.00

Expenses	Estimated	Actual	Difference
Professional Services 125-5-00-00-330.000	\$3,000.00	\$4,375.00	(\$1,375.00)
Training, Conferences, Dues 125-5-00-00-500.000			\$0.00
Advertising 125-00-00-540.000	\$500.00	\$85.98	\$414.02
Other Purchased Services 125-5-00-00-570.000	\$100.00		\$100.00
Travel 125-5-00-00-580.000			\$0.00
General Supplies 125-5-00-00-610.000	\$1,000.00	\$749.04	\$250.96
Total Operating Expenses	\$4,600.00	\$5,210.02	(\$610.02)

Net Balances	\$19,327.88	\$13,326.86	\$6,001.02
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Trial Balance Carried Forward	\$78,138.96
Current Balance on hand	\$91,465.82