



**Wichita - Sedgwick
Opioid Settlement Consortium
Strategic Plan for Utilization of Opioid
Settlement Funds (2025-2030)
FINAL REPORT**

Prepared by the Steadman Group

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background	5
Needs Assessment Findings Summary	6
Strategic Plan Structure Summary	7
Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Strategies and Goals	8
Allocation Estimates	10
Implementation Recommendations	11
Governance Options	12
Communications	13
Evaluation	13
Partners	14
Conclusion	14
Appendices	15

Executive Summary

In early 2024, Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita became pioneers among Kansas local governments by partnering to manage their respective allocations of opioid settlement dollars jointly. This collaboration resulted in the formation of the Wichita-Sedgwick Opioid Settlement Consortium (WS-OSC), which developed an evidence-based, community-driven Strategic Plan for substance use disorder interventions with the support of the Steadman Group.

Guided by an inclusive and collaborative approach, the WS-OSC brought together representatives from diverse sectors, including public safety, public health, human services, healthcare, education, and individuals with lived experience. From January to December 2024, the Steadman Group facilitated meetings, conducted a needs assessment, and worked with the WS-OSC to identify service gaps and develop strategies to address the opioid crisis. The resulting Strategic Plan, which guides opioid abatement efforts through 2030, emphasizes evidence-based solutions, sustainable governance, and community impact. It includes a Vision, Mission, several Guiding Principles, and four Strategies as follows:

Vision: A Sedgwick County where everyone has equitable access to coordinated and comprehensive substance use services for a healthier community.

Mission: To unite a diverse and collaborative group of community partners in addressing substance use through treatment, prevention, intervention, and harm reduction, focusing on promoting overall health and well-being in Sedgwick County.

Guiding Principles

1. Spend Money to Save Lives
2. Use Evidence to Guide Spending
3. Focus on Equity
4. Invest in Cost-Effective Interventions Along the Substance Use Continuum
5. Ensure a Fair and Transparent Funding Decision-Making Process
6. Sustainability

Strategies

1. Stigma reduction, education, and community outreach
2. Integrated care
3. Overdose prevention
4. Treatment capacity

Each Strategy includes specific goals, evaluation metrics, and potential activities. The Strategic Plan also includes recommendations for implementation, governance options, communications, evaluation, and a list of partners.

The Strategic Plan provides a clear roadmap to address the opioid epidemic. It ensures transparent decision-making, community engagement throughout its execution, and a focus on continuous evaluation and adaptation to maximize impact.

Acknowledgments

We are profoundly grateful to all WS-OSC members for their support in developing this Strategic Plan. Their dedication, subject matter expertise, and lived experiences were instrumental in shaping a roadmap that reflects a shared vision and goals amongst your community. None of this would have been possible without their time, dedication, wisdom, and outstanding

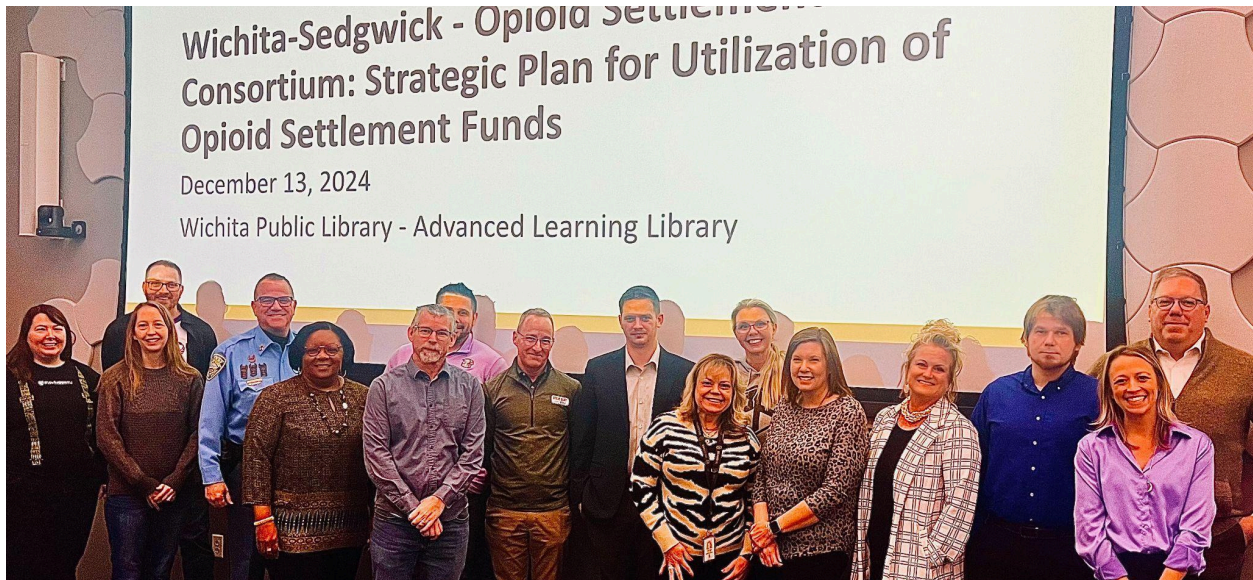
contributions. We also greatly appreciate the thoughtful and insightful guidance of the Steering Committee: Sheriff Jeff Easter, Donte Martin, and Denise Peters.

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Background

Wichita and Sedgwick County face significant behavioral health challenges, including high suspected overdose rates and massive socio-economic barriers to care. In 2023, Sedgwick County reported 3.68 suspected overdose emergency department visits per capita—one of the highest rates in Kansas. Shockingly, 58.7% of the 1,146 emergency department visits involved uninsured individuals, underscoring a critical gap in access to behavioral health services in the community. Opioid overdose fatalities in 2021 were 17.9 per 100,000, nearly double the state average of 9.1.

Furthermore, overdose incidents often intersect with mental health challenges; 57.1% of emergency department visits for females aged 15-19 included mental health concerns like suicidal ideation, highlighting a need for integrated care approaches. Initiatives like the Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) have been implemented to combat these issues, with Sedgwick County adopting data-driven tools like the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) and naloxone distribution programs.

These efforts use geospatial and socioeconomic data to target areas with high overdose risk, support evidence-based interventions, and promote collaboration between public health and public safety sectors. Despite these strides, Sedgwick County and Wichita continue to face a myriad of behavioral health challenges fueled in part by the opioid epidemic.

Kansas, along with numerous other states, has settled lawsuits with entities involved in the production, distribution, and marketing of prescription opioids to address their role in the opioid epidemic. In 2021, Kansas and 205 local governments joined these settlements and enacted the Kansas Fights Addiction Act (KFA) to direct settlement funds toward combating the opioid crisis. The KFA mandates that 75% of settlement funds go to the Kansas Fights Addiction Fund (KFAF) and 25% to the Municipalities Fight Addiction Fund (MFAF).

In early 2024, Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita partnered to tackle the opioid crisis, becoming among the first Kansas local governments to jointly manage settlement funds by combining their MFAF allocations. They hired the Steadman Group to create a Strategic Plan focused on evidence-based, community-driven solutions for substance use disorders. To drive this process and ensure locally tailored, effective approaches to settlement spending, the Wichita-Sedgwick Opioid Settlement Consortium (WS-OSC) was formed. The WS-OSC Strategic Plan, guiding opioid abatement efforts through 2030, is summarized in this report and detailed in a Microsoft Excel document available in [Appendix A](#).

Guided by the Steadman Group, the WS-OSC Consortium was formed through an inclusive process to ensure diverse community representation and effective planning. Consortium members included representatives from the sheriff's office, healthcare and substance use providers, behavioral health organizations, educators, nonprofits, and individuals with lived experience of substance use disorders and behavioral health challenges. The WS-OSC developed and refined every aspect of the plan.

From January to December 2024, the Steadman Group facilitated WS-OSC meetings to foster collaboration, gather input, and guide the Strategic Plan. A needs assessment in quarter one of 2024 identified service gaps and opportunities, combining secondary data analysis with community insights to provide a holistic view of the opioid crisis in Sedgwick County and Wichita. Based on the assessment findings, the Steadman Group led stakeholders in prioritizing strategies and goals, aligning on effective, impactful approaches to address substance use disorders.

Together, the group developed the Strategic Plan's Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Strategies, and Goals to ensure they were evidence-based, community-focused, and sustainable. To support the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Steadman Group developed supporting deliverables, including governance options, allocation estimates, and an implementation plan, including communications and evaluation. The Consortium reviewed, improved, and ultimately endorsed all of these. The Strategic Plan and information on each additional deliverable are outlined below.

Needs Assessment Findings Summary

The Analysis of the Behavioral Health Landscape: Wichita-Sedgwick, also known as the Needs Assessment Report ([Appendix B](#)), was commissioned by the WS-OSC and prepared by The Steadman Group. The report analyzes Sedgwick County's SUD/OD landscape to guide settlement fund allocation. It combines qualitative data from over twenty interviews and focus groups with relevant populations with quantitative insights from regional and national databases to identify gaps, barriers, and strengths in addressing local substance use and behavioral health issues.

Needs Assessment Key Findings

- 1. Community Challenges:** Sedgwick County experiences higher-than-average opioid-related overdose rates, compounded by disparities in access to healthcare and behavioral health services. Vulnerable populations, including the uninsured, Hispanic/Latino communities, and youth, are particularly affected. Social determinants such as transportation, housing, and poverty further exacerbate these challenges.
- 2. Resource Gaps:** The assessment reveals a limited availability of treatment beds, medical detox options, and harm reduction services in Sedgwick County. Workforce shortages and stigma surrounding substance use disorder (SUD) patients further hinder service provision. The report also highlights a lack of sufficient support for individuals transitioning between care levels, particularly for youth and residents of rural communities.
- 3. System Strengths:** Recovery groups and providers are promisingly collaborating in the community. Programs like Oxford House and Integrated Care Teams effectively support recovery in the community.

The Needs Assessment recommended a comprehensive, collaborative, and evidence-based approach to maximizing the impact of settlement funds. This approach would focus on community education, overdose prevention, workforce development, behavioral health services access, sustainable funding, and data collection and accountability.

The Needs Assessment is a foundational tool for the WS-OSC, guiding strategic initiatives to combat the opioid crisis and improve health outcomes for Sedgwick County and Wichita residents. Based on the findings, the WS-OSC developed an evidence-based plan for allocating settlement funds to set a statewide standard for collaborative, community-driven crisis response.

Strategic Plan Structure Summary

The Strategic Plan structure was designed to be simple, with clear logic and action steps. The following describes the structural components.

- **Vision:** The Vision statement addresses why we are doing this work and spending this money and our aspirations for a better future related to opioid use and substance use disorder. The statement acknowledges that we are not alone in trying to achieve this vision and was crafted to be brief, memorable, jargon-free, and acronym-free.
 - **Mission:** The Mission statement describes what Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita will do to achieve the Vision and the intended impact.
 - **Guiding Principles:** These principles outline the fundamental philosophy that will guide Strategic Plan decision-making, with suggested guardrails on what we will do and not do
 - **Strategies:** These broad work areas provide an organizational framework for long-term decision-making and prioritizing Goals and Activities. They

are designed to be enduring and adaptable, giving direction throughout the Strategic Plan's life.

- **Goals and Goal Metrics:** Describe what success looks like for each Strategy. Focus on the desired outcome(s) or impact, not the specific actions. Potential Goal Metrics are suggested measures for each identified Goal. These recommended baseline Metrics will likely change based on the programs that receive funding and the corresponding metrics deemed appropriate for each program.
 - **Activities are** projects, programs, or tasks in the Strategic Plan that could be funded. They are baseline suggested actions. Implementing agencies will specify in their proposals what activities are needed to meet each Goal.
- **Implementing Recommendations**
 - **Allocation Estimates:** A framework for distributing funds to prioritized Strategies
 - **Implementation Plan:** Steps to implement the Strategic Plan
 - **Governance Options:** Suggestions for governing Strategic Plan implementation
 - **Evaluation:** Performance-based data collection, monitoring, and reporting on the Strategic Plan and funded projects
 - **Communications:** Advocacy, promotion, and education for a range of target audiences
 - **Partners List:** A list of the stakeholders that may support the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including those that could provide expertise and supplemental funding.

Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Strategies and Goals

Consortium members collaboratively developed the Strategic Plan's Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles, prioritized Strategies and Goals, and implementation recommendations. These are detailed in Sections (or Tabs) in the spreadsheet in Appendix A and summarized below:

Vision: A Sedgwick County where everyone has equitable access to coordinated and comprehensive substance use services for a healthier community.

Mission: To unite a diverse and collaborative group of community partners in addressing substance use through treatment, prevention, intervention, and harm reduction with a focus on promoting overall health and well-being in Sedgwick County.

Guiding Principles: Guiding principles are fundamental guidelines that provide a framework for decision-making, maximize the impact of opioid settlement funds, ensure long-term focus, and help identify what will not be funded or pursued.

1. **Spend Money to Save Lives:** Prioritize opioid settlement funds for programs and services that directly reduce overdose deaths and strengthen the continuum of care, ensuring resources supplement—not replace—existing efforts.
2. **Use Evidence to Guide Spending:** Commit to funding strategies rooted in proven evidence while embracing innovative, community-driven solutions tailored to the unique needs of the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County.
3. **Focus on Equity:** Direct resources to address disparities in access to care and outcomes, ensuring that communities historically underserved receive the support needed to achieve health equity.

4. **Invest in Cost-Effective Interventions Along the Substance Use Continuum:** Target investments toward effective prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives that deliver meaningful impact across the entire spectrum of substance use care.
5. **Ensure a Fair and Transparent Funding Decision-Making Process:** Establish a transparent and inclusive process actively involving public health leaders, community members, and individuals with lived experience in guiding funding decisions.
6. **Sustainability:** Design long-term strategies that integrate settlement investments into existing infrastructure, ensuring programs remain effective and impactful well into the future.

Strategies and Goals: In pursuit of this Vision and to carry out the Mission following the Guiding Principles, WS-OSC will focus on the following Strategies and Goals (Goals are prioritized and listed based on impact, feasibility, and chronology (order of business), as determined by WS-OSC).

Strategy 1—Stigma Reduction, Community Outreach, and Education: Invest in programs that increase awareness and reduce stigma through community outreach and education. These programs should be multifaceted, culturally sensitive, inclusive, and evidence-based.

- **Goal 1 -Community Stigma Reduction:** Allocate funding for stigma reduction efforts and awareness campaigns aimed at reducing misconceptions about substance use disorders and promoting empathy and understanding for the community at large.
- **Goal 2—High-Impact Stigma Reduction:** Prioritize culturally sensitive, inclusive, and evidence-based initiatives that target high-impact demographic groups (e.g., educators, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and policymakers) to increase awareness, destigmatize substance use, and advocate for evidence-based approaches to treatment and support.
- **Goal 3 - Community Outreach and Education:** Develop comprehensive community outreach and education programs aimed at raising awareness about the risks of substance misuse and providing information on available resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Strategy 2—Integrated Care: Establish sustainable integrated care that fosters collaboration across the healthcare continuum to address individuals' complex needs.

- **Goal 1: Enhanced Access to Behavioral Health Services and Recovery Housing for Underserved Populations:** Allocate funding to expand access to behavioral health services, including SUD treatment, mental health support, and recovery housing, mainly targeting underserved populations in Sedgwick County.
- **Goal 2: Workforce Support:** Increase and better support the provider workforce along the behavioral health continuum of care (clinicians, healthcare workers, first responders, etc.) through evidence-based recruitment and retention strategies, training, and educational opportunities that expand knowledge and reduce burnout.
- **Goal 3: Partnerships:** Develop transparent, collaborative partnerships between community organizations to improve communication and service delivery for those needing care.
- **Goal 4: Sustainable Funding:** Develop a pathway for sustainable funding for integrated care in our community.

Strategy 3—Overdose Prevention Initiatives: Invest in culturally responsive prevention and harm reduction services to diminish substance use risk and overdose incidence, and increase community and youth resilience.

- **Goal 1: Improve Youth Resilience Programs:** Expand prevention programs focused on youth at higher risk for substance use to provide culturally responsive substance use

education and resilience-building workshops to increase knowledge about substance use risk and protective factors among youth in our community.

- **Goal 2: Reduce the Number of Overdose Incidents:** Initiate a naloxone distribution program where participating first responders are equipped with overdose prevention kits for leave behind focus to prevent future overdose incidents.
- **Goal 3: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT):** Increase the use of SBIRT in medical and community settings.
- **Goal 4: Re-entry Supports:** Support re-entry and recovery/treatment maintenance programming through the use of Community Health Workers, peer navigators, or other similar roles.

Strategy 4—Expansion of Treatment Capacity: Establish financially sustainable comprehensive treatment services, ensuring all levels of care are accessible and equitable in our community.

- **Goal 1: Medical Detox:** Establish and maintain sufficient medical detox resources that are accessible to uninsured or underinsured individuals.
- **Goal 2: MAT/MOUD Resources:** Establish and sustain easily accessible MAT/MOUD resources.
- **Goal 3: Diversion:** Expand diversion in jails and judicial processes (including non-substance-related charges) into treatment and recovery services, through sentencing grid expansion.
- **Goal 4: Medically Assisted Treatment/Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MAT/MOUD) in Jails:** Establish MAT/MOUD induction for people with opioid use or substance use disorder within county jails.
- **Goal 5: Postvention Services:** Establish co-responder teams to provide postvention services for individuals who have experienced a non-fatal overdose and their family members or friends in the period immediately following the overdose event.

In addition to the information provided above, the Strategic Plan in Appendix A outlines suggested Goal Metrics and potential Activities to reach each Goal.

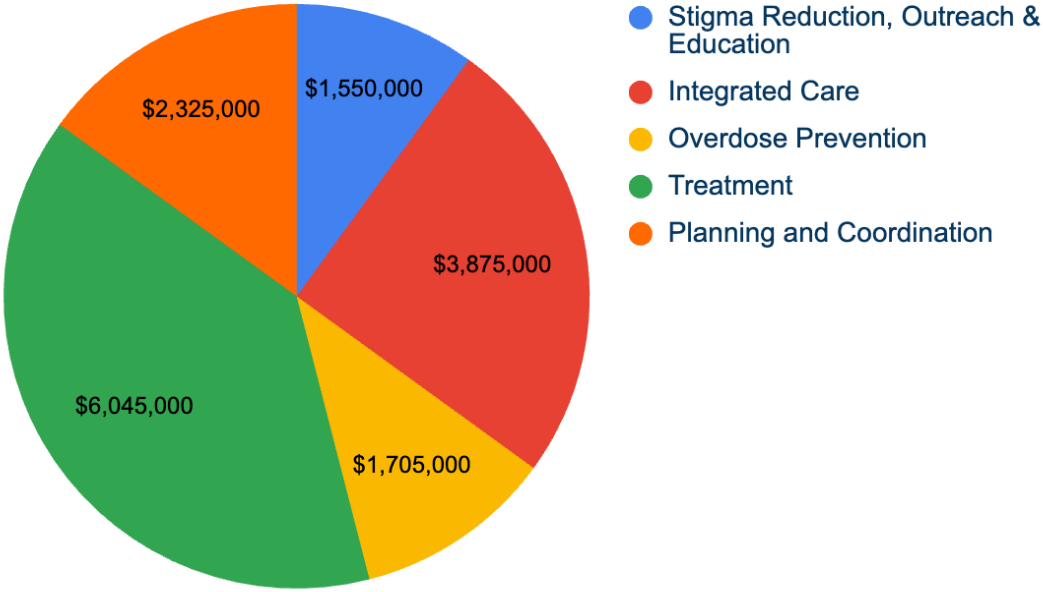
Allocation Estimates

Currently, the combined opioid settlement distribution for Sedgwick County and Wichita totals approximately \$15.5 million over the fourteen-year settlement duration. Slight increases are expected as additional litigation finalizes. As of December 2024, \$2,130,513 is immediately available for spending.

The suggested allocations (Table 1 and Graph 1) offer a framework for distributing funds to prioritized Strategies. Developed using the Steadman Group's expertise in behavioral health and local WS-OSC knowledge, these allocations may change based on the local environment and available funding. Ultimately, the implementing agencies' budgets should determine the final funding amounts allocated per Strategy/program.

Allocation Estimates		
Strategy	Dollars	Percent
Strategy 1: Stigma Reduction, Community Outreach, and Education	\$1,550,000	10%
Strategy 2: Integrated Care	\$3,875,000	25%
Strategy 3: Overdose Prevention	\$1,705,000	11%
Strategy 4: Expansion of Treatment Capacity	\$6,045,000	39%
Planning and Coordination of Strategic Plan	\$2,325,000	15%
Total	\$15,500,000	100%

Allocation Estimates



Implementation Steps

To provide the City and County with an outline for successfully implementing the Strategic Plan, the Steadman Group developed an implementation workplan detailed in [Appendix A](#). The basic phases and most crucial tasks of the workplan are outlined below. The implementation of Goals is intentionally set up to ensure all programs are funded for at least two years. This lessens the administrative burden on the City and County and typically results in better program outcomes. Safeguards should be built into the evaluation and contracting processes if Goals are not adequately achieved.

Phase One (Q1 - Q3 2025): Stand up process and infrastructure for Strategic Plan implementation

- Selection of governing structure
- Staffing and/or development of advisory body
- Meeting cadence and logistics
- Determination of evaluation process for Strategic Plan

Phase Two (Q2 2025 - Q4 2027): Implementing Goals – Round One

- Selection of Goals to fund
- Communicate opportunities and provide technical assistance (TA) and education sessions to potential applicants
- Solicitation and selection of implementing entities (method, scopes, selection process)
- Contracting with winners
- Programming begins! (Q4 2025)

Phase Three (Q4 2025 - Q4 2027): Evaluating Goals – Round One

- Ongoing evaluation updates to decision-makers
- Annual evaluation report review to determine what funding should continue (based on progress thus far)

Phase Four (Q1 2027 - Q4 2029): Implementing Goals – Round Two

- Assess available funding
- Selection of Round 2 Goals to fund
- Communicate opportunities and provide technical assistance (TA) and education sessions to potential applicants
- Solicitation and selection of implementing entities (method, scopes, selection process)
- Contracting with winners
- Round 2 programming begins! (Q4 2027)

Phase Five (Q4 2027 - Q4 2029): Evaluating Goals – Round Two

- Ongoing evaluation updates to decision makers
- Annual evaluation report review to determine what funding should continue

Phase Six (Q1 -Q4 2030): Strategic Plan Audit

- Conduct a formal review of the Strategic Plan process. If necessary, solicit an external evaluator
- Complete public report with key findings and recommendations for next steps. Hold public forums to collect feedback on the report. Refine findings leveraging community input
- Review Strategic Plan audit findings with decision-makers to determine the next steps.
- Option for the entire process to iterate again at this point

Governance Options

The Steadman Group developed four governance options for implementing the Strategic Plan, which the WS-OSC reviewed. The options are presented below in order of WS-OSC recommended preference, based on principles including elected officials' involvement, accountability and transparency, flexibility, specialized expertise, community representation, and efficient resource use. (To see select advantages and disadvantages and example operational processes, please refer to the Governance section/tab in [Appendix A.](#))

1. **Public-Private Partnership Administrator Model:** A public-private partnership (PPP) where local government contracts with and directs a non-governmental organization to administer opioid settlement funding. The administrator would manage the Strategic Plan implementation, project/program procurement, and evaluation processes, with City and County oversight.
2. **City/County Governance with an Advisory Council:** A hybrid model where an Advisory Council (Committee or Board) consisting of community stakeholders, subject matter experts, and representatives from marginalized communities would provide recommendations to the City Council and County Commissioners. The Council and Commissioners would retain final decision-making authority.
3. **Independent Opioid Settlement Council:** A new, independent Opioid Settlement Council would be created and modeled after the Wichita Sedgwick County Community Action Partnership. This Council would have the authority to implement the Strategic Plan, including budgetary decisions, with oversight from the City and County governments.
4. **Extant City Council/County Commissioners Governance:** The City Council of Wichita and the Sedgwick County Commissioners would have full authority over all decisions regarding implementing the Strategic Plan. They would review and approve all initiatives, budgets, and programmatic decisions through existing meetings and decision-making processes.

Communications

The communications recommendations in [Appendix A](#) aim to ensure transparency, accountability, and sustained stakeholder engagement in implementing the Strategic Plan. Communications include four goals and suggested key target audiences, outcomes, channels, key themes and messaging, and timelines. The goals are as follows:

1. Mobilize broad stakeholder engagement and maintain consistent governance communications to implement the Opioid Settlement Strategic Plan effectively.
2. Establish consistent feedback loops via community forums, surveys, and advisory groups.
3. Promote transparency through public reporting mechanisms and communication channels.
4. Ensure communications align with the Strategic Plan's Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Strategies, and Goals.

Evaluation

Evaluation recommendations, detailed in [Appendix A](#), provide a guide for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Opioid Settlement Strategic Plan, and the projects and programs funded under the Plan. Evaluation may be conducted internally by the governing or implementing organization and externally through an independent, audit-type process. Evaluation recommendations include three main goals:

1. Ensure accountability and informed decision-making
2. Review, and adapt, or revise the Strategic Plan as necessary to maximize long-term goals
3. Provide a process for monitoring and reporting on Strategic Plan-funded projects and programs

Partners

The partners list in [Appendix A](#) serves as an ongoing reference for decision-makers to identify Strategic Plan stakeholders for various needs. The partners are identified by organization, sector

(e.g., government, provider, university), primary point of contact, focus areas/subject matter expertise, funding capacity, and additional areas. The partners list will be a critical resource and should be actively maintained.

Conclusion

The Wichita-Sedgwick Opioid Settlement Consortium (WS-OSC) Strategic Plan provides a clear roadmap to tackling the opioid crisis in its community and a model for Kansas. By uniting diverse stakeholders and addressing key gaps through evidence-based strategies, the plan focuses on reducing stigma, expanding treatment, preventing overdoses, and promoting integrated care.

Recommendations for phased implementation through 2030 and governance, communications, and evaluation will ensure the transparent, impactful use of opioid settlement funds for the Wichita Sedgwick County Community. Guided by a shared vision of equitable access and improved community health, Sedgwick County and Wichita lead Kansas in innovative, community-driven solutions to the opioid epidemic.

Appendices

Appendix A

[Wichita-Sedgwick - Opioid Settlement Consortium \(WS-OSC\): Strategic Plan for Utilization of Opioid Settlement Funds](#)

Appendix B

[Analysis of the Behavioral Health Landscape – Wichita and Sedgwick County \(Needs Assessment Report\)](#)