



**Ocean County
Opioid Advisory Council
Plan
2027-2029**

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Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council Overview

Ocean County elected to join the nationwide settlement agreements to resolve all opioid litigation brought by States and local governmental entities against distributors of opioid pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical manufacturers. Ocean County is eligible for a direct share and will receive direct distributions from the applicable National Opioid Litigation Resolution.

The Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council was established pursuant to the Memorandum of Agreement between the State of New Jersey and Local Governments on Opioid Litigation Recoveries dated 2022, which establishes binding terms for the distribution and spending of funds from any National Opioid Litigation Resolution that is a settlement agreement or bankruptcy plan. The Council is accountable to the Ocean County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Sam Ellenbogen serves as liaison to the Department of Human Services and the Council. The Council's role is to provide input, advice, and recommendations to the County of Ocean and participating municipalities regarding the use of these funds.

The Council is comprised of required membership representing a person with lived experience with substance use and addiction issues, expertise in substance use disorder treatment or prevention, and a provider of behavioral health or substance use disorder treatment in the community.

Individuals are also named by title to the Council, including the County Prosecutor, the County Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Director, the County Mental Health Administrator, the Chief Financial Officer of the County of Ocean, the County Administrator, and the Director of the Department of Management and Budget. Pursuant to the Bylaws of the County that were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on March 15, 2023, Council members serve a three-year term at the pleasure of the Board.

Opioid Advisory Council members

Bradley D. Billhimer, County Prosecutor

Alternate: Renee White Esq., FNP-BC, PNHNP-BC, FN-CSA

Jamie Busch, PhD., Director, Human Services

Alternate: Rosemarie Bulbach, Assistant Director, Human Services

Tara Chalakani, PsyD, LPC, RN, ACS, CEO of Preferred Behavioral Health Group

Alternate: Laura Messina, MSW, LCSW, LCADC, CCS

Moire M. DiMartini, County Appropriation of Funds Officer

Michael J. Fiure, County Administrator

Tracy Maksel, PhD, Deputy County Administrator

Kimberly Reilly, MA, LPC, County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Director

Alternate: Daniel Regenye, MHA

Kimberly Veith, MSW, MBA, LCSW, LCADC, CEO of Bright Harbor Healthcare

Alternate: Meghan Corrigan, MSW, LCSW, LCADC

Stephen Willis, Esq., Person with Lived Experience and Co-Founder of Hope Sheds Light

Alternate: Pamela Capaci, CADC

Meir Kubie, Community Member– Rising Stars

Maria LaFace, Community Member, Director Ocean County Department of Senior Services

Ocean County has been allocated funding through national opioid settlement agreements reached with pharmaceutical manufacturers, distributors, and related entities that contributed to the opioid epidemic. These settlement funds will be distributed to the County over an 18-year period, providing a sustained source of investment to address the long-term impacts of opioid misuse and substance use disorders within our communities.

The funds must be used for evidence-based services and programs that remediate the opioid epidemic. Consistent with settlement requirements and New Jersey guidelines, funding will support approved strategies focused on opioid prevention, treatment, recovery, harm reduction, and public education. The settlement agreements identify 113 approved uses, outlined in Exhibit E, that focus on treating opioid use disorder, preventing opioid misuse and drug-related deaths, and implementing other effective strategies to combat the opioid crisis.

Through careful planning and collaboration with community partners, Ocean County will invest these resources in programs and initiatives that reduce opioid-related overdoses, expand access to treatment and recovery services, support individuals and families affected by substance use disorders, and strengthen community-based prevention efforts. Ocean County is committed to ensuring these funds are used responsibly and effectively to improve public health outcomes and create lasting, positive change for residents over the coming years.

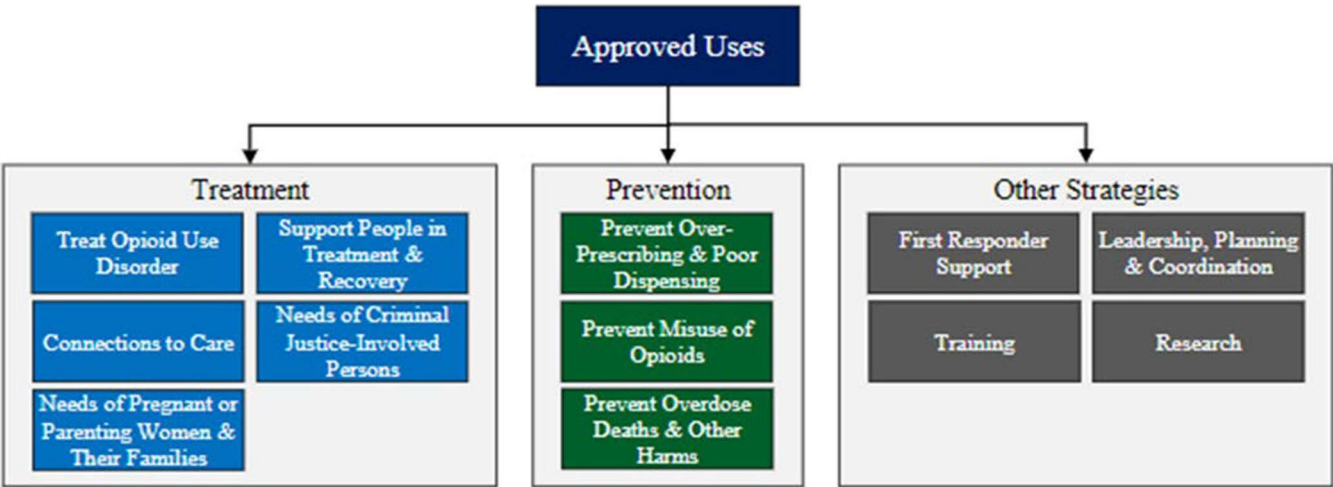
Schedule A of the exhibit lists core opioid remediation uses. Priority should be given to the following core strategies.

Opioid Settlement – Approved Uses



All Approved Uses

There are three (3) overarching approved-use categories and twelve (12) approved-use subcategories pursuant to Schedule B of the national settlements with the Settling Distributors and J&J.



Naloxone or other FDA Approved Drug to Reverse Opioid Overdoses: expand training on the use of naloxone throughout the community and increase distribution to uninsured or underinsured individuals.

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Distribution and Other Opioid-Related Treatment: provide treatment and recovery support services that allow/integrate MAT, increase MAT access for uninsured/ underinsured individuals, provide education and raise awareness of MAT among healthcare and first responders, and provide education to youth to discourage or prevent misuse.

Pregnant and Postpartum Women: expand screening for substance use disorders for pregnant women and expand comprehensive evidence-based treatment, recovery supports, and wraparound services, including MAT, for pregnant and parenting women.

Expanding Treatment for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS): expand comprehensive evidence-based treatment and recovery support for babies with NAS, long term treatment and services, and expand the continuum of care accessible to infant-need dyad.

Expansion of Warm Hand-off Programs and Recovery Services: expand navigators, on-call teams to begin MAT, warm handoff transition services, recovery services to include co-occurring disorders, and comprehensive wraparound services to individuals in recovery, as well as hire behavioral health workers to facilitate expansions.

Treatment for Incarcerated Population: provide comprehensive evidence-based treatment and recovery support, including MAT, for people within and transitioning out of the criminal justice system.

Prevention Programs: conduct media campaigns to prevent opioid use, evidence-based prevention programs, medical provider education on prescribing practices, community drug disposal programs, train first responders to participate in diversion or response programs that connect at-risk individuals with services.

Expanding Syringe Service Programs: provide comprehensive syringe service programs with more wrap-around services, including linkage to treatment, access to sterile syringes and linkage to care and treatment of infectious diseases.

Evidence-Based Data Collection and Research Analyzing the Effectiveness of the Abatement Strategies within the State

The Council shall review and make recommendations to the County Board of Commissioners pertaining to projects to be funded by any National Opioid Litigation Resolution, consistent with the current Plan and prioritized Approved Uses, in accordance with applicable contracting laws. The Council shall monitor the delivery of services and the administration of all programs under the Council's jurisdiction. The Council is required to report to the State on the use of funds in the County and participation in municipalities within it, on a fiscal year cycle (for the period of July 1 to June 30).

Pursuant to the Council Bylaws adopted by the Board of Commissioners on March 15, 2023 and amended on April 16, 2025, the Council will engage in a community needs assessment and planning process on a three-year basis. The Council may initiate plan updates to respond to environmental changes, significant events, and other circumstances in the interim. Each planning process will incorporate opportunities for public feedback.

Executive Summary

The Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council (OCOAC) is a county-based planning, advisory and coordinating council dedicated to helping the community by providing input, advice, and recommendations to the County of Ocean and participating municipalities regarding the use of national opioid settlement funds. Staff of the Ocean County Department of Human Services (OCDHS) and the Ocean County Department of Management and Budget provide oversight to the Council, which consists of nine members and five alternate members serving three-year terms. Appointment to the OCOAC is regulated through the national opioid settlement which requires members to be appointed by title of County Prosecutor, County Mental Health Administrator, County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Director, County Appropriation of Funds Officer, County Administrator or Deputy Administrator, person with lived experience with substance use and addiction issues, expertise in substance use disorder treatment or prevention, and a provider of behavioral health or substance use disorder treatment in the community.

It is the intention of the OCOAC to facilitate and enhance the delivery of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), and subsequently Substance Use Disorder, services through collaborative relationships in the community and between local, county, state and federal agencies. The OCOAC seeks to utilize these relationships to identify high priority needs and improve access for target populations through its planning, coordinating, enhancing and implementation of initiatives at the county level. Ocean County's functional network of agencies and organizations are dedicated to delivering strong programs and services to the community and its most vulnerable residents. For 2023, Ocean County had 168 suspected overdose deaths and 677 suspected Naloxone administrations. The high rates of opioid use in Ocean County continue to significantly affect individuals with substance use disorder, families, friends, businesses, and Ocean County as a whole.

This is the second planning cycle of the Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council Plan, building upon the 2023–2026 Plan. The 2023 plan was approved by the Ocean County Board of Commissioners on August 2, 2023, and was developed to document local needs and gain a better understanding of the community's perception of available services within the County. The intended goal of those findings was to inform action steps for the appropriate use of national opioid settlement funds, reduce identified barriers, and enhance existing programs and services. On June 19, 2024, the Board of Commissioners approved an addendum to the plan following the Opioid Advisory Council's review and adoption on May 30, 2024. `

The 2027–2030 Plan continues this work by further assessing community needs and perceptions of services, building on the strengths of existing programming, and addressing identified gaps to strengthen the overall system of care. This planning cycle continues the commitment to improving access, coordination, and effectiveness of services for individuals and families impacted by substance use disorder.

Priorities for funding identified by the Council are:

1. Public Awareness and Education:
 - Opioid Prevention Consultation and Mitigation
 - Targeted Outreach and Engagement
 - Innovative Substance Use Programming
2. Care Management and Comprehensive Wraparound Services for Individuals with Substance Use Disorder and their Families
 - Housing Navigation and Linkage
 - Transportation Assistance
3. Preventing Substance Use and Early Intervention
4. Workforce Development
5. Evidence Based Treatment for the Incarcerated Population: Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)

All five areas reflect the core abatement strategies listed in Schedule A.

The recommendations contained in this Plan are based on a comprehensive planning process that included a countywide Community Needs Assessment, five public information forums, and a review of program outcomes. Input was received from individuals with lived experience, community members, service providers, and other stakeholders to ensure that funding priorities reflect local needs and evidence-informed practices.

The planning process identified priorities for sustaining successful initiatives while addressing emerging gaps in the continuum of care. These priorities include prevention and public education, outreach and engagement, comprehensive care management, housing and transportation supports, workforce development, and evidence-based treatment, including Medication-Assisted Treatment within the Ocean County Jail.



In addition to funding recommendations, the Opioid Advisory Council identified several operational improvements to strengthen the administration of settlement funds. These include promoting grant-writing resources, expanding Council representation, developing a standardized public submission process, and increasing collaboration with municipalities and county partners to improve coordination, transparency, and community engagement.

As the needs of Ocean County continue to change, the financial recommendations in this three-year plan may differ from those included in the previous plan. These recommendations are intended to reflect current community needs, emerging trends, available funding, and opportunities to support the most effective prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction efforts. The 2027-2030 planning cycle reaffirms the County's commitment to using opioid settlement funds strategically and transparently to support sustainable, community-informed initiatives that improve health outcomes, strengthen the system of care, and advance long-term recovery and wellness.

Methodology

A wealth of information, data, and feedback were gathered in the development of this Plan. A comprehensive community needs assessment was undertaken to identify needed services and target groups, existing services and service availability, and priorities for resource development and funding.

Needs Assessment Survey

An online needs assessment survey was developed to gather broad input on the importance of the Approved Uses of settlement funds to residents of Ocean County. Survey respondents were prompted to anonymously rate each category of Approved Uses and individual Approved Uses with respect to their opinion of its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County. Importance refers to the need for funding in Ocean County.

The list of uses was moderately abbreviated for clarity and focused on County and local level strategies.

Respondents were asked to identify their municipality of residence and the interest group(s) they represent, including, but not limited to, consumer/peer/person with opioid use disorder, family member, service provider, education, faith-based organization, law enforcement, and/or government. This information was used to describe the sample who participated in the survey and evaluate the breadth of representation. To keep the survey brief, no other demographic information was collected.

A total of 58 survey responses were received from February 16 through March 15, 2026. A report on the results, highlighting the highest-rated uses based on a weighted average, was shared with the Council in preparation for its executive planning sessions.

Public Forums

A series of forums were held to facilitate public participation in the planning process. A session was held virtually on Wednesday, March 11 at 5:00pm. An in-person session was held on Thursday, March 12 at 2:00pm in the Southern Service Center in Manahawkin. On Friday, March 13 at 2:00pm an in-person session was held at the Toms River branch of the Ocean County Library. Additional forums included an in-person session for Professionals held on March 13 at 11am in the Ocean County Library, Toms River Branch and a virtual session for law enforcement stakeholders on March 24 at 2:00pm.

Each session began with a brief overview of the settlement, the Council, and the purpose of the forum provided by the County's operations team, which staffs the Council. All attendees were given the opportunity to speak. Attendees were also invited to complete the survey and submit written testimony.

A report and thematic analysis of feedback gathered from the public forums were shared with the Council in preparation for its executive planning session.

Written Testimony

Written testimony from the public was invited, along with announcements about the survey and public forums. A dedicated email address was created to receive the feedback: OCOAC@co.ocean.nj.us. No written testimony was received.

Data Analysis

To inform the Council's decision-making process, key data and trends related to substance use were reviewed, including opioid use disorder treatment access, overdose and drug-related deaths, drug-related arrests, and incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome.

These data were analyzed alongside identified service gaps, community needs, and recommendations from related assessments and reports, including the Comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services Plan and the Opioid Fatality Review Team Annual Report. Findings were cross-referenced with approved uses of opioid settlement funds, community needs assessment results, and stakeholder feedback to identify priority areas and funding opportunities.

Additional information is provided in the Community Data and Trends section.

Opioid Advisory Council Executive Planning Session

The members of the Opioid Advisory Council convened for executive planning sessions on March 23, 2023, and April 27, 2023. A summary of the feedback received at the public forums, written testimony, and survey results were provided to Council members in advance of the executive planning sessions. During these planning sessions, the Council reaffirmed the continued need to invest in opioid prevention, consultation and mitigation strategies, care management and comprehensive wraparound services, substance use prevention and early intervention initiatives, innovative substance use programming and targeted outreach and engagement efforts. The Council also emphasized the importance of investing in workforce development. During the June 25, 2026 Executive Session, members identified additional community needs, including grant writing support for smaller agencies and expanded services for older adults. Key priorities included expanding medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in the county jail, addressing the growing demand for prevention, treatment, recovery, and family support services, and improving access to housing and transportation supports to strengthen recovery services across Ocean County. An additional planning session was held on July 14, 2026 to finalize priorities and make funding recommendations. The plan was endorsed by the Executive committee



on July 30, 2026, pending review and consideration of public comments.

Public Comment Period on the Plan- A draft of the plan was posted for public comment. The public comment period closed with no comments submitted for consideration.

Adoption by the Board of Commissioners – The Plan herein was adopted by the Board of Commissioners at its meeting of **TO BE DETERMINED**.

Ocean County Data and Trends

“Ocean County is located within the Atlantic Coastal Plain of central New Jersey. In terms of size, the County is the second largest in the State and one of four New Jersey counties that border the Atlantic Ocean. Toms River Township, formerly Dover Township, serves as the County Seat and is centrally located within Ocean County. The County is near two of the Nation's largest metropolitan centers, New York City, approximately 60 miles to the north and Philadelphia, roughly 50 miles to the west. In addition, Atlantic City is located approximately 50 miles to the south of the County Seat. These metropolitan areas are easily accessible to Ocean County via several major highways.” ¹

Ocean County has 33 municipalities ranging in size from less than one square mile (Seaside Heights Borough) to over 100 square miles (Jackson Township). Lakewood, Toms River, and Brick Townships are the largest municipalities by population. Ocean County has an extensive stretch of shoreline along the Atlantic Ocean and several beaches that are frequented by tourists and locals each year.

Ocean County households earn an estimated median income of approximately \$89,863, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2020–2024 American Community Survey estimates. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is approximately \$398,400. Compared to statewide averages, Ocean County continues to rank below the New Jersey median household income, even as housing values have increased significantly. The highest median property values for owner-occupied housing units remain concentrated in Mantoloking Borough, while some of the lower housing values are found in municipalities such as Manchester Township.

Ocean County continues to experience steady population growth. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the County's estimated population reached 666,434 residents in 2024, increasing from 637,229 residents recorded in the 2020 Census. Since 2010, Ocean County has remained among the fastest-growing counties in New Jersey, with substantial population gains occurring in municipalities including Lakewood, Toms River, Brick, Jackson, and Stafford.

Special Populations

Seniors. Ocean County is known for its large number of retirement communities; nearly 100 in all. As of the most recent census, almost 155,000 residents are aged 65 or older, representing 23.3% of the County's population. This is significantly higher than both the New Jersey and national averages.

Children and Youth. The US Census estimates that 24.9% of Ocean County's population is children under 18. This is higher than New Jersey at 21.9%. The youth population in Ocean County will continue to grow in the coming years, as 6.5% of the total population is under five years of age, exceeding the statewide average in NJ. Children in Ocean County are more likely to live in poverty than those across the state (16.8% versus 14.5%). Poverty rates remain particularly elevated among children under age five.

Veterans. According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates (2020–2024), approximately 29,973 veterans reside in Ocean County, making it home to one of the largest veteran populations in New Jersey. Although the total number of veterans has declined over the past decade, largely due to the aging veteran population, Ocean County continues to have one of the highest concentrations of veterans in the state. Consistent with previous trends, many Ocean County veterans are older adults and seniors, reflecting the County's substantial retirement and senior population

Consistent with previous trends, many Ocean County veterans are older adults and seniors, reflecting the County's substantial retirement and senior population. Ocean County's large veteran community continues to contribute significantly to the County's demographic and service needs.

Low Income. 10% of Ocean County's population lives in poverty, comparable to the proportion in New Jersey as a whole. The median household income and per capita income are each about 15% lower than the statewide average.

Substance Use and Opioid Use Disorders

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH 2024), 16.8% of people aged 12 or older exhibited a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year. This estimate is based on a nationwide sample in 2024. Young adults are most frequently impacted by SUD; 25.6% of adults 18-25 years. Based on this estimate, more than 100,000 residents of Ocean County may be experiencing an SUD. SUDs are considered brain disorders, as the use of drugs leads to long-lasting changes in the structure and function of the brain.

Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) is described as problematic and recurrent use of opioids that leads to problems fulfilling obligations at work, school, or home and other distress such as tolerance, unsuccessful efforts to control or reduce use, continued use in physically hazardous situations and despite social, physical, or psychological problems caused by use. Opioids include the illegal drug heroin, as well as prescription opioid analgesics, which are a class of medications such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, and methadone used to treat both acute and chronic pain. There is a higher risk of substance dependence for opioids. Opioids can lead to physical dependence within as little as four to eight weeks of use. Abruptly stopping after a period of chronic opioid use leads to withdrawal symptoms that can last several days: generalized pain, chills, cramps, restlessness, anxiety, intense cravings, among others.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explains that the opioid epidemic has had three distinct waves, starting in the 1990s when there was a marked increase in prescribing of opioids. In 2010, increases in drug-related deaths involving heroin were recorded. Around 2013, a 39% increase in overdose deaths was seen across the US, many involving synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. From 1999 to 2013, the rate of drug poisoning deaths involving opioids nearly quadrupled.

According to the 2024 NSDUH, approximately 1.7% of Americans age 12 and older, about 4.8 million people, had an opioid use disorder in the past year. Applying this estimated rate to Ocean County suggests that roughly 11,000 residents may be living with OUD.

Access to Treatment

American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) defines levels of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment on a continuum, ranging from lowest to highest intensity. A directory of treatment providers is included in this plan [Continuum of Care, page 43]. Access to treatment is an ongoing concern in the behavioral health field. This is partly due to coverage (e.g., individuals having adequate health insurance and financial resources to pay for treatment) and availability (e.g., an adequate number of qualified providers at all levels who accept coverage).

Residents can access SUD treatment in a variety of ways: direct outreach to a provider, inquiry through a health insurer, or utilizing one of many access and referral sources. Statewide, the Interim Managing Entity will provide phone-based screening and linkage to treatment.

In Ocean County, 68% of the population has private insurance. The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) of 2008 requires health insurers to provide the same level of benefits for mental and/or substance use treatment and services that they do for medical/surgical care. Individuals with private insurance should be able to access treatment through practitioners and provider agencies within their plan's network. Private insurance plans vary widely in the specific benefits and services covered, costs (premiums, deductibles, and copays), and provider networks.

In 2021, it was estimated that 4.2% of Ocean residents were uninsured. To service individuals who were uninsured and low-income, Alcohol Education, Rehabilitation and Enforcement Fund (AEREF) and other State discretionary funds for treatment were administered by the Ocean County Health Department. A range of clinical and recovery support services were contracted by the OCHD, driven by a triennial Comprehensive Plan and community needs assessment.

The State Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services also funds a network of licensed SUD treatment providers through fee-for-service funding initiatives for special populations, including recipients of WFNJ and individuals charged with driving under the influence or on parole. Ocean County adolescents aged 13-18 may be eligible for treatment funding through the South Jersey Initiative (SJI).

Medicaid is the single largest payer for SUD treatment nationwide. New Jersey expanded Medicaid eligibility in accordance with the Affordable Care Act (ACA) starting in 2014. In addition to the aged, blind, and disabled, the following groups are eligible for Medicaid:

- Adults under age 65 a part of households with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty line (FPL)
- Children with household incomes up to 350% of FPL. In 2023, eligibility is regardless of immigration status.
- Pregnant women with incomes up to 200% of FPL. Coverage continues for 12 months after the baby is born.

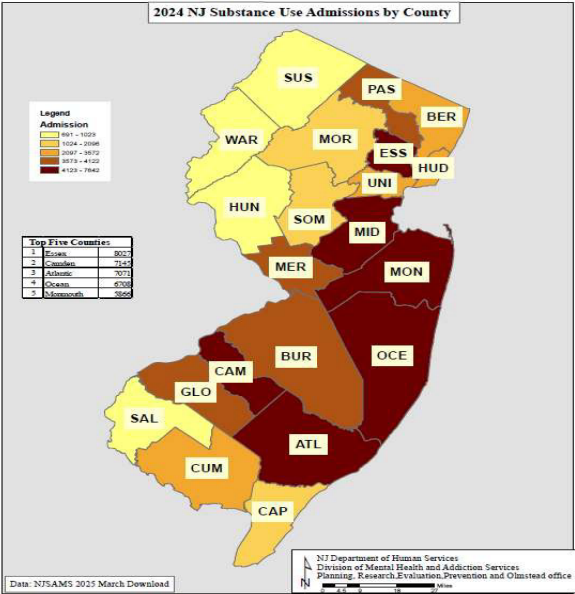
In Ocean County, approximately 20% of the population receives Medicaid coverage. Starting in 2018, New Jersey Medicaid plans cover a full continuum of SUD treatment, including long-term residential. Trained behavioral health providers can establish presumptive Medicaid eligibility for individuals seeking care who are otherwise uninsured.

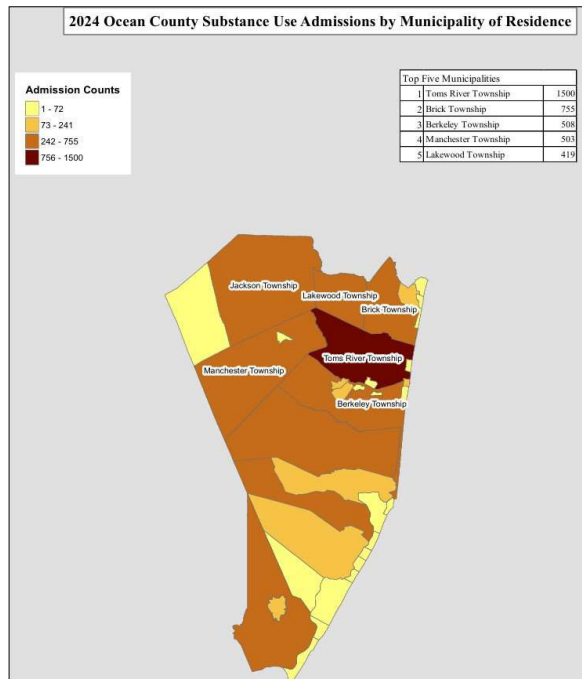
Publicly funded treatment providers are required to enter de-identified information about individuals receiving care in NJSAMS. The NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) makes county-level statistical reports based on this data available. While it reflects only a segment of individuals seeking treatment and providers, it provides important insight into trends and needs in Ocean County.

In 2021, there were 6,915 admissions to publicly funded substance use treatment by 3, 815 unique residents of Ocean County. The table on the next page shows demographic data for the admissions from Ocean County residents. Ocean County represents about 8% of treatment utilization statewide; an elevated rate in relation to the County’s proportion of the population (6.7%). As of 2024, Ocean continues to rank 4th among counties for treatment admissions (see map).

Historically, there has been an average of 7,200 admissions to care by Ocean County residents each year. There was a 20% decrease in treatment utilization in 2020, sustained into 2021, statewide as well as locally; negatively correlated with a rise in overdose deaths.

Sex		
Male	4,294	66%
Female	2,236	34%
Age		
Under 18	8	0%
18-21	106	2%
22-24	178	3%
25-29	704	11%
30-34	1,175	18%
35-44	2,226	34%
45-54	1,143	17%
55 and over	1,005	15%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	5,541	85%
Black	427	7%
Hispanic	534	8%
Other	43	1%





The chart to the left reflects the number of Ocean County substance use admissions by municipality of residence in 2024.

Drug Related Deaths

Opioid use disorder (OUD) is of particular importance due to the heightened risk of overdose and death associated with use of opioids. Opioids were found in almost 75% of all drug-related deaths in 2020 nationwide, according to the CDC.

The impact of the overdose epidemic in Ocean County is a true public health issue. Compared to other counties in New Jersey, an unprecedented number of overdose deaths were reported in Ocean County beginning in 2016. The number of drug-related deaths had been slowly declining, attributed to public focus on the issue and availability of naloxone to police, first responders, and the public. As seen nationwide, overdoses increased again in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, isolation, anxiety, stress, and decreased access to natural and clinical supports. In 2022, there were 186 suspected overdose deaths in Ocean County as well as 748 reported administrations of naloxone. More than 300,000 prescriptions of opioids

were dispensed that year, heightening the risk of misuse. In 2023, Ocean County recorded 168 suspected overdose deaths and 677 suspected Narcan administrations. Ocean County averages 5-6 fatal or non-fatal overdoses per day based on data from the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program. (ODMAP)

According to the NJ Department of Health, the total annual overdose deaths in Ocean County in the year 2024 were 144 with all substances and 111 opioids. Despite gradual improvements in overdose mortality, opioid related harm continues to be a critical concern that requires sustained investment in prevention, treatment, and harm reduction.

Correlations and Risk Factors

The underlying causes of substance use disorders (SUD) are varied and complex. Risk factors are circumstances among youth that are associated with an increased likelihood of later SUD. The presence of a risk factor doesn't mean that a particular young person will develop an SUD, and there may be individuals with SUD who have few or no risk factors.

Some risk factors include:

Availability of drugs and alcohol	Risk-taking and impulsivity	Adverse childhood experiences
Community poverty	Early antisocial or aggressive behavior	Friends who use drugs/alcohol
Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization	Poor social skills	Early first use
Discrimination	Chronic pain or physical illness	Lack of parental supervision
Genetic predisposition	Positive attitude toward substance use	Transitions and mobility; moving homes and changing schools often
	Academic failure or difficulty at school	Family conflict

Untreated psychiatric disorders are considered a risk factor for developing an SUD, along with many other genetic and environmental factors. In the 2023 NSDUH survey, approximately one-third of adults with SUD also experience a mental illness. A smaller cohort of about 1 in 10 experience a co-occurring serious mental illness. Of the Ocean County residents receiving publicly funded treatment in 2021, 66% were identified as experiencing a co-occurring mental illness. Based on the national estimates, there may be 12,000 adults in Ocean County living with co-occurring substance use and serious mental health disorders.

Estimates of trauma exposure among individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) are particularly high, ranging from 50 to 90% depending on the source. The self-medication hypothesis of substance use proposes that people use drugs/alcohol and develop substance use problems in an attempt to manage distress associated with the effects of trauma exposure and traumatic stress symptoms. Some research suggests that opioids may be the preferred type of drug used by individuals with histories of childhood trauma because opioids have the potential to numb both physical and psychological pain. In turn, traumatic stress may make it more difficult for individuals to stop using, as exposure to reminders of the traumatic event has been shown to increase drug cravings in people with co-occurring trauma and substance abuse. On the other hand, substance use is also a risk factor for trauma, where using drugs and alcohol is commonly correlated with risky behaviors such as hitchhiking, walking in unsafe neighborhoods, experiencing trauma, and witnessing violence.

A recent CDC study showed that the odds of opioid misuse increased as the number of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) increased. Students experiencing five or more ACEs were 15 times more likely to report opioid misuse than those experiencing no ACEs. Losing a loved one to overdose or suicide during childhood can increase the risk of overdose or suicide. Experiencing trauma before age 18 is associated with increased odds of opioid misuse; the odds of opioid misuse are approximately three times higher among adults with four or more different experiences of trauma.

The Ocean County Overdose Fatality Review program has been in place since 2018, bringing together a multidisciplinary group to analyze the circumstances around drug-related deaths to inform planning and resource development. The goal is to identify programmatic fissures in public systems and social services that, if strengthened, could prevent future deaths. Between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2025, a total of 258 overdose cases have been reviewed. The Ocean County program was recognized as a

model practice by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) in 2019 and serves as a technical advisor to other counties.

Common circumstances include:

- 81% of overdoses happened at home
- 76% had a known criminal history; one quarter were convicted of driving under the influence
- 67% had been linked to substance use treatment at some point
- 56% had been diagnosed or linked to mental health treatment
- 48% were reported to have fair or poor health
- 57% were employed, and 36% did not graduate from high school
- Trauma was identified in 27% of cases. These findings further evidence the need for connections to treatment, both SUD and mental health, and the importance of collaboration with justice system and healthcare partners. The low instance of trauma underscores a gap in screening for and reporting traumatic experiences.

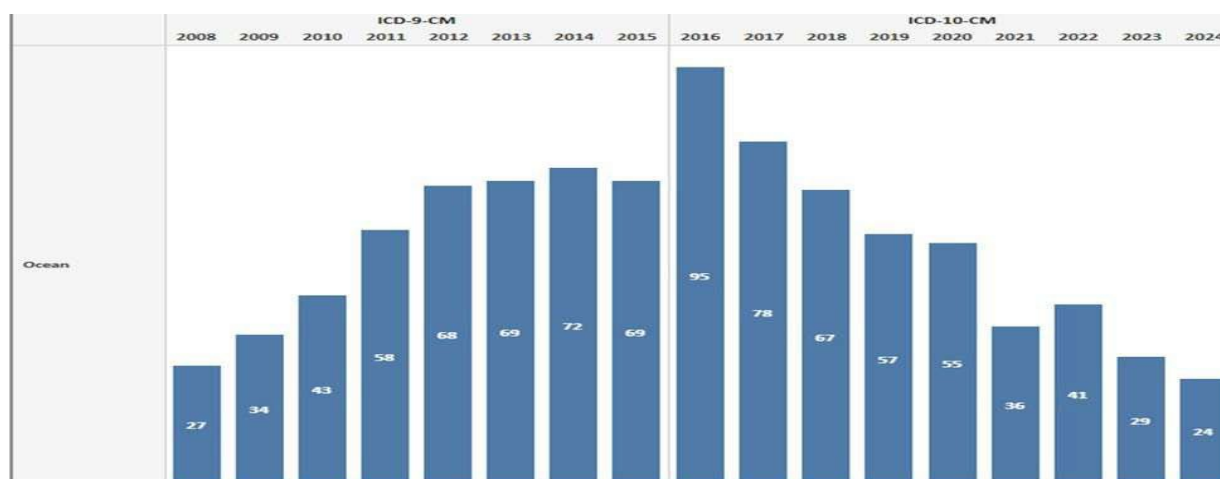
Pregnant and Parenting Women and Their Families

Among the 25 core abatement strategies that participating areas are encouraged to prioritize under the Settlement Agreement, several address the needs of pregnant and parenting women with opioid use disorder and co-occurring substance use or mental health conditions, as well as the needs of their families, including infants affected by Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). These strategies are identified in Schedule A of Exhibit E. The State funds two initiatives for this population:

- The *Pregnant Women/Women With Dependent Children* Initiative provides a network of specialized substance abuse treatment services, including methadone maintenance, residential, halfway house, and outpatient. Programs address clinical treatment, clinical support, and community support services. Specialized services include primary medical care for women, referrals for prenatal care; primary pediatric care; trauma-informed and trauma-specific substance abuse treatment; therapeutic interventions for children in custody of women in treatment; case management, transportation, and childcare to ensure that women and their children have access to these services. Additional services include aftercare, linkages, housing assistance, and recovery management.

- The *Maternal Wrap Around Program* provides intensive case management and recovery support services for opioid dependent pregnant and postpartum women, during pregnancy and up to one year after the birth event. Intensive case management focuses on developing a single, coordinated care plan for pregnant/postpartum women, their infants, and families. Recovery Support Specialists provide non-clinical assistance and recovery support while maintaining follow-up. The overall goal of the MWRAP is to alleviate barriers to services through comprehensive care coordination and reduce potential harm of prenatal substance exposure pre-pregnancy, prenatal, at birth, neonatal, and early childhood.

The general fertility rate in Ocean County is substantially higher than the statewide rate; at 93.7 live births per 1,000 women age 15 to 44 years old, compared to 59.3 in NJ and 58.3 nationwide.



Most NAS cases continue to occur among Caucasian women. In 2024, 64.2% of the births were covered by Medicaid. Around 3-10% were uninsured. In 2024, 1% of the treatment admissions were to pregnant women (52 total).

Justice Involved Individuals

Another set of core abatement strategies centers around treatment for the incarcerated population and individuals transitioning into the community from the criminal justice system. Specifically, the identified priority is evidence-based treatment and recovery support, including medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for persons with opioid use disorders (OUDs) and co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders, within and transitioning out of the criminal justice system.

Individuals who use drugs are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system. Most people in jails (53%), state prisons (56%), or federal prisons (50%) met DSM-IV criteria for a substance use disorder (SUD) at the most recent national surveys. While the exact rates of inmates with SUDs are difficult to measure, some research shows that an estimated 65% of the United States prison population has an active SUD. Another 20% did not meet the official criteria for an SUD but were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of their crime.

Numerous studies have documented greatly elevated risk of death when people are released from jail or prison, with the leading cause of death being drug overdose. In the first two weeks after release, the risk of opioid overdose is 40 times higher for those who were incarcerated compared to the general population.

Formerly incarcerated individuals with SUDs or substance-related criminal charges are more likely to be re-incarcerated than those without substance involvement.

Existing Initiatives

Behavioral health and justice partnerships are a strength in Ocean County. Existing initiatives to ensure access to treatment and prevent overdose deaths include:

Blue Hope offers SUD screenings at local police departments and referrals and linkage to the level of care needed. Any person who voluntarily enters one of the participating departments on the scheduled day and time will be immediately screened and offered appropriate resources.

Driving Under the Influence Initiative (DUII) - supports treatment of financially indigent residents who have been convicted or recently arrested for a DUI charge. Funds cover the full continuum of care.

Recovery Court—Since 2002, more than 30,000 individuals have participated in Recovery Court (formerly known as Drug Court). Recovery Court allows individuals to receive treatment, counseling, guidance, and close supervision to address non-violent crime related to drug and alcohol dependency.

Mutual Agreement Program (MAP) - Collaboration between DMHAS and DOC to support a fee-for-service network of licensed community-based substance use treatment programs for State prison inmates pending or on parole.

Justice Involved Services— Designed to assist persons with serious and persistent mental illness who become entangled with the criminal justice system, Justice Involved Services helps to avoid or reduce incarceration among this population and/or assist with reentry to their communities to receive the appropriate treatment. Individuals with co-occurring mental illness and SUD may be served. Several municipal courts in Ocean County are engaged in a Justice Involved Services pilot.

On Point—The On POINT program embeds a social worker into local police departments to address the high volume of mental health, substance abuse, and social service-related calls and incidents that utilize a considerable volume of police and emergency resources. The social worker follows up and facilitates linkages to treatment and other resources.

Operation Helping Hand—Through funding from the Attorney General's Office, the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office facilitates community outreach and education regarding SUDs; peer support, guidance, and recovery opportunities for individuals who have overdosed and surviving family members; and diversion into addiction treatment rather than continuing with traditional prosecution of pending municipal court charges.

Arrive Together—With funding from the Attorney General's Office, a mental health clinician will be available to law enforcement officers throughout Ocean County to respond to 9-1-1 calls for service related to mental or behavioral health crises, including, but not limited to, SUD

Service Delivery Outcomes

The following section summarizes reporting outcomes and performance for contacted providers receiving Opioid Settlement Funds across the identified priority areas. Providers were required to submit quarterly reports demonstrating progress toward service delivery goals and program outcomes associated with their funding. Outcomes reflect information received as of the writing of this plan.

Opioid Prevention Consultation and Mitigation Outcomes Data Analysis (2025)

Service Outcomes Summary (2025)

Service Type	Total Number
Events/Trainings Held	165
Narcan kits distributed	870
Businesses engaged in opioid mitigation efforts	106
Community focus groups conducted	4

Narrative Summary of Outcomes- Opioid Mitigation

One contracted provider delivers Opioid Prevention Consultation and Mitigation Services through an annual contract funded up to \$200,000 per year.

Efforts to expand overdose prevention and harm reduction services resulted in the distribution of 870 Narcan kits, increasing access to life-saving overdose reversal medication and strengthening community overdose response preparedness.

Community partnership initiatives exceeded expectations, with 106 businesses engaged in opioid mitigation efforts, compared to the original goal of 10 businesses.

Four community focus groups were also conducted, meeting the annual goal and providing opportunities for stakeholder input, community feedback, and identification of emerging needs. Opioid mitigation efforts demonstrated strong community engagement, expanded overdose prevention capacity, improved harm reduction accessibility, and strengthened collaboration among stakeholders addressing the opioid crisis.

Substance Use Prevention & Early Intervention Outcomes Data Analysis

(2024–2025)

Service Outcomes Summary (2024–2025)

Service Type	2024 Total	2025 Total
School buildings outreached	10	27
School districts outreached	8	4
Students served	969	1,522
School districts served (broader engagement)	N/A	67
Staff trained in WNBI 2.0	9	9
Training cohorts conducted	31	36

Narrative Summary of Outcomes- Prevention & Early Intervention

One community partner has been contracted for an amount up to \$200,000/year to provide Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention services.

Substance use prevention and early intervention initiatives in Ocean County focused on expanding school-based outreach, increasing student engagement, strengthening prevention education, and improving early identification and intervention strategies.

Across the reporting period, outreach to school buildings increased from 10 in 2024 to 27 in 2025, reflecting expanded prevention programming and greater geographic reach.

Student engagement also increased from 969 students served in 2024 to 1,522 students served in 2025, demonstrating continued growth in prevention education delivery and early intervention efforts within school settings.

Staff capacity remained consistent, with 9 staff trained in We're Not Buying It! 2.0 (WNBI 2.0) across both reporting years. Training cohort delivery increased from 31 cohorts in 2024 to 36 cohorts in 2025, further strengthening prevention education implementation and supporting evidence-based curriculum delivery.

In 2025, broader system-level engagement expanded significantly, with prevention and early intervention efforts reaching 67 school districts through outreach and collaboration, compared to 8 districts in 2024. Overall, these efforts demonstrate sustained investment in school-based prevention infrastructure, expanded student reach, and strengthened early intervention capacity across Ocean County.

Care Management Outcomes Data Analysis (2024–2025)

The contract for Care Management for Individuals with Substance Use Disorder was awarded to three (3) community partners for up to \$800,000 annually.

Care management services in Ocean County focused on increasing participant engagement, strengthening linkage to treatment, improving recovery outcomes, expanding harm reduction distribution, and enhancing recovery-oriented supports through ongoing case management, outreach, and wellness programming. The following comparison reflects service delivery and outcomes across 2024 and 2025.

Care Management Service Outcomes Summary (2024–2025)

Service Type	2024 Total	2025 Total
Participants served	122	659
Participants enrolled in services	88	264
Participants reporting symptom improvement	72% (97% of goal)	239
Participants engaged in ongoing case management/recovery check-ins	73% / 79.3%	814
Warm handoffs to treatment/support services	72% / 79.7%	382
Community outreach events conducted	165	139
Recovery community/wellness events conducted	449	469
Attendees participating in recovery/wellness events	6,177	6,675
Narcan or harm reduction kits distributed	1,123	1,424
Individuals receiving direct supportive assistance	28	34
Direct supportive assistance funds distributed	\$2,276	\$4,389

Narrative Summary of Outcomes- Care Management

Between 2024 and 2025, care management services in Ocean County demonstrated significant expansion in service reach, engagement, and recovery support capacity. Participants served increased substantially from 122 individuals in 2024 to 659 in 2025, with enrollment increasing from 88 to 264, reflecting expanded access to care management services.

Recovery outcomes remained strong across both years, with 2024 reporting high rates of symptom improvement, treatment attendance improvement, ongoing case management engagement, and successful warm handoffs to treatment and support services. In 2025, 239 participants reported symptom improvement, with 814 individuals engaged in ongoing case management or recovery check-ins and 382 warm handoffs completed to treatment and support services.

Recovery-oriented community engagement also increased, with recovery community and wellness events rising from 449 in 2024 to 469 in 2025, and total attendance rising from 6,177 in 2024 to 6,675 in 2025. Community outreach efforts remained strong throughout both years, supporting engagement and service visibility.

Harm reduction efforts expanded significantly, with Narcan and harm reduction kit distribution increasing from 1,123 kits in 2024 to 1,424 kits in 2025, strengthening overdose prevention capacity throughout the community.

Direct supportive assistance also increased from \$2,276 in 2024 to \$4,389 in 2025, supporting participants with stabilization needs and reducing barriers to recovery engagement.

Overall, care management outcomes demonstrate continued growth in service capacity, strong recovery engagement, expanded harm reduction efforts, and increased system-wide support for individuals impacted by substance use disorder in Ocean County.

Targeted Outreach and Engagement Overview 2024-2025

Five contracted community providers deliver Targeted Outreach and Engagement services, with total funding of up to \$600,000 annually.

Targeted outreach and engagement initiatives in Ocean County focused on expanding recovery supports, increasing community-based engagement, strengthening harm reduction efforts, and improving service linkage for individuals impacted by substance use disorder. This report compares outcomes from 2024 and 2025 across key service categories to demonstrate program growth, expanded geographic reach, and increased service capacity.

Service Outcomes Summary (2024–2025)

Service Type	2024 Total	2025 Total
Community outreach contacts made	932	7,124
Universal/community outreach efforts conducted	56	106
Hot Spot outreach events conducted	56	106
Towns served through outreach initiatives	9	20
Mobile outreach engagement events held	21	21
Outreach/resource day events held	10.5	110
Recovery Café events held	0	281
All Recovery Model events held	40	171
LGBTQIA+ recovery meetings held	0	34
Community Featured	N/A	14
Individual/community meetings conducted	N/A	58
Total attendees at presentations/meetings	255	579
Print educational materials disseminated	355	586
Code Red/Code Blue guest contacts	12	96
Individuals engaged in street outreach	227	251
Average sober living residents engaged in non-clinical case management	18	148
Harm reduction kits distributed	8	2,286
Individuals trained in Peer Recovery Specialist/Credible Messenger	1	23
Consumers engaged through recovery support application	N/A	101
Full Interactions App	N/A	176
Application log-ins recorded	N/A	360
Unique wellness tracker users	N/A	11

Narrative Summary of Outcomes- Targeted Outreach

Between 2024 and 2025, targeted outreach and engagement initiatives in Ocean County demonstrated substantial expansion in service delivery, geographic reach, and participant engagement. Engagement was provided in identified “Hot Spot” areas with high overdose rates, helping connect vulnerable individuals to outreach, recovery support, harm reduction resources, and community-based services.

Community outreach contacts increased from 932 in 2024 to 7,124 in 2025, reflecting a significant expansion in outreach capacity and visibility across high-need communities.

Hot Spot outreach efforts increased from 56 events serving 9 towns in 2024 to 106 events serving 20 towns in 2025, demonstrating expanded geographic coverage aligned with overdose response priorities.

Outreach/resource day events increased from 10.5 in 2024 to 110 in 2025, reflecting strengthened structured engagement opportunities. Recovery-oriented programming expanded significantly, with All Recovery Model events increasing from 40 to 171.

Recovery Café programming and LGBTQIA+ recovery meetings were newly established in 2025, with 281 Recovery Café events and 34 LGBTQIA+ recovery meetings enhancing peer support and inclusive recovery access.

Engagement with high-risk populations also increased, with Code Red/Code Blue contacts rising from 12 in 2024 to 96 in 2025. Sober living engagement expanded substantially from an average of 18 individuals in 2024 to 148 in 2025 receiving non-clinical case management support.

Harm reduction efforts demonstrated one of the largest increases, growing from 8 kits distributed in 2024 to 2,286 kits in 2025, significantly strengthening overdose prevention capacity.

Workforce development also expanded, increasing from 1 trained peer recovery specialist/credible messenger in 2024 to 23 trained individuals in 2025, supporting a stronger recovery-oriented workforce.

Overall, the comparison of 2024 to 2025 demonstrates significant system-wide growth in outreach, engagement, harm-reduction distribution, recovery supports, and workforce capacity throughout Ocean County.

Innovative Substance Use Programming Outcomes Data Analysis (2024–2025)

One community partner is contracted to provide Innovative Substance Use Programming for up to \$100,000 annually.

Service Outcomes Summary (2024–2025)

Service Type	2024 Total	2025 Total
Employers engaged	5	15
Employers outreached	127	130
Portal members	26	379
Action	1	11
Action team meetings held	6	13
Best practice trainings conducted	6	20
Community education seminars conducted	6	50
Community education seminar attendees	183	267

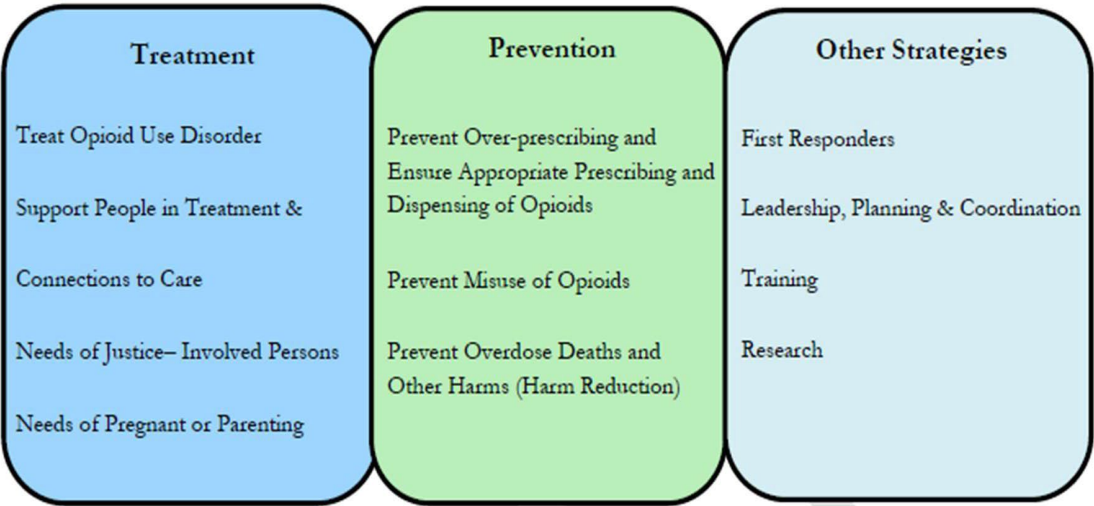
Narrative Summary of Outcomes- Innovative Programming

Innovative substance use programming initiatives in Ocean County focused on expanding employer engagement, strengthening community partnerships, increasing prevention and recovery education, and supporting collaborative action planning across sectors. Across the reporting period, employer outreach increased slightly from 127 employers in 2024 to 130 in 2025, while active employer engagement increased from 5 in 2024 to 15 in 2025, reflecting strengthened participation in workplace-based prevention and recovery support initiatives.

Digital engagement expanded through an employer/employee portal connecting workplaces to prevent education and recovery resources, with membership increasing from 26 in 2024 to 379 in 2025. Collaborative infrastructure also expanded, with action teams increasing from 1 in 2024 to 11 in 2025, and action team meetings increasing from 6 to 13 over the same period.

Training and education efforts also showed growth, with best practice training courses conducted increasing from 6 in 2024 to 20 in 2025. Community education seminars increased from 6 seminars serving 183 attendees in 2024 to 50 seminars serving 267 attendees in 2025, reflecting expanded public education and community awareness efforts. Overall, innovative substance use programming in Ocean County demonstrates significant expansion in collaborative infrastructure, education and training capacity, and community engagement from 2024 to 2025, supporting strengthened cross-sector approaches to addressing substance use disorder.

12 Categories of Approved Uses



Public Forum Feedback

The Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council held three open forums allowing public input to assist the Council in determining priority uses:

Wednesday, March 11 at 5:00pm – Virtual – Via Microsoft Teams

Thursday, March 12 at 2:00pm – Ocean County Southern Service Center
Friday, March 13 at 2:00pm – Ocean County Library – Toms River Branch

To capture input from specialized stakeholder groups who work with populations directly impacted by the opioid crisis, the following forums were conducted:

Professional Forum– Friday, March 13 at 11:00am – Ocean County Library – Toms River Branch

Law Enforcement Forum– Tuesday, March 24 at 2:00pm-Virtual– Via Microsoft Teams

The forums were advertised through the mailing lists and social media of the Ocean County Department of Human Services.

- At the initial public forum, participants shared a range of perspectives regarding current opioid response efforts and emerging community needs. One municipality reported utilizing opioid settlement funds to support a Class II program aimed at addressing substance use-related concerns within the community. Participants discussed the growing issue of homelessness in Ocean County and the impact on high-risk populations. One participant noted that opioid-related trends in Ocean County appear to be improving, reflecting progress in prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts
- At the second public forum, participants stressed the need to address key barriers to recover including housing instability, the lack of sober living facilities, transportation challenges, and food insecurity. Attendees also noted that service providers require additional funding to expand capacity and meet the growing community demand.

Funding priorities identified included support for basic needs such as housing, food, clothing, shelter, wound care and transportation to ensure individuals can engage in and sustain recovery services. Participants also highlighted the importance of early intervention efforts, including programming and supports that engage children and youth before substance use begins.

- During the third public forum, participants discussed challenges related to the grant application process, noting that grant writing can be difficult for smaller agencies that may lack the administrative capacity to compete for funding and may benefit from additional technical assistance. The need to increase the number of sober living residences was also identified as a priority to support individuals in recovery. Participants expressed interest in increased involvement from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to better support employment and recovery outcomes for this population. Overall, attendees emphasized the need to expand available services across the continuum of care, with particular attention to increasing access to stable housing to support individuals in recovery.
- Participants of the Professional forum discussed the need for direct services to support loved ones and family members affected by substance use, including education, resources, and ongoing support programming. Transportation barriers were also highlighted, with a suggestion that funding could be used to provide gift cards to ride-hailing services to improve access to treatment and recovery services. Additional points were raised that aligned with themes identified in other forums, including the need for increased housing support, workforce development initiatives, and expanded funding to enable agencies to build capacity in response to community needs. Participants also identified the importance of developing targeted youth programming, including support groups within high school settings.
- At the Law Enforcement forum, participants discussed challenges related to navigating approved uses of opioid settlement funds. One police department noted challenges ensuring compliance with funding guidelines. A question was raised regarding the potential use of funds for an artificial intelligence-based training or response program, and it was recommended that departments submit brief proposals for review by the Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council (OCOAC) to assist in determining eligibility. Additional discussion highlighted the importance of increasing family support services, education, and Narcan distribution for the county's growing senior population.

Needs Assessment Survey Results

58 responses to the survey were received. The largest representation of municipality was Toms River at 40%. 28% of respondents indicated they reside or work in Southern Ocean County, defined as Waretown or below.

Community Services providers accounted for the highest number of responses at 20%, followed by a tie between consumers/peers/persons with opioid use disorder and family members of individuals with opioid use disorder at 17%.

The settlement outlines 12 main categories of approved uses. Participants were asked to rate each subcategory based on their opinion of its importance for funding in Ocean County. Responses indicate strong prioritization of treatment, recovery support, and overdose prevention within opioid use–related funding categories, with several areas receiving notably high “extremely important” ratings.

- Supporting Individuals in Treatment & Recovery (87.9%) (1.13)
- Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (85.7%) (1.16)
- Prevention of Overdose Deaths and Other Harms (82.5%) (1.21)
- Connections to Care (75.4%) (1.32)
- Needs of Pregnant or Parenting Women & Their Families (64.9%) (1.54)
- Prevention of the Misuse of Opioids (63.2%) (1.58)
- First Responder Support (57.9%) (1.72)
- Prevention of Over-Prescribing and Poor Dispensing (54.4%) (1.83)
- Training (54.4%) (1.83)
- Needs of Justice-Involved Persons (52.6%) (1.90)
- Research (50.0%) (2)
- Leadership Planning & Coordination (46.6%) (2.14)

Survey results reflect strong consensus that current uses of Settlement funds align with high-priority needs, with all program areas receiving majority “extremely important” ratings.

- Care Management (77.6%) (Weighted Average of 1.3)
- Prevention and Early Intervention (73.7%) (1.35)
- Targeted Outreach and Engagement (70.7%) (1.41)
- Innovative Substance Use Disorder Programming (69%) (1.44)
- Opioid Prevention and Consultation (65.5%) (1.52)
- Opioid Mitigation Consultation (65.5%) (1.52)

Respondents rated several approved uses of opioid settlement funds as either “extremely important” or “very important” for development or expansion. The findings highlight strong consensus around improving access to treatment, strengthening supportive services, and enhancing prevention and system coordination across multiple sectors of care.

- Availability of treatment (100%) (1)
- Comprehensive wraparound services (e.g., housing, transportation, education, job placement/training, childcare) and counseling, peer support, recovery case management, and residential treatment with access to medications (94.8%) (1.05)
- Education or intervention services for families, youth, and adolescents at risk (94.5%) (1.05)
- Training for school nurses and other school staff to respond to opioid overdoses (94.5%) (1.05)
- MAT (Medication-Assisted Treatment), recovery, and prevention services for pregnant women (92.8%) (1.07)
- Training for emergency room personnel on post-discharge planning (89.5%) (1.12)
- Support for non-opioid pain treatment alternatives (89.1%) (1.12)
- Transportation to treatment or recovery services (87.9%) (1.14)
- Research on models to reduce and deter opioid misuse within criminal justice populations (80%) (1.25)
- Cross-system coordination (78.2%) (1.28)
- Wellness and support services for first responders and others experiencing secondary trauma (77.8%) (1.28)

Overall, availability of treatment services received prioritization, with additional emphasis placed on integrated wraparound supports, recovery infrastructure, and workforce training across healthcare, education, and public safety systems.

Opioid Advisory Council Recommendations

The 2023 Plan and Plan Addendum identified the priorities of Public Awareness and Education, Care Management and Comprehensive Wraparound Services, Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention, and Workforce Development. From those priorities, initiatives were defined as Opioid Prevention and Consulting, Targeted Outreach and Engagement, Innovative Substance Use Programming, Care Management, and Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention.

Based on feedback gathered through public forums, the Community Needs Assessment, and review of the outcomes outlined in the plan, the Advisory Council recommends continued investment in the current initiatives. These initiatives have demonstrated measurable success in expanding access to care, increasing engagement with high-risk and underserved populations, strengthening prevention and recovery supports, and improving coordination across systems of care. Enhanced outreach efforts, expanded recovery support services, increased engagement in sober living environments, and the implementation of innovative community-based programming have contributed to a more responsive and comprehensive continuum of services throughout the county. In 2026, the Advisory Council recommends highlighting the need for housing and transportation to support people in treatment and recovery, and incorporating an additional priority to enhance capacity of evidence-based medication assisted treatment.

Plan Priority	Initiative	Schedule B Uses Addressed
Public Awareness and Education	Opioid Prevention and Consulting	Support People in Treatment and Recovery (B10, B12) Prevent Overdose Deaths and Other Harms (H1) Training (K2)
	Targeted Outreach and Engagement	Support People in Treatment and Recovery (B2) Connections to Care (C11, 15) Prevent Overdose Deaths and Other Harms (H1)
	Innovative Substance Use Programming	TBD
Care Management and Comprehensive Wraparound Services	Care Management and Comprehensive Wraparound Services	Support People in Treatment and Recovery (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6)
	Housing	Support People in Treatment and Recovery (B4)
	Transportation	Support People in Treatment and Recovery (B7)
Preventing Substance Use and Early Intervention	Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention	Prevent Misuse of Opioids (G9)
Enhance Capacity to Treat Substance Use Disorders	Workforce Development	Support People in Treatment and Recovery (B15) Training (K1)
Enhance Capacity of evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment	Medication Assisted Treatment for the Incarcerated Population	Address the Needs of Criminal Justice Involved Persons (D4)

The OCOAC works closely with the Ocean County Health Department (OCHD) to strengthen public health education and expand prevention programming. Settlement funds will further support and expand these efforts over the next three years. Through the NACCHO IOPSLL initiative, the Health Department developed an overdose monitoring system and coordinated response plan that now serve as core prevention tools for the county. Building on this progress, the Advisory Council will prioritize settlement funding for the continuation of **Opioid Prevention Consultation and Mitigation** initiatives, including outreach and education for law enforcement agencies and local businesses to help reduce opioid misuse and overdose.

The Opioid Advisory Council continues to identify **Targeted Outreach and Engagement** as a priority funding area. This priority focuses on reaching individuals with substance use disorders and their families through innovative, community-based approaches that increase awareness of available services, encourage treatment initiation, and strengthen engagement in treatment and recovery supports.

Core strategies of Targeted Outreach and Engagement include public awareness and education efforts that promote access to treatment, recovery resources, and naloxone; provide education and support for families affected by substance use disorders; strengthen collaboration with law enforcement and community partners; support prevention initiatives for youth and families; and implement environmental strategies that help reduce substance use and overdose risk. Recognizing that a strong workforce is essential to effective outreach and treatment engagement, this initiative includes a workforce component.

In addition, the Council supports the continuation of **Innovative Substance Use Programming** initiatives designed to increase employer engagement, strengthen community partnerships, and increase prevention and recovery education across sectors. These creative initiatives emphasize collaborative efforts that bring together public, private, and community stakeholders to address emerging needs and promote long-term improvements across the system. The Council also places strong emphasis on training and education grounded in best practice standards, ensuring that providers, partners, and community members have access to high-quality, evidence-informed learning opportunities that strengthen the county's ability to respond effectively to substance use disorder.

Care Management services focus on connecting individuals to behavioral health and recovery support, enhancing continuity of care and improving overall service engagement through partnerships with qualified community-based organizations. These services include resource navigation, assessment, individualized care planning, peer support, and family engagement, all grounded in harm reduction strategies, along with outreach and education for law enforcement, criminal justice partners, first responders, and healthcare professionals. Care management services are designed to meet individuals where they are, ensuring comprehensive, individualized, and accessible support.

Care management is recognized as a critical component of the overall system of care and will be sustained throughout this plan to ensure continuity, stability and ongoing access to coordinated support for individuals and families.

Supporting individuals in overcoming barriers to treatment and recovery is a core function of Care Management services. Throughout the planning process, **housing navigation and linkage** was consistently identified as one of the greatest challenges facing individuals with opioid use disorders. Community members identified a shortage of recovery-supportive housing, including sober living residences, and emphasized that access to safe, stable housing is essential to improving long-term recovery outcomes. As part of the Care Management approach, connecting individuals to recovery housing, sober living residences, and other recovery-supportive housing resources will remain a priority to help promote stability and sustain recovery.

The Council also recognizes that there is a shortage of affordable housing in the county and will advocate for collaborative solutions that improve housing stability, strengthen housing navigation and support long-term recovery.

Transportation was consistently identified as a critical barrier limiting access to treatment, recovery support, and essential services. Participants noted that many individuals face challenges traveling to appointments, recovery meetings, employment opportunities, and other supportive services, particularly those experiencing housing instability or financial hardship. Over the next three years, a funding priority will be to support initiatives that reduce transportation barriers and improve individuals' ability to access treatment, recovery services, housing resources, and other essential supports. Strengthening transportation assistance and service linkage will help increase engagement in treatment and recovery programs, improve continuity of care, and promote more equitable access to services throughout Ocean County.

Ocean County has identified that transportation remains a consistent need throughout the county. The Ocean County Department of Transportation will be conducting efficiency studies to address these needs. The Opioid Advisory Council will collaborate with the Ocean County Department of Transportation throughout 2027 to ensure that the transportation needs of this vulnerable population are considered as part of these efficiency studies.

The Council plans to continue supporting the use of settlement funds for **Prevention and Early Intervention** initiatives delivered in partnership with community organizations and local schools. These efforts include the implementation of an evidence-based universal prevention program within a designated grade level, along with support for data collection and evaluation to measure long-term outcomes. The Council recognizes that Prevention and Early Intervention efforts are most effective when strengthened through ongoing collaboration, coordination, and partnership.

Workforce development continues to be a fundamental priority as behavioral health organizations continue to face significant staffing shortages and workforce attrition, affecting their ability to provide timely, high-quality care and sustain essential services. The Advisory Council emphasized the importance of strategic investment in workforce development to sustain and strengthen both the provider network and the recovery community. The Council supports the strategic use of opioid settlement funds to promote workforce retention, fair compensation, professional development, competitive benefits, career advancement opportunities, innovation, and long-term workforce stability. Retention strategies, including clear career pathways, reduced administrative burden, program innovation and realignment, reimbursement rates that reflect local costs, and value-based payment models that support positive outcomes, are essential to maintaining a skilled, experienced workforce capable of meeting the community's growing and evolving needs. Strengthening the behavioral health workforce is foundational to the long-term success and sustainability of opioid-related initiatives and the delivery of effective, responsive care.

The Opioid Advisory Council reviewed a study conducted by the Ocean County Jail evaluating the effectiveness of its **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Program**. As part of the county's comprehensive treatment continuum, MAT remains one of the most effective evidence-based interventions for opioid use disorder and plays a critical role in reducing overdose risk, supporting recovery, and improving long-term treatment outcomes. Individuals involved in the criminal justice system experience disproportionately high rates of substance use disorders and face a significantly elevated risk of overdose following release from incarceration.

The Ocean County Jail's MAT Program has become a key component of the county's response to opioid use disorder among this high-risk population. Based on the program's reported outcomes and the Council's review, the Opioid Advisory Council supports continued funding for MAT services within the Ocean County Jail as an essential element of the county's comprehensive response to the opioid crisis.

Council Operational Enhancements

In response to community feedback regarding challenges smaller agencies face in the grant application process, the Opioid Advisory Council recommends promoting existing grant-writing support resources. Ocean County Department of Human Services in partnership with Ocean County College offers free Grant Writing Workshops for nonprofit organizations. These workshops help participants strengthen grant-writing skills, improve funding applications, and enhance organizational capacity to secure resources and expand services.

Recognizing the growing need for services, support, and education for the senior population, the Advisory Council has expanded its membership to include a community representative with expertise in Senior Services. This addition strengthens the Council's capacity to better understand and address the unique needs of older adults affected by substance use, including prevention, education, and linkage to appropriate support and care.

Additionally, the Council has identified the need to develop a standardized form for submitting requests and ideas related to the use of opioid settlement funds. This form will ensure that consistent information is collected for all submissions. The form will be made available to the public on the Ocean County Opioid Advisory website.

Recommendations for Municipal Use of Opioid Settlement Funds

In Ocean County, 12 municipalities were eligible and have opted into the national opioid litigation settlements and received direct allocations of opioid settlement funds separate from the County's allocation. The Opioid Advisory Council is available to consult with municipalities regarding the implementation of these funds and offer guidance on countywide priorities identified through the planning process. While municipalities are responsible for ensuring that expenditures comply with approved settlement fund uses and for establishing their own local funding priorities, the needs identified in this plan reflect common challenges experienced across Ocean County. Municipalities are encouraged to consider these priorities when making funding decisions to support a coordinated and comprehensive response to substance use and recovery needs. Throughout 2027, the Council plans to incorporate regularly scheduled municipal debrief sessions.

The 2027-2030 planning cycle reaffirms the County's commitment to using opioid settlement funds strategically and transparently to support sustainable, community-informed initiatives that improve health outcomes, strengthen the system of care, and advance long-term recovery and wellness.

Funding Recommendations

Ocean County anticipates receiving a total of \$27 million from the various settlements under the National Opioid Litigation Resolution. Payments to Ocean County will vary from year to year throughout the settlement period. At least two additional settlements are still in process, which may result in additional distributions.

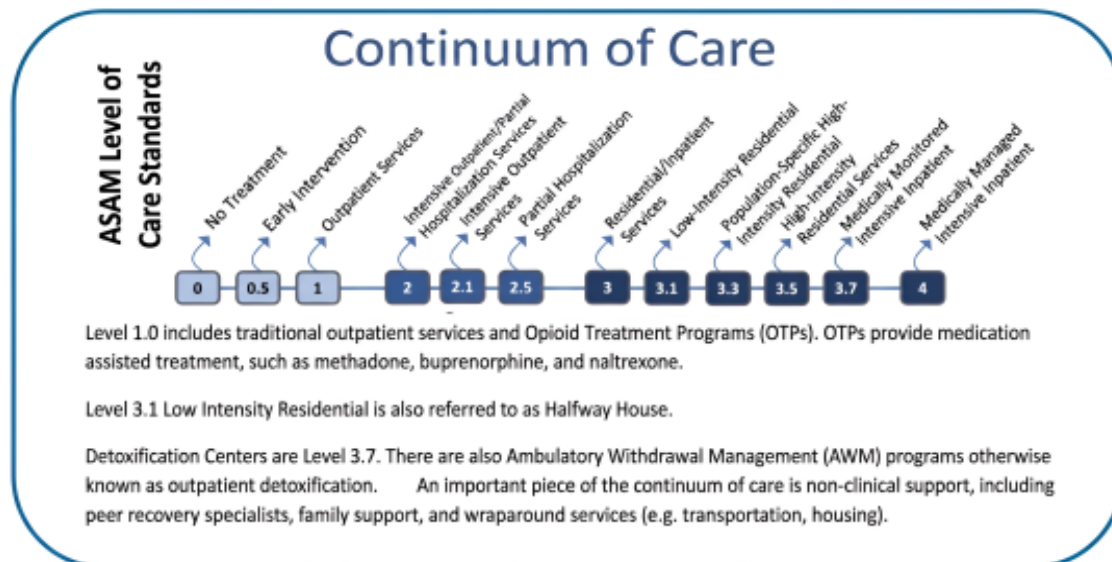
As of June 30, 2026, a sum of \$10,965,429.66 has been received from Settling Distributors, Janssen, Mallinckrodt bankruptcy, Allergan, Teva, CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, McKinsey, and Endo. An aggregate of \$5,100,000 has been obligated for services since 2024.

Based on the total projection of \$27,869,599.91 and 16 years of active service delivery, the Advisory Council recommends appropriating \$1.9 million annually, as follows:

Opioid Prevention and Consulting	\$150,000
Targeted Outreach and Engagement	\$450,000
Innovative Substance Use Programming	\$100,000
Care Management and Comprehensive Wraparound Services	\$870,000
Housing	
Transportation	
Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention	\$180,000
Workforce Development	
Medication Assisted Treatment for the Incarcerated Population	\$150,000

Should additional distributions come to fruition, the Council recommends allocating it to housing and transportation, either standalone projects to support people in treatment and recovery or as enhancements to Care Management and Comprehensive Wraparound Service programs and Targeted Outreach and Engagement projects. The Council will convene to develop a Plan Addendum in this case.

Furthermore, the Council recommends utilizing any interest accrued from the settlement funds for one-time seed projects that address the Plan Priorities and approved uses. To maximize the impact, it is recommended that interest is allowed to accrue for a period of 6 years to align the funding cycle with every other three-year Council plan. The first round would be anticipated in 2029.



Continuum of Care Resources

The Department of Substance Abuse, Addiction, and Opioid Dependency in the Ocean County Health Department publishes a resource directory. The directory lists hotlines, self-help groups, prevention, early intervention, treatment, and support services located in Ocean County and serving Ocean County residents.

Licensed substance use treatment providers are listed in the Rutgers Addiction Services Treatment Directory to assist in locating treatment and related services in the State for adolescents and adults. The treatment directory can be viewed alphabetically or searched by name of treatment agency, by county, by municipality, by type of treatment services, type of care, special populations, type of funding and special initiatives.

ATLAS National Principles of Care for Addiction Treatment Facilities

- ◇ Fast Access to Treatment
- ◇ Personalized Evaluation and Treatment Plan
- ◇ Access to Medications for Opioid or Alcohol Use Disorders
- ◇ Effective Behavioral Therapies for Addiction
- ◇ Long Term Treatment and Follow Up
- ◇ Coordinated Care for Mental and Physical Health

The State of New Jersey is one of 10 states that contract with Shatterproof to use its Addiction Treatment Locator, Assessment, and Standards Platform (ATLAS).

ATLAS helps people search for and compare addiction treatment facilities to find high-quality care for themselves or their loved ones. Shatterproof also identified the National Principles of Care, key elements of effective addiction treatment that have been shown to improve the health and well-being of individuals with substance use disorder (see figure at the top).

Treatment facilities are encouraged to submit validated quality data to ATLAS that demonstrate their fidelity to the principles. Search results can be filtered to only facilities with quality data. ATLAS does not include a listing of organizations that provide recovery support only.

Providers in Ocean County

Agenda	Location	Levels Of Care
Acenda Recovery	Manahawkin	1.0, 2.1
Agape Counseling Services	Lanoka Harbor	1.0, 2.1
Bright Harbor Healthcare	Bayville	1.0, 2.1, AWM, Recovery
Supports Counseling Center	Toms River	1.0, 2.1
Creative Change Counseling	Lakewood	1.0, 2.1
Crossroads of New Jersey	Toms River	1.0 Opioid Treatment
Evolve Recovery Center	Toms River	
GenPsych*	Brick	1.0, AWM
Harbor MAT	Brick	1.0 Opioid Treatment Program
Hope Sheds Light	Toms River	Recovery Supports
Iron Wellness	Brick, Toms River	1.0, 2.1
Integrity, Inc.	Toms River	1.0, 2.1, Recovery
Mental Health Association	Toms River	Recovery Supports
Ocean Medical Services	Toms River	1.0 Opioid Treatment
Ocean Monmouth Care	Brick	1.0 Opioid Treatment
Preferred Behavioral Health	Barnegat, Toms River Lakewood	1.0, 2.1, AWM, Recovery Supports

Agency		Location	Levels of Care
Preferred Services	Children's	Toms River	0.5
Quantum Health	Behavioral	South Toms River	1.0, 2.1
RWJBarnabas Behavioral Health		Toms River	1.0, 2.1, 3.7
Saint Francis Community Center		Beach Haven	Recovery Supports
SeaChange RCO		Beach Haven	Recovery Supports
Sunrise Detox		Toms River	3.7
Taylor Care		Tuckerton	0.5, 1.0, 2.1
The Center at Advanced Behavioral		Lakewood	0.5, 1.0, 2.1

Providers Serving Ocean County

Agency	Location	Levels of Care
Anderson House	Whitehouse Station	3.1
Blake Recovery Center	Belle Mead	3.5, 3.7
Discovery Institute	Marlboro	3.5, 3.7
Epiphany House Asbury	Long Branch	3.1
Hansen House	Egg Harbor City	3.1
Hendricks House	Vineland	3.1
Integrity House	Newark	3.1, 3.5
Maryville	Pemberton	3.5, 3.7
New Bridge	Paramus	3.5, 3.7
New Hope IBHC	Marlboro	3.5, 3.7
Philip House	Long Branch	1.0, 2.1, 3.1
Turning Point	Paterson	3.5, 3.7

References

Department of Health | Population Health | Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

https://www.nj.gov/health/populationhealth/opioid/opioid_nas.shtml

CHIP Substance Abuse – Ocean County Health Department (ochd.org)

<https://oceancountyhealth.gov/services/community-health-improvement-plan/>

Department of Health | Population Health | Naloxone Incident Dashboard

https://nj.gov/health/populationhealth/opioid/opioid_naloxone.shtml

Ocean-County-Overdose-Response-Plan 2024

https://oceancountyhealth.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Ocean-County-Overdose-Response-Plan_2024-update.pdf

NJ Cares - New Jersey Office of Attorney General

<https://www.njoag.gov/programs/nj-cares-2025-initiatives/>

Ocean County Health Department | Resources - Ocean County Health Department

<https://oceancountyhealth.gov/>

Injury Center Priorities | Injury Center | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/injury/index.html>

Understanding the Opioid Overdose Epidemic | Overdose Prevention | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/about/understanding-the-opioid-overdose-epidemic.html>

Managing Addiction as a Chronic Condition - PMC

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2797101/>

Coordination of Care Upon Release from Incarceration: A NACo Opioid Solutions Strategy Brief | National Association of Counties

<https://www.naco.org/>

Labor Market Information | About the New Jersey State Data Center

<https://www.nj.gov/labor/labormarketinformation/contact-us/NJSDC.shtml>

Resource Library | Overdose Fatality Review

<https://www.ofrtools.org/resource/library>

Home Page -Treatment Directory Application

<https://www.harbormat.com/>

Assessment | Treatment Atlas

<https://treatmentatlas.org/>

Department of Health | Population Health | New Jersey SUDORS Overdose Mortality Data Explorer

<https://www.nj.gov/health/populationhealth/opioid/sudors.shtml>

Pretrial Services for People with Opioid Use Disorder | National Association of Counties

<https://www.naco.org/resource/osc-mat>

Illicit Substance use after Release from Prison among formerly incarcerated primary care patients: a cross-sectional study | Addiction Science & Clinical Practice | Springer Nature Link

<https://www.springer.com/>

Ocean County Health Department, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Resource Directory

<https://oceancountyhealth.gov/services/alcohol-and-drug-services/>

Preliminary Summary of Opioid Forums

Listening Forums were held on the following dates:

Tuesday , March 11 at 5:00pm –Virtual – Via Webex
Thursday, March 12 at 2:00pm – Ocean County Southern Service Center
Friday, March 13 at 11:00am – Ocean County Library, Toms River Branch
Friday, March 13 at 2:00pm – Ocean County Library, Toms River Branch
Tuesday, March 24 at 2:00pm- Law Enforcement, Virtual- Via Teams

Public Forum- 3/11/26-virtual 5pm

One municipality reported using funds to support a Class II program.
Participants noted an increase in homelessness and suggested allocating funds to help address this issue.

A participant shared that trends in Ocean County are improving.
The OCOAC was commended for its efforts.

Public Forum Southern Service Center- 3/12/26:

The need to address barriers to recovery was identified: housing, need for sober living facilities, transportation, and addressing food insecurity.

Agencies need more funding to expand services

Funding is needed for housing, food, clothing, shelter, wound care and transportation

Professional Forum, Toms River Branch of OC Library- 3/13/26 11am:

Discussion occurred regarding the need for direct services for loved ones/family members, including education and support.

Discussed the need for transportation- suggestion was made to suggest funding is used for purchase of Uber gift cards;

Additional topics: housing; the need for workforce development; funding for expansion within agencies to accommodate need; develop groups for youth at high schools.

Feedback provided regarding the forums:

Provide an annual schedule of all forums to allow individuals to arrange transportation in advance.

Offer additional virtual forums to increase accessibility and participation.

Discussed the possibility of agencies hosting forums and submitting findings to OCOAC.

Suggested offering public opioid meetings in the evenings.

Recommended holding evening forums and reporting findings to OCOAC.

Public Forum Toms River Branch of the OC Library 3/13/26-2pm:

Participants discussed challenges with the grant application process.
Grant writing was identified as difficult, especially for small agencies, which may need additional support.

A need for more sober living residences was identified.
Participants expressed interest in greater involvement from DVR to support this population.

Overall need to expand services was discussed
Increased housing was identified as a priority

Law Enforcement Forum-Virtual- 3/24/26 2pm:

One department reported challenges using opioid settlement funds within approved guidelines.

A question was raised about whether funds could be used for an AI program (training/response).

It was recommended that departments submit a brief proposal for OCOAC review to confirm eligibility.

Suggested increased focus on seniors, including family support services and Narcan distribution.

Reminder for departments to explore how to access and use funds locally, particularly if their municipality receives opioid settlement funding.

Survey

A total of 58 responses were received. The largest representation of municipality was Toms River at 40%. Community Services providers accounted for the highest number of responses at 20%, followed by a tie between consumers/peers/persons with opioid use disorder and family members of individuals with opioid use disorder at 17%.

Survey results reflect strong consensus that current uses of Settlement funds align with high-priority needs, with all program areas receiving majority “extremely important” ratings.

Care Management (77.6%) (Weighted Average of 1.3)

Prevention and Early Intervention (73.7%)

Targeted Outreach and Engagement (70.7%)

Innovative Substance Use Disorder Programming (69%)

Opioid Prevention and Consultation (65.5%)

Opioid Mitigation Consultation (65.5%)

The approved uses listed in the settlement agreement fall into 12 subcategories.

Participants were asked to rate each subcategory with respect to their opinion of its importance to be funded in Ocean County:

Responses indicate strong prioritization of treatment, recovery support, and overdose prevention within opioid use–related funding categories, with several areas receiving notably high “extremely important” ratings.

Care Management (77.6%) (Weighted Average of 1.3)

Supporting Individuals in Treatment & Recovery (87.9%) (Weighted Average 1.13)

Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (85.7%) (1.16)

Prevention of Overdose Deaths and Other Harms (82.5%) (1.21)

Connections to Care (75.4%) (1.32)

Needs of Pregnant or Parenting Women & Their Families (64.9%) (1.54)

Prevention of the Misuse of Opioids (63.2%) (1.58)

First Responder Support (57.9%) (1.72)

Prevention of Over-Prescribing and Poor Dispensing (54.4%) (1.83)

Training (54.4%) (1.83)

Needs of Justice-Involved Persons (52.6%) (1.90)

Research (50.0%) (2)

Appendix B

Responses Overview Active

Responses

58



Average Time

11:14



Duration

142 Days



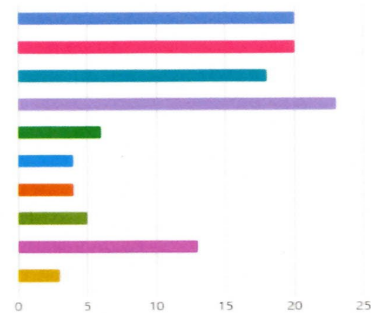
1. Please select the municipality in Ocean County that you work or live:

● Barnegat	4
● Beach Haven	0
● Beachwood	2
● Berkeley	3
● Brick	3
● Jackson	1
● Lacey	5
● Lakewood	0
● Little Egg Harbor	5
● Long Beach	0
● Manchester	0
● Ocean	2
● Seaside Park	1
● Ship Bottom	0
● Stafford	7
● Toms River	22



2. I represent the following (select multiple if applicable):

● Consumer/peer/person with opioid use disorder (OUD)	20
● Family member of a person with opioid use disorder (OUD)	20
● Behavioral healthcare services provider	18
● Community services provider	23
● Education	6
● Public Administrator/Government	4
● Faith-based/Volunteer	4
● Law Enforcement or Juvenile Justice System/First Responder	5
● Interested member of the public	13
● Other	3



3. If you answered "other" in question #2, please specify:

3
Responses

Latest Responses
...

4. Ocean County has used opioid settlement funds to support the following initiatives:

- **Care Management Programs** – A coordinated, individualized approach that links individuals with appropriate services to address their specific needs and goals. Principles of care include: fast access to care, individualized integrated treatment, coordinated care and peer based support.
- **Targeted Outreach and Engagement** –Provides outreach and engagement to individuals who have had difficulty accessing harm reduction, substance use treatment or recovery support services. Also provides Community education and public awareness efforts.
- **Opioid Prevention Consultation Initiatives** –Delivers education, resources and opioid use reduction consultation to retail businesses that have experienced high rates of opioid and drug related response by law enforcement and medical professionals.
- **Innovative Substance Use Disorder Programming** – Delivers innovative, high-impact strategies or services not widely available in Ocean County. Addresses critical service gaps through new outreach approaches, individualized treatment practices, research translation, or capacity building. Services are community based, integrated and include peer support.
- **Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention**- Provides evidence based primary prevention programs designed for youth before substances use or experimentation begins.

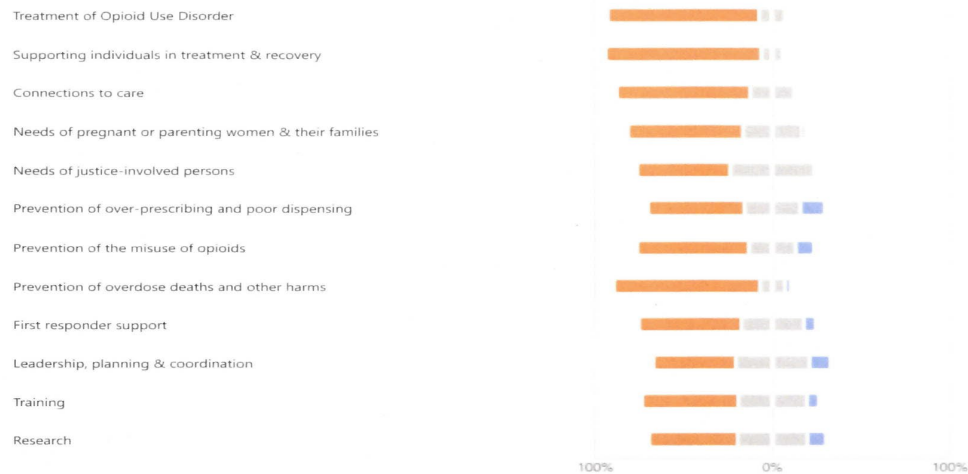
How important are these initiatives to you and your community?

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All or No Opinion



5. The approved uses listed in the settlement agreement fall into 12 subcategories. In the following table, please rate each subcategory with respect to your opinion of its importance to be funded in Ocean County:

● Most Important ● Important ● Least Important



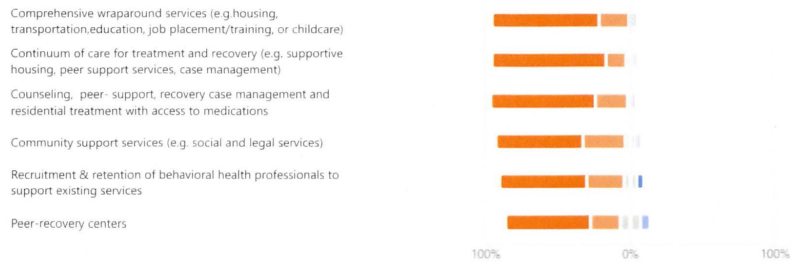
6. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support treatment of OUD and any co-occurring SUD or MH conditions. Please rate these approved uses based on its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County:

● Extremely Important ● Very Important ● Moderately Important ● Slightly Important ● Not Important At All or No Opinion



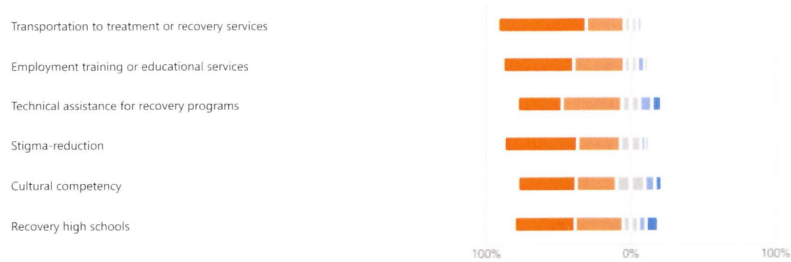
7. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support people in recovery from OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions. Please rate these approved uses based on its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County:

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



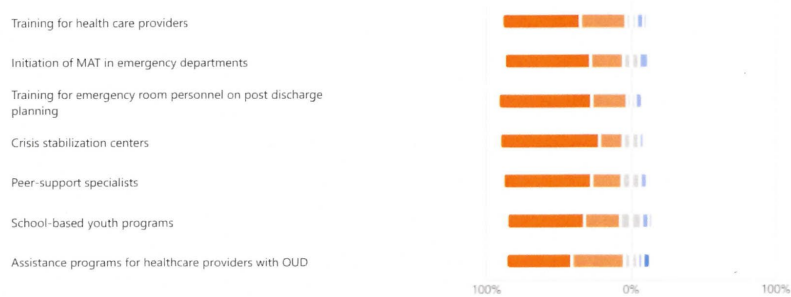
8. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support people in recovery from OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions. Please rate these approved uses based on its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County:

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



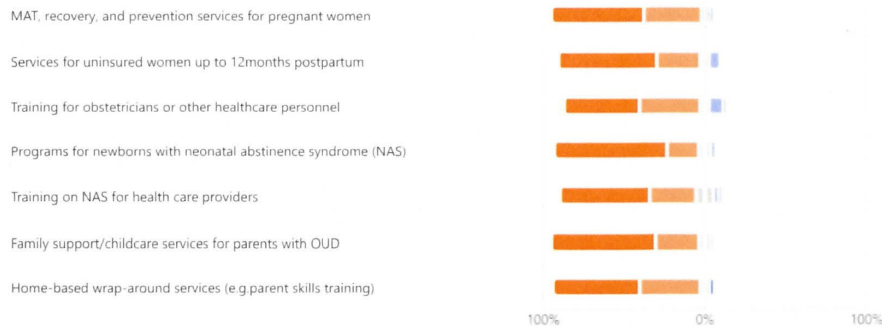
9. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to provide connections to care for persons who have - or are at risk of developing - OUD and any co-occurring SUD or MH conditions. Please rate these approved uses based on its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County:

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



10. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to address the needs of pregnant or parenting women with OUD and any co-occurring SUD or MH conditions and the needs of their families. Please rate these approved uses based on its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County:

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



11. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support efforts to prevent over-prescribing and ensure appropriate prescribing and dispensing of opioids. Please rate these approved uses based on its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County:

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



12. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support efforts to discourage or prevent misuse of opioids. Please rate these approved uses based on its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County:

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



13. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support efforts to prevent or reduce overdose deaths or other opioid related harms. Please rate these approved uses based on its importance to be developed or expanded in Ocean County:

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



14. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support first responders.

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



15. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support efforts to provide leadership, planning, coordination, facilitations, training and technical assistance.

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



16. The following are a potential use of funds (not listed in priority order) to support opioid abatement research.

Extremely Important Very Important Moderately Important Slightly Important Not Important At All Or No Opinion



17. Please Provide Additional Feedback/Comments:

RESOLUTION

September 9, 2026

WHEREAS, the Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council is charged with providing input, advice, and recommendations on the disbursement of funds allocated to the County of Ocean and participating municipalities within Ocean County from the National Opioid Litigation Resolution and to create a planning document; and

WHEREAS, the National Opioid Litigation Resolution restricts the use of settlement funds to certain opioid-related treatment, prevention, and remediation purposes (hereafter the "Approved Uses"); and

WHEREAS, the Opioid Advisory Council has developed a planning document entitled Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council Plan 2027-2029, which includes an assessment of community needs and identification of Approved Uses prioritized for funding; and

WHEREAS, the Opioid Advisory Council approved and endorsed the planning document on July 30, 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, of the COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY** approves and endorses the Ocean County Opioid Advisory Council Plan 2027-2029.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this Resolution shall be made available to the County Opioid Advisory Council and the County Department of Human Services.

Thank you to the Ocean County Board of Commissioners:

Frank Sadeghi, Director

Jennifer Bacchione, Deputy Director

Robert S. Arace

Sam Ellenbogen

Ray Gormley