



**STATE OF ALABAMA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

STEVE MARSHALL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

501 WASHINGTON AVE
MONTGOMERY, AL

November 13, 2023

Alabama Association of County Commissions
P.O. Box 5040
Montgomery, Alabama 36103

Alabama League of Municipalities
P.O. Box 1270
Montgomery, Alabama 36102

VIA EMAIL

Re: State of Alabama Opioid Settlements

Dear Commissioners and Councilmen:

As you know, the Attorney General's Office has recently entered into several settlement agreements with opioid supply-chain participants. These settlements will bring millions of dollars into Alabama for the specific purpose of abating the opioid crisis in our state. Your cities and counties have received, and will continue to receive, funds from those settlements. I write to underscore for you the permitted uses of this money and to ask for your help in ensuring that it is used judiciously. **We owe it to the People of Alabama to get this right.**

Most of these settlements will be paid out over several years. The lengthy payout periods will allow us, on both the state and local levels, to implement and fund long-term strategies to address this crisis. This comes with significant responsibility. Each settlement requires that abatement funds be spent only to abate, or reduce, the opioid crisis in our state. To that end, each agreement includes a list of approved uses that limit how abatement funds can be spent. If these funds are spent on non-approved purposes, it could cost the State and its subdivisions, including your cities and counties, future payments from the opioid defendants.

While there is some variation in the approved uses amongst the settlements, they all generally require that these funds be spent to address three broad categories of abatement: education, prevention, and treatment. The approved uses are designed to serve as guardrails to channel spending towards appropriate

abatement strategies but are also meant to be wide-ranging enough to give you the flexibility to best address the needs of your community. For examples of strategies in each of these categories, I invite you to consult the annual reports of the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council which I co-chair.

I am sure that many of you have already been approached by a variety of vendors seeking funding for opioid initiatives. Please proceed with caution. Though public-private partnerships may prove valuable in some instances, investing your funds with outside vendors should only be done after thorough examination of demonstrated successes in other cities or states. Ideally, you have already identified existing reputable organizations with demonstrated success that offer opportunities for partnership in this endeavor. It is also paramount that your decisions are made with full transparency and accountability to the constituents whom you serve. As always, Alabama's ethics laws prohibit any action taken with a conflict of interest or for personal enrichment.

I am of the strong conviction that local governments know best how to combat the opioid epidemic in their communities. It is my hope that subdivisions will work with one another, and in some cases with the State, to implement a thoughtful and meaningful abatement plan that will yield regional benefits. If our cities and counties are willing to come together by regions to develop a larger, long-term plan for their areas, then there could be opportunities for the state to support these endeavors directly. The State has already invested a great deal in the state agencies tasked with tackling the opioid epidemic, but I believe that it is time we also considered a ground-up approach. Local leaders like you are on the front lines, and we need your leadership.

The Legislature has recently established the Oversight Commission on Alabama Opioid Settlement Funds to allocate the State's share of the settlement funds. Just like you, that body will have to decide how best to allocate the State's share of the abatement funds. I would like to be able to report to the Commission on the many ways that opioid funds are being invested at the local level and to encourage them to support any local projects or programs that have produced positive results. As you make decisions about expenditures, please send these to my Office via OpioidFunds@AlabamaAG.gov. Your participation will also enable me to ensure that your spending is in keeping with the State's settlement agreements.

The opioid crisis has touched countless lives across Alabama. It has brought pain, grief, and death to so many. We have been presented with a real opportunity to ease the suffering in our communities. My Office stands ready and willing to assist you as we work together to help heal our great state.

Sincerely,



Steve Marshall
Attorney General