Buncombe County Opioid Settlement Fund

Strategic Plan 2027-2030 Overview

BUNCOMBE COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH



Background

In 2022, Buncombe County launched an extensive strategic planning process to guide investments for the county's share of North Carolina's $26 billion opioid settlement. The resulting 2024-2026 Opioid Settlement Strategic Plan established a dual approach: implementing immediate, life-saving interventions while strengthening long-term system capacity to address the root causes of substance use.

Since then, Buncombe County has made meaningful progress, including fewer overdose deaths and emergency department visits, better access to medications for opioid use disorder, more robust harm-reduction services, and stronger reentry supports. At the same time, Tropical Storm Helene, shifts in healthcare and justice system policies, and a more unpredictable drug supply have created new barriers to treatment access, housing stability, and recovery.

Strategic Planning at a Glance

In April of 2026, the Department of Public Health launched the next phase of planning to identify strategies that will guide the use of opioid settlement funds for fiscal years 2028-2030. This process relied on insights from the original plan, updated environmental scans, and community engagement, including contributions from individuals with lived experience, system partners, and the broader public.

Vision for Change

2038 Vision Statement

Buncombe County is a community where substance use recovery is characterized by timely and coordinated holistic care centered in empathy, cultural responsiveness, and evidence-based methods from prevention to long-term recovery.

Key Indicators of Change

1. Overdose-related deaths
2. Overdose-related Emergency Department visits
3. The number of Child Protective Services cases associated with substance use
4. Criminal justice data associated with substance use
5. Social Determinants of Health associated with substance use

Strategic Priorities for 2027-2030

A Renewed Dual Approach to Change

Continued Prioritization of Life-Saving Resources		Invest in Planning & Prevention to Address Root Causes	
Access to Care	• Meeting people where they are • Alternative public safety response models • Treatment during incarceration	**Coordinated Services**	• Integrated information systems • Coordinated case management • Justice system diversion and reentry resources • Systems-level coordination
Harm Reduction Resources	• Narcan/Naloxone • Safer-use supplies • Drug checking & early-warning systems • Outreach & Education	**Holistic Care & Stability Supports**	• Strengthen recovery housing • Employment & training pathways • Transportation access