

# Graham County Impact Report Narratives for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Each local government that receives opioid settlement funds is asked to share an Annual Settlement Update describing how they have made use of settlement funds during each fiscal year. For each strategy funded, local governments also share additional narratives to describe their progress and successes (success information is optional for some local governments). Across all funded strategies, each local government selects one progress narrative and one success narrative to spotlight each fiscal year.

Graham County provided the following narrative information for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (July 2023 through June 2024):

## Annual Settlement Update

During FY 2023-2024, Graham County started using opioid settlement funds to address the opioid crisis in our community. \$21,447.66, representing approximately 5% of the total available funding, was disbursed towards Exhibit A, Post-Overdose Response Team. Specifically, these funds were expensed for salaried and contracted services related to the Community Linkage to Care Program and the Post-Overdose Response Team. The CLC program aims to connect Graham County residents to treatment and support for substance use or addiction. Support includes harm reduction, housing, food, and jobs. The goal is to reduce overdose hospital visits and deaths in Graham County. The Post-Overdose Response Team is crucial for providing immediate care and intervention to individuals who have experienced an overdose, offering a pathway to recovery and reducing the likelihood of repeat incidents.

At this early stage, the main focus has been laying the groundwork for the long-term. We've prioritized planning and have worked with community stakeholders to ensure resources are being allocated appropriately. Although the impact reported is modest, this is only the beginning. We recognize the significant amount of work ahead and are actively planning and preparing to implement a range of strategies designed to combat opioid addiction more comprehensively. As additional initiatives are put into action, we expect to see both increased spending and a more substantial impact on our community. We remain committed to addressing this critical issue and look forward to reporting greater progress in the future.

## Strategy Spotlights

### ❖ Exhibit A, Strategy 8: Post-Overdose Response Team

#### Progress Narrative

During the fiscal year 2023-2024, Graham County used opioid settlement funds for a Post-Overdose Response Team (PORT). The PORT strategy focused on providing timely follow-up care to individuals who have experienced an overdose. Extensive research was conducted to review existing programs and best practices for PORT models across the state. This research, alongside collaboration with emergency medical services (EMS) and community stakeholders, informed the development of our local PORT model.

The initial phase of the PORT implementation involved creating a standardized response protocol and PORT kits. These kits, which included naloxone, harm reduction information, and contact details for

PORT members, were distributed by EMS professionals at the scene of overdoses. Regardless of consent to further services, all individuals received these kits. For those who signed a consent form, PORT members followed up within 24-72 hours, offering continued support and connections to recovery resources.

There were numerous key partners in the PORT strategy including Graham County EMS, which played a vital role in distributing the kits and responding to overdose events. PORT staff members have personal lived experience and are certified peer support specialists, embedding peer support deeply into the work. In addition, other key members involved also have lived experience.

While still in its early stages, the PORT strategy has laid a strong foundation for future outreach and follow-up efforts, with extensive research contributing to its development. We anticipate increased community impact as the program expands in the future.

#### ❖ **Exhibit A, Strategy 8: Post-Overdose Response Team**

##### **Success Narrative**

One of our Post-Overdose Response Team (PORT) clients has made remarkable strides in their recovery journey. Following an overdose in April, during which both emergency medical services (EMS) and law enforcement were called, this individual was introduced to our team. We facilitated their entry into a treatment program, which they successfully completed. In addition, we assisted them in enrolling in Medicaid, ensuring they had access to essential healthcare services.

The individual was on probation at the time of their overdose and has not tested positive on any drug screens since. As part of their recovery plan, we connected them with medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD), which they continue to use as part of their ongoing recovery. We also helped establish a comprehensive medication management plan for their other mental health needs.

With newfound stability, they have secured employment and made significant progress toward regaining their driver's license. In addition to completing the TASC program, a court-ordered drug treatment program, they have successfully finished parenting classes. The individual is actively working with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to regain custody of their child, demonstrating continued commitment to their family and future.

Due to their significant progress and dedication, the judge overseeing their case recently released them from probation, marking an important milestone in their recovery.

#### **Progress and Success Narratives for All Funded Strategies**

#### ❖ **Exhibit A, Strategy 8: Post-Overdose Response Team**

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