



# City of Baltimore Overdose Response Community Engagement Plan

## Overview

On August 29, 2024, Mayor Scott released an Executive Order outlining a comprehensive framework for the administration of opioid restitution funds to fight the ongoing opioid epidemic in Baltimore at all levels. Part of this executive order charged the city government with developing a City Overdose Response Strategy to guide the efforts to address the opioid and overdose epidemic through programs, interventions, and funding. The Community Engagement Plan outlines a two-step approach to ensure the City's Overdose Response Strategy reflects the current needs and gaps in services.

## Part 1: Community Input

The City will engage in several activities to hear directly from residents about the opioid crisis.

Several key principles will guide this community input process, including:

- 1. Baltimore Centered:** The City will draw on the collective expertise, experience, and wisdom of Baltimore.
- 2. Creating Opportunity:** So that as many city residents as possible can participate, the City will offer several opportunities for input, including community listening sessions, an online public input form, key informant interview and focus groups.
- 3. Diverse Perspectives:** The input of people, organizations, and communities most impacted by the overdose crisis is particularly important. The plan includes outreach to people who have used or are using drugs and their families.
- 4. Transparency and Exchange:** The City acknowledges that while this crisis is not new, there is a new vigor to the conversation centered on the additional funds the City has won from the opioid litigation. As part of these sessions and this process, the City will share information collected from these community sessions and note how they will be used to guide restitution efforts.

## *Goals of Community Input*

The City seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of how to best serve its residents. To accomplish this, the City will:

1. Hear about people's experiences around addiction and overdose crisis in the City.
2. Identify the community's priorities related to the overdose crisis that the community believes need immediate attention and investment.
3. Identify the approaches to ensure that the process for the exchange of information on the City's response to addiction and overdose is fair, transparent, and well-managed. This information will be used to develop the ongoing engagement plan in Part 2.

## *Activities for Community Input*

In order build out the City's overdose response strategy, the City will create the following opportunities:

1. Community listening sessions: to hear from residents in person about their perspectives on how their specific community has been impacted by the overdose crisis, the challenges they face, and recommendations to address the opioid epidemic.

2. Online public input form: to receive input from residents online about their biggest concerns about the overdose epidemic.
3. Key informant interviews and forums with city agencies and service providers: to hear from leadership and frontline staff responding to the overdose crisis in Baltimore City about their experiences working within the current service landscape
4. Focus groups with people with lived and living experience: to learn from people who use or have used drugs about the most significant concerns, effectiveness of current services, and opportunities to create change.

## **Part 2: Ongoing Engagement**

As outlined in the Executive Order, the City will also develop a plan for robust, comprehensive, and ongoing input on the City's efforts to address the overdose crisis. Utilizing information gathered in Part 1, the City will release a proposed plan for ongoing engagement.