



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 03/10/2026

REQUESTER: AshLynn Wilkerson, Assistant City Attorney

PRESENTER: AshLynn Wilkerson, Assistant City Attorney

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, REJECTION, AMENDMENT AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF RESOLUTION R-2526-121: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA AUTHORIZING GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE 2026 POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OPIOID ABATEMENT GRANT FROM THE OKLAHOMA OPIOID ABATEMENT BOARD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$750,000 TO FUND A PARTNERSHIP WITH MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OKLAHOMA TO IMPLEMENT THE "A BETTER WAY-OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS" SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

BACKGROUND:

In 2020, the Oklahoma Legislature enacted House Bill 4138, the Political Subdivisions Opioid Abatement Grants Act, creating the Oklahoma Opioid Abatement Board oversight body for the distribution of opioid settlement funds. Section 2 of the Act provides the Legislature's purpose, which is "to promote and protect the health of Oklahomans by using monetary grants to abate the opioid crisis in a comprehensive manner that includes cooperation and collaboration with political subdivisions." 74 O.S. § 30.4. Although the City of Norman did not participate as a litigating party in any of the opioid lawsuits, it is eligible for opioid abatement grants.

Grants funds are limited by statute for certain approved purposes set out in 74 O.S. §30.5. These include evidence-based, forward-looking strategies, programming and services used to:

- a. expand the availability of treatment for individuals affected by opioid use disorders, co-occurring substance use disorders and mental health issues,
- b. develop, promote and provide evidence-based opioid use prevention strategies,
- c. provide opioid use disorder and co-occurring substance use disorder avoidance and awareness education,
- d. decrease the oversupply of licit and illicit opioids,
- e. support recovery from addiction services performed by qualified and appropriately licensed providers,

- f. treat opioid use, abuse and disorders including early intervention screening, counseling and support,
- g. support individuals in treatment and recovery from opioid use, abuse and disorder,
- h. provide programs or services to connect individuals with opioid use, abuse or disorder, or who are at risk of developing opioid use disorder, co-occurring substance use disorder and mental health issues, with treatment and counseling programs and services,
- i. address the needs of individuals who are involved, or who are at risk of becoming involved, in the criminal justice system due to opioid use, abuse or disorder through programs or services in municipal and county criminal judicial systems including prearrest and postarrest diversion programs, pretrial services and drug or recovery courts,
- j. address the needs of pregnant or parenting women with opioid use, abuse or disorder and their families,
- k. address the needs of parents and caregivers caring for babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome,
- l. support efforts to prevent overprescribing and ensure appropriate prescribing and dispensing of opioids,
- m. support efforts to discourage or prevent misuse of opioids including the oversupply of licit and illicit opioids,
- n. support efforts to prevent or reduce overdose deaths or other opioid-related harms including through increased availability and distribution of naloxone and other drugs that treat overdoses for use by first responders, persons who have experienced an overdose event, families, schools, community-based service providers, social workers and other members of the public,
- o. reimburse or fund law enforcement and emergency responder expenditures relating to the opioid epidemic including costs of responding to emergency medical or police calls for service, equipment, treatment or response alternatives, mental health response training and training for law enforcement and emergency responders as to appropriate practices and precautions when dealing with opioids or individuals who are at risk of opioid overdose or death,
- p. reimburse attorney fees and allowable expenses directly related to opioid litigation incurred as part of legal services agreements entered into before May 21, 2020,
- q. support efforts to provide leadership, planning and coordination to abate the opioid epidemic through activities, programs or strategies for prevention and recovery models including regional intergovernmental efforts and not-for-profit agency support,
- r. support education of youths regarding the dangers of opioid use, abuse and addiction,
- s. fund training relative to any approved purpose,
- t. monitor, surveil and evaluate opioid use, abuse or disorder, or
- u. provide opioid abatement as identified by the Oklahoma Opioid Abatement Board as consistent with the purpose of the Political Subdivisions Opioid Abatement Grants Act.

The City applied for the first round of Opioid Abatement Grant Funding in March 2024 and was successfully awarded a grant in the amount of \$190,000.00 in July 2024 to fund a project with The Virtue Center. The City applied for the second round of Opioid Abatement Grant Funding in June 2025 and was successfully awarded a grant in the amount of \$498,000.00 in August 2025 to fund a three-year project with The Virtue Center.

The Oklahoma Opioid Abatement Board has opened another application round in 2026 for additional Opioid Abatement Grant awards. The applications open online on February 1, 2026, and close March 31, 2026. Similar to the 2025 application round, this round of grant funding is designed to support projects/programs that span a timeline of three (3) years. For a municipality with a population of 100,001 or more, the proposed maximum funding is \$750,000.00 (\$250,000.00 per year). This grant funding also permits a grant recipient to contract or partner with a nonprofit organization or other applicant for the purpose of using its grant award for the approved purposes set forth in the Act. Grant award funding is not guaranteed.

DISCUSSION:

In April 2025, the City entered into Contract K-2425-109 to partner with Mental Health Association Oklahoma on the “A Better Way – Opportunity Knocks” program. This program was partially funded with opioid settlement funds provided from the State through the Distributors Settlement Agreement in combination with Sanitation funding. The 2026 Opioid Abatement Grant funding will be the vehicle to ensure continuation of the program past the expiration of K-2425-109 in April 2026.

The program will provide employment opportunities and social services targeted toward individuals experiencing homelessness with a focus on those individuals impacted by OUD, SUD, and/or co-occurring mental health conditions. It is a supportive employment and case management program that provides participants with wages for their day labor, meals, and opportunities for engagement with a Case Manager and Employment Specialist who will offer wrap-around social services, connections to care, and employment support. Additionally, the Case Manager and Employment Specialist will have flexibility to interact with participants outside the scheduled work activities, facilitating services in public spaces and other convenient locations.

Resolution R-2526-121 authorizes Staff to submit an application for grant funding for the purpose of funding a three-year partnership with Mental Health Association Oklahoma to continue implementation of the “A Better Way – Opportunity Knocks” program.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends adoption of Resolution R-2526-121.