



Jersey City's Fight against the Opioid Crisis

How Settlement Funds Are Saving Lives and Strengthening Our Community

The opioid epidemic has left deep scars across families and communities nationwide. In Jersey City, however, settlement dollars have been turned into lifelines. Guided by a vision of compassion, accountability, and innovation, the city has built a coordinated response that prioritizes people, saving lives today while building resilience for tomorrow.

A Holistic Community Response

Settlement funds have been invested in programs that meet residents where they are, whether in clinics, schools, neighborhoods, or even through the city's 24/7 vending machine. Together, these initiatives are not isolated projects but part of a citywide fabric of support. They provide harm reduction through access to Narcan, fentanyl test strips, and safe-use kits; Treatment and recovery services, including medication-assisted treatment, peer support, and trauma-informed care; and Education and prevention, with workshops, youth programs, and culturally tailored outreach. This approach ensures that wherever a resident is in their journey (prevention, active use, or recovery) there is a doorway to safety and healing.

24/7 Kiosk

One of the boldest steps was the launch of a harm reduction kiosk, the first of its kind in the region. Stocked with free Narcan, test strips, and hygiene supplies, it has dispensed thousands of lifesaving tools, proving that when barriers are removed, lives are saved.

Building Partnerships, Rebuilding Trust

The settlement dollars have also created space for unlikely but powerful partnerships. Police officers are working hand-in-hand with counselors and peer recovery specialists to provide rapid response, crisis intervention, and follow-up care. These collaborations are not only addressing addiction head-on but are also helping to rebuild trust between law enforcement and the neighborhoods most affected by the opioid crisis. Peer-led models have also reshaped recovery in Jersey City. Recovery Junction and other grassroots efforts have shown that healing happens in safe, welcoming spaces where residents can learn from and support one another. Meanwhile, programs led by community groups, the Urban League and SAMHIN, are reaching youth and cultural communities with education that reduces stigma and builds resilience early.

Jersey City's use of opioid settlement funding demonstrates what is possible when dollars are directed with purpose. The outcomes are already clear: expanded harm reduction resources available around the clock, increased access to treatment and culturally sensitive care, youth engaged in prevention programs that strengthen future resilience, and families supported through trauma-informed outreach and education.

The opioid crisis is far from over, but Jersey City's commitment offers hope to our city. By investing in harm reduction, recovery, education, and community trust, the city is proving that settlement funds are not just about addressing a crisis — they are about creating a healthier, safer, and more equitable future for all residents, #HealthierJC.

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Project

Description

Khaleidoscope Health Care (KHC)

Delivered trauma-informed harm reduction through education sessions and wellness pop-ups; distributed fentanyl test kit and Narcan; emphasized stigma reduction and family-friendly outreach. Khaleidoscope has made harm reduction approachable and stigma-free, reaching families where they live. KHC distributed hundreds of fentanyl test kits and Narcan kits while creating a dozen trauma-informed, family-friendly events. More than half of their participants identified as in recovery or seeking treatment- a testament to the trust and safety KHC has built in the Jersey City community.

Spectrum Health Care (SHC)

SHC expanded access to lifesaving Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) enrolling new patients into methadone, buprenorphine and naltrexone programs. Alongside treatments, SHC has provided Narcan trainings, peer-support meetings, safe-use kits into the community and high risk neighborhoods in Jersey City, ensuring no resident is left without options for care and safety.

Recovery Junction

Recovery Junction offers a peer-led community of hope for residents of Jersey City. They distributed more than 700 safe-use and wound care kits, including Narcan and xylazine test strips- directly in high-risk areas. They created peer-led harm reduction workshops and a safe environment with weekly meetings, reducing the stigma of residents in recovery or seeking recovery options. For one participant, "Grace", what began as a court mandate has become a voluntary lifeline. *"This place reminded me that I am not alone (in my recovery). I didn't know help like this existed in Jersey City".*

Forge Health

Forge Health provided evidence- based behavioral health care for individuals with OUD and co-occurring mental health challenges. They specialized in providing programming for first responders, veterans, and residents facing trauma, PTSD, anxiety, depression, and substance use. By offering outpatient, intensive outpatient, and partial hospitalization programs, they ensure Jersey City residents receive the right level of care at the right time and veterans.

Harm Reduction Kiosk

In 2023, Jersey City became the first city in the region to launch a 24/7 harm reduction vending machine located outside the Department of Health. Stocked with free Narcan, fentanyl/xylazine test strips, and hygiene supplies, the vending machine provides judgement-free, barrier-free access. Thousands of items have been dispensed- preventing overdoses and saving lives at all hours of the day and night.

Jersey City Police Officers
Benevolent Association (POBA)

The Jersey City Police Officers Benevolent Association (POBA), in partnership with C-Line Community Outreach Services spearheaded an Opioid Response Team dedicated to addressing addiction through trauma-informed, culturally attuned services. This initiative brought together a team of police officers, detectives (both active and retired), interns, and trained professionals, including certified drug and alcohol counselors, licensed clinical social workers, and national certified peer recovery specialists to provide 24-hour crisis intervention services, personalized therapy, weekly support groups, and referrals to detox and recovery services. Focused on the city's five highest-risk neighborhoods, the POBA/C-Line program not only addresses addiction but also works to rebuild trust between law enforcement and community members.

Jersey City's Fight against the Opioid Crisis

Opioid Settlement funds also seeded mini grants across community organizations, extending the impact far beyond traditional providers

Mini Grants

Program Description

Athletes for a Better Community

Athletes for a Better Community gave youths aged 6-13 years from the Marion Gardens housing community, a safer summer camp with recreation, nutrition, and mental health support. The ABCKidz Summer Camp addressed the Urgent Health Priority of Community Safety and Open Spaces by providing recreational and educational activities at Martucci Field. The camp provided wellbeing through open-space recreation guided by educators, special guests, and professional mental health counselors, fostering physical fitness, emotional empowerment, and community engagement.

C-Line Outreach

C-Line outreach created Healing Circles, to address trauma recovery and prevent teen vaping, marijuana use, and violence. This program addressed the Urgent Health Priority of Community Safety and Open Spaces by providing safe spaces for trauma recovery and drug prevention. The program also offered parent workshops on the health risks of substance use and the psychology of addiction.

Hunters World

Hunters World trained teens in mentoring, mindfulness, and leadership, preparing them to serve peers year-round. Funding addressed the Urgent Health Priority of Education by training teens over four weeks to serve as mentors during the school year. This program built social and emotional skills, such as counseling, active listening, emotional regulation, leadership, and teamwork.

Jersey City Women Clergy Alliance

Women Clergy Alliance brought together girls and senior women for wellness, nutrition, and a community theater program to combat isolation and stress. Funding supported the GSW (Girls and Senior Women) Community Outreach Program, addressing the Urgent Health Priority of Community Safety and Open Spaces. The program engaged 30 participants (15 girls and 15 single senior women) to combat COVID-19-related isolation, stress, and substance use through personal development, nutrition, mental wellness, and a community theater performance.

Most Excellent Way Life Center, Inc

Funding addressed the Urgent Health Priority of Education through C.A.M.P. Me (Cultivating, Aspiring, Manifesting a Powerful Me), a four-week program that nurtured youth potential, empowered participants, fostered meaningful connections, and instilled self-belief. Funding also addressed the Urgent Health Priority of Health Education & Management of Chronic Illness through the Fatherhood Engagement Project (FEP), which tackled gaps in mental health services in Hudson County. Using Certified Recovery and Mental Health Peer Mentors, the project reached young fathers (ages 18-25) from Greenville and connected them to primary care, mental health checks, and employment opportunities.

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SAMHIN (South Asian Mental Health Initiative Network)

Funding supported the Urgent Health Priority of Education by providing free workshops that reduced stigma around mental illness and addressed substance use/abuse in the South Asian community. Medical experts increased awareness by sharing national and local statistics, dispelling myths, identifying risk factors and warning signs, and discussing prevention and treatment strategies.

Spectrum Health Care

Funding addressed the Urgent Health Priority of Community Safety and Open Spaces Education by supporting programs that promoted safe, healthy environments and educational activities within the community. These initiatives focused on increasing awareness of safety practices, encouraging use of open spaces for physical and mental wellbeing, and fostering community engagement.

Urban League of Hudson County

Funding addressed the Urgent Health Priority of Education through the launch of the "Free Teens" program, which educated teens ages 13-19 about STIs, unprotected sex, and substance use. The program was led by doctors, nurses, and teachers and included trips to hospitals and clinics to demonstrate the real-life impact of venereal disease and addiction.

Looking Ahead

The opioid epidemic has devastated families across the nation. But Jersey City is proving what happens when settlement dollars are used with compassion, innovation, and accountability.

Jersey City expanded harm reduction.

Jersey City increased access to treatment and recovery.

Jersey City is addressing trauma and building resilience in families.

Jersey City is creating a healthier, safer, more equitable place to live.

