

RISE

Recovery • Intervention • Support • Empowerment

La Crosse County's Opioid Response Plan



Opioid Response Plan

July 2026

RISE: OPIOID RESPONSE PLAN

La Crosse County is implementing a coordinated, system-level response to substance use and overdose through the RISE Initiative, which stands for Recovery, Intervention, Support, and Empowerment. This effort brings together county departments, treatment providers, and community partners to strengthen how our community prevents, responds to, and recovers from substance use challenges.

Through national opioid litigation settlements, La Crosse County will receive approximately \$7.6 million over ten years. These funds are being invested strategically to improve existing services, fill critical gaps, and support long-term solutions that benefit individuals, families, and the entire community.

What RISE Does

RISE strengthens La Crosse County's response to substance use by coordinating work across Justice Support, Family Strengthening, and Treatment Access—the areas where improvements can most reduce harm, improve health, and lower long-term costs.

Instead of short-term programs, RISE focuses on sustainable, system-wide improvements through 18 coordinated action plans. These efforts:

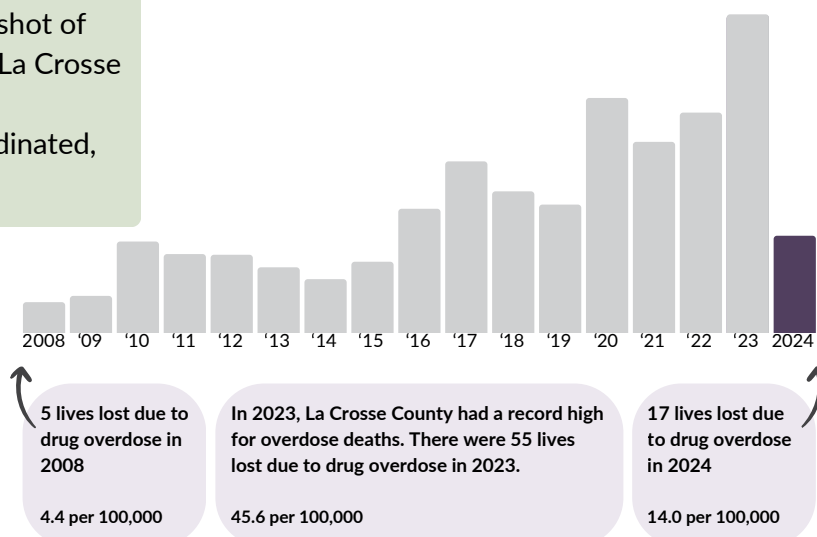
- Improve access to treatment, recovery housing, and coordinated care
- Strengthen connections among service providers
- Reduce gaps and barriers to care
- Support individuals and families throughout their recovery
- Lessen long-term pressure on high-cost systems like the jail and out-of-home care

To achieve these goals, RISE uses evidence-based, data-informed strategies, including harm-reduction and overdose-prevention initiatives such as naloxone distribution. By aligning partners across systems and focusing on long-term impact, RISE aims to reduce overdose deaths, improve outcomes, and build a healthier, safer community.

BACKGROUND

Substance use and overdose continue to affect individuals and families across La Crosse County. Opioid use disorder creates serious health and safety challenges, strains families, and often leads to involvement with multiple county systems. Like many communities, La Crosse County has absorbed millions of dollars in unexpected and unbudgeted time and resources responding to the opioid epidemic across the justice, child protection, behavioral health, and homeless response systems.

This chart provides a snapshot of recent overdose trends in La Crosse County and reinforces the continued need for a coordinated, long-term response.



The national opioid settlements give counties the chance to reinvest funds in the areas most impacted by these rising needs. Because counties provide many of the core services affected by substance use, focusing the funds on county services can strengthen the systems that respond every day to the opioid crisis, improve how services work together, and help ensure these supports remain strong over time.

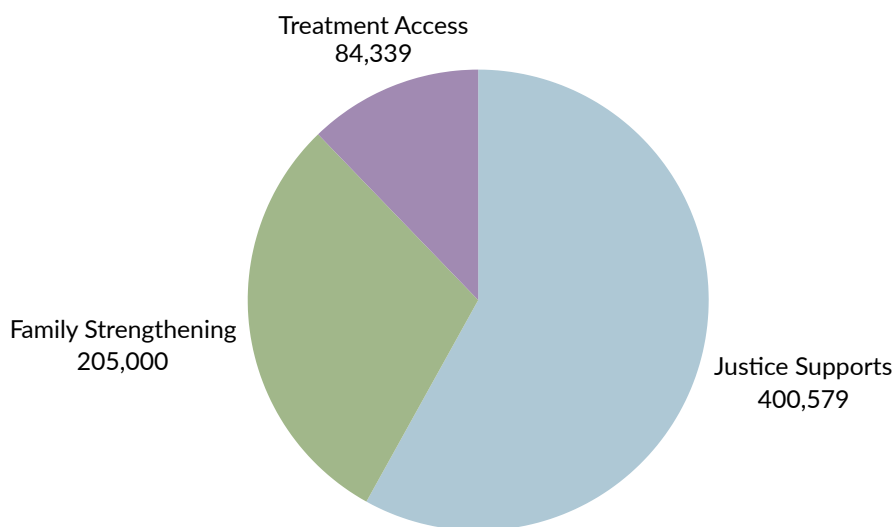
This plan was developed through a thoughtful, practical process that began with input from the County Board. County staff researched strategies used in other communities, gathered feedback from local partners, and relied on expertise across Health, Human Services, and the Sheriff's Office to shape recommendations that reflect both local needs and sustainable solutions.

With these settlement funds, La Crosse County can address immediate needs while strengthening the systems that support individuals and families over time. These investments help reduce pressure on high-cost county services, improve coordination, and promote healthier outcomes for people and the broader community.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

La Crosse County is investing opioid settlement funds to strengthen justice system responses, support families, and improve treatment access. These early investments launch a **10-year plan** for a long-term approach to prevention, treatment access, and community well-being.

2026 Budget: \$626,100
\$63,800 in matching grant funds



Family Strengthening – \$205,000

- Home visiting (prevention)
- Treatment supports
- Housing

Justice Support – \$400,600

- Jail services
- Treatment courts & deflection
- Housing supports

Treatment Access– \$84,300

- System coordination
- Harm reduction
- Digital tools (AI pilot)
- Housing

*2027 budget amounts shown in this report are estimates. Final funding decisions will be made during the regular budget approval process.

COORDINATED APPROACH

La Crosse County's opioid settlement investments are organized across **Justice Supports**, **Family Strengthening**, and **Treatment Access**. Together, these efforts aim to reduce overdose risk, improve access to care, strengthen family stability, and support long-term recovery.

The framework below provides an overview of how these efforts work together to support prevention, treatment, recovery, and community well-being.

UNIFIED PREVENTION STRATEGY ACROSS JUSTICE, FAMILY, AND TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Strategic use of opioid settlement funds to strengthen systems and prevent overdose



Identify Risk Early • Prevent Opioid Misuse • Reduce Overdose • Stabilize Families • Improve Treatment Access



JUSTICE SUPPORT

Justice Support focuses on improving safety, treatment access, and stability for individuals who encounter the justice system. This work expands screening and treatment inside the jail, improves re-entry planning, and increases access to safe housing and recovery supports.



What This Strategy Does

La Crosse County is expanding treatment and support across the justice system to create a more consistent and effective continuum of care. Everyone entering the jail will be screened for opioid use disorder, and individuals already receiving medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) will continue treatment. Those who need medication will have it safely initiated while in custody.

A full-time Re-Entry Coordinator and an in-jail licensed therapist will help individuals plan for a successful transition, complete assessments, and connect to treatment, housing, and community supports before release. Contingency management—small, evidence-based incentives—will be piloted to help people stay engaged in treatment, and Treatment Court operations will be reviewed to strengthen fairness and alignment with national standards.

To promote stability after release, investments include a sober living home for men, expanded transitional and sober living options for women, and a new sober living resource for expecting parents or parents with young children. A dedicated Justice Housing Stability Fund will provide short-term rental support for people leaving jail who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

Expected Impact

- Safer withdrawal management and reduced overdose risk
- Earlier identification of treatment needs
- More coordinated and supported re-entry
- Increased access to stable housing and recovery supports
- Reduced recidivism and crisis-system involvement
- Stronger, evidence-based justice practices

JUSTICE KEY INVESTMENTS

Invested in 2026:
\$400,600

Plans to Invest in 2027:
\$410,579*

MOUD in Jail

Provides screening and ensures medication treatment continues or begins during incarceration, with coordination for post-release care.

2026: \$110,000 | 2027: \$110,000*

Re-Entry Planning & Coordination

Adds a full-time Re-Entry Coordinator to support individualized re-entry plans and connect individuals to treatment, housing, and supports.

2026: \$98,243 | 2027: \$98,243*

Substance Use Assessments

Adds a licensed therapist to conduct assessments, brief interventions, and referrals inside the jail.

2026: \$106,336 | 2027: \$106,336*

Contingency Management Pilot

Uses small incentives to increase engagement in treatment and recovery activities.

2026: \$6,000 | 2027: \$12,000*

Four-Bed Sober Living Home (Men)

One-time funding to establish sober living for men transitioning from jail or homelessness.

2026: \$70,000 | 2027: No additional funds requested

Ophelia House Expansion (Women)

Improves and expands sober living and transitional housing options for women.

2026: No funds requested | 2027: \$70,000*

Justice Housing Stability Fund

Provides short-term housing support for individuals leaving jail when no other resources are available.

2026: \$10,000 | 2027: \$10,000*

Treatment Court Enhancement

Strengthens consistency and alignment with national practices in preparation for future positive-incentive models.

2026 and 2027: Funding covered by existing resources

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

Family Strengthening focuses on helping families affected by substance use remain safely together by expanding in-home support, improving coordinated care for parents, and increasing access to stable housing and family-centered treatment.



What This Strategy Does

La Crosse County is investing in programs that support parents in recovery, improve family stability, and reduce the need for out of home placements. A full-time home visitor will provide in-home support, parenting education, and service coordination for families involved with or at risk of entering Child Protective Services (CPS).

Access to residential treatment will be expanded through partnerships with additional providers, especially for parents and individuals with complex needs. New supportive living options will support pregnant individuals and parents with young children, offering safe housing, case management, and recovery support to help families remain together whenever possible.

To better meet the needs of pregnant and postpartum individuals with substance use disorders, partners across hospitals, schools, and treatment settings will work together to improve how people are identified, referred, and supported through care. A family-focused outpatient treatment specialization will also be developed to provide integrated, parent-centered behavioral health care aligned with CPS.

Finally, a Family Housing Stability Fund will provide short-term rental assistance to help stabilize families impacted by substance use, prevent child removal, and support reunification when possible.

Expected Impact

- Fewer out-of-home placements and stronger family stability
- Better coordination and support for pregnant and postpartum individuals
- Improved access to treatment and recovery supports for parents
- More stable housing for families impacted by substance use
- Reduced long-term child welfare involvement

FAMILY KEY INVESTMENTS

Invested in 2026:
\$205,000

Plans to Invest in 2027:
\$361,336*

Home Visiting (Healthy Families America)

Funds a full-time home visitor to support families with in-home services, parenting education, and coordinated connections to resources.

2026: \$100,000 | 2027: \$100,000*

Expanded Residential Treatment Network

Builds partnerships with residential treatment providers to improve access to higher levels of care for parents and individuals with complex needs.

2026: \$5,000 | 2027: \$5,000*

Local Mother/Child Supportive Living

Supports development of a family-centered supportive living home for pregnant individuals or parents with young children, including startup costs and case management.

2026: \$50,000 | 2027: \$100,000*

Coordinated Maternal Care Initiative

Improves referral pathways and coordinated support for pregnant and postpartum individuals with substance use disorders.

2026 and 2027: Funding covered by existing resources

Family-Focused Substance Use Treatment Specialization

Creates a specialized outpatient treatment track for parents, providing integrated, family-centered behavioral health care aligned with CPS.

2026: No funds requested | 2027: \$106,336*

Family Housing Stability Fund

Provides short-term rental support to stabilize families, prevent child removal, and support reunification.

2026: \$50,000 | 2027: \$50,000*

TREATMENT ACCESS

Treatment Access focuses on strengthening how people enter, move through, and stay connected to substance use treatment. This includes improving system coordination, increasing digital support tools, and reducing housing barriers that make it difficult for individuals to stay engaged in care.



What This Strategy Does

Local treatment and mental health leaders will participate in an ongoing collaboration to improve how the treatment system works—strengthening referral pathways, identifying gaps, and improving overall system flow. A part-time facilitator will coordinate meetings, gather feedback, and support continuous improvement so individuals can access treatment more easily.

Harm-reduction efforts will be aligned countywide to ensure consistent access to naloxone, fentanyl test strips, xylazine test strips, and training. This includes tracking supply and demand, coordinating with community partners, and supporting public education efforts like Drug Take Back Day. The goal is to ensure lifesaving supplies reach people most at risk and that providers have a shared understanding of community needs.

To support treatment engagement, will be piloted to help individuals starting or maintaining medication for opioid use disorder build recovery skills, stay connected between appointments, and improve long-term outcomes.

Finally, a Treatment Housing Stability Fund will reduce housing-related barriers that prevent people from staying in treatment. Short-term rental support, utilities, sober living fees, transportation, and other essential costs can be covered when no other resources are available, helping individuals maintain stability during recovery.

Expected Impact

- More coordinated and accessible treatment pathways
- Improved treatment engagement
- Better access to harm reduction tools countywide
- Fewer housing-related barriers to treatment retention
- Stronger collaboration among treatment, behavioral health, and community partners

TREATMENT KEY INVESTMENTS

Invested in 2026:
\$84,339

Plans to Invest in 2027:
\$84,339*

Treatment Leader Collaboration & System Effectiveness Initiative

Creates an ongoing collaboration of treatment and mental health leaders to strengthen referral pathways, improve coordination, and identify system gaps. Supports a part-time facilitator to coordinate meetings and guide improvement efforts.

2026: \$48,339 | 2027: \$48,339*

Harm Reduction Coordination

Coordinates countywide harm-reduction supplies and training, including naloxone and drug-checking tools. Supports communication, supply tracking, collaboration, and public education efforts like Drug Take Back Day and overdose prevention training.

2026: \$6,000 | 2027: \$6,000*

AI-Based Therapeutic Program Pilot

Pilots a digital tool that supports individuals in treatment-especially those starting or maintaining MOUD-by reinforcing recovery skills and improving engagement between appointments.

2026: \$10,000 | 2027: \$10,000*

Treatment Housing Stability Fund

Provides short-term rental assistance, utilities, sober living support, and transportation to help individuals stay engaged in treatment and prevent homelessness during recovery.

2026: \$20,000 | 2027: \$20,000*

RISE

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La Crosse County's coordinated response to substance use starts with strong connections and accessible support.

Questions

Email the RISE Project Team: RISE@lacrossecounty.org

In Crisis

For immediate assistance call **608-784-HELP (4357)**