PLUS PROGRAM · ALIGNMENT GUIDE · OPIOID SETTLEMENT

PLUS ALIGNMENT GUIDE

CALIFORNIA OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS (CA ABATEMENT ACCOUNTS FUND)

SIDE-BY-SIDE LANGUAGE FOR GRANT WRITERS. ADAPT EVERY BRACKET TO YOUR SCHOOL.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

California cities and counties receive opioid settlement funds from the national opioid settlements. Most of the local share flows through the CA Abatement Accounts Fund. Those funds must be spent on the opioid remediation uses listed in Exhibit E of the national settlement agreements. Exhibit E has two parts. Schedule A is a short list of Core Strategies, and Schedule B is a longer list of Approved Uses. California adds one more rule. At least 50 percent of the funds a city or county receives from the Abatement Accounts Fund in each calendar year must go to six High Impact Abatement Activities. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) oversees compliance. There is no single state application and no statewide deadline. Each county or city decides how to allocate its funds, so a school district reaches this money by proposing a partnership to its county behavioral health or public health department, or by answering a local request for proposals. As of October 31, 2026, timing depends entirely on the county. The most recent DHCS reporting window for cities and counties ran July 1 to September 30, 2026.

This guide follows the settlement's own framework in order: the High Impact Abatement Activities, the Exhibit E Core Strategies, the Exhibit E Approved Uses, the DHCS guiding principles for allocating funds, and how counties solicit and report. Each table shows what the settlement asks for, where PLUS fits, and sample language a writer can adapt. The sample language uses brackets for the details only your district can supply. Replace every bracket with your own data, schools and county partners, and rewrite the language in your district's voice.

> **Writer's note.** Use the rows that fit your proposal. PLUS is school-based prevention. It does not provide treatment, medication, harm reduction or naloxone distribution. A strong proposal claims one High Impact Abatement Activity and two or three Exhibit E uses, and names the county partners who cover everything else.

HIGH IMPACT ABATEMENT ACTIVITIES

Counties must spend at least half of each calendar year's Abatement Accounts funds on these six activities. A proposal that fits one of them helps the county meet its own requirement.

THE SETTLEMENT ASKS FOR	WHERE PLUS FITS	SAMPLE LANGUAGE
HIAA 5. Interventions to prevent drug addiction in vulnerable youth	This is the activity PLUS can fit most closely. Describe which students are most vulnerable and let the county confirm the fit. PLUS runs inside middle and high schools all year. Each month it measures what students experience on campus, including vaping and substance use, and the PLUS Team plans prevention activities from that data.	*"[District] proposes school-based prevention through the PLUS Program at [number] secondary schools as an intervention to prevent drug addiction in vulnerable youth. Each school will measure student experiences with substances every month and respond with prevention activities planned from that data."*
HIAA 3. Addressing the needs of communities of color and vulnerable populations disproportionately impacted by SUD (including sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations)	This activity centers people affected by substance use disorder. PLUS does not serve that population directly. Direction results can be viewed by student group, which helps a county see whether some students face more exposure than others.	*"Direction results will be reported to the county by grade level and student group so that prevention reaches the students in [District] who report the most exposure to substances on campus."*
HIAA 1, 2, 4 and 6. Treatment facilities and infrastructure, diversion from the justice system, and naloxone purchase and distribution	PLUS does not fit these activities. Naloxone access and staff overdose response belong to district health services and the county under separate policy.	*Leave these out of the PLUS request. If your district has a naloxone plan, describe it in a separate section and name who runs it.*

EXHIBIT E, SCHEDULE A: CORE STRATEGIES

DHCS calls Schedule A the preferred list of evidence-based uses. Use the Core Strategy number and wording your county uses in its own plan.

THE SETTLEMENT ASKS FOR	WHERE PLUS FITS	SAMPLE LANGUAGE
Core Strategy G.2. Funding for evidence-based prevention programs in schools	PLUS meets ESSA Tier 2 (moderate evidence) as a school climate program. It gives each school a monthly structure for prevention: student data, a student-facilitated Forum, an action plan and schoolwide activities.	*"PLUS is an evidence-based school program used in California schools for about 25 years. County funds will add substance use cycles to the PLUS calendar at [schools], so prevention is planned from current student data at every campus."*

THE SETTLEMENT ASKS FOR	WHERE PLUS FITS	SAMPLE LANGUAGE
Core Strategy G.1. Funding for media campaigns to prevent opioid use	PLUS Teams design campaigns for their own campus from Forum and Direction data. Fentanyl and opioid facts come from county public health. Students design the message and the delivery and do not give medical guidance.	*"Each PLUS Team will design [two] campaigns a year on fentanyl and counterfeit pills, using facts supplied by [County] Public Health and messages built from what students reported in that cycle's Forum."*
Core Strategy B.2. Provide education to school-based and youth-focused programs that discourage or prevent misuse	This item sits under the Core Strategy for treatment, so confirm with the county that it will charge prevention education here. PLUS students deliver prevention talks at feeder schools using activities from the Direction activity resource database.	*"High school PLUS students will deliver prevention talks at [feeder middle schools], using the feeder school talk from the PLUS activity resource database and facts provided by [County] Public Health."*
Core Strategy A. Naloxone and other overdose reversal drugs	PLUS does not fit this strategy.	*Name the district or county office that manages naloxone, outside the PLUS request.*

EXHIBIT E, SCHEDULE B: APPROVED USES (PREVENT MISUSE OF OPIOIDS)

Schedule B, Part II, Section G lists prevention uses. These two items describe school and family work.

THE SETTLEMENT ASKS FOR	WHERE PLUS FITS	SAMPLE LANGUAGE
G.9. School-based or youth-focused programs or strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in preventing drug misuse and seem likely to be effective in preventing the uptake and use of opioids	Be accurate here. The PLUS studies measure attendance, bullying and school climate. They do not measure substance use outcomes. PLUS builds protective factors such as connection and belonging and carries prevention to every campus, and the county decides whether that meets this item.	*"PLUS meets ESSA Tier 2 for improving attendance and has been studied for its effect on bullying and school climate. [District] proposes PLUS as school-based prevention infrastructure that builds the protective factors linked to lower substance use and measures substance use experiences on campus each month."*

THE SETTLEMENT ASKS FOR	WHERE PLUS FITS	SAMPLE LANGUAGE
G.10. Community-based education or intervention services for families, youth and adolescents at risk for OUD and co-occurring conditions	PLUS Teams can host an evening Forum for families each semester. Direction runs parent surveys by QR code. A county public health educator can present the health information while students facilitate.	*"Each school will host an evening family Forum on substance use and fentanyl in [languages]. PLUS students will facilitate, and a [County] Public Health educator will present the health information."*

DHCS GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ALLOCATING FUNDS

DHCS publishes guiding principles for cities and counties. A proposal that answers them is easier for county staff to approve.

DHCS ASKS COUNTIES TO	WHERE PLUS FITS	SAMPLE LANGUAGE
Prioritize evidence-based activities within prevention, treatment, harm reduction and recovery	PLUS meets ESSA Tier 2 and is studied by university research teams at UC Berkeley, the University of Oregon and the University of Florida.	*"The proposed prevention work uses PLUS, which meets ESSA Tier 2 (moderate evidence). [Cite the studies on the PLUS Research page.]"*
Supplement current successful efforts rather than replace them	Many districts already fund the PLUS class and Advisor. Settlement funds can pay only the substance use share and the added prevention activities.	*"[District] funds the PLUS class sections and most Advisor time from [LCFF or other source]. Settlement funds will add a substance use prevention strand that the district could not fund on its own."*
Use a transparent process with community engagement, including local data and input from the public	Direction and monthly Forums give the county current, student-generated data. PLUS students can present results to the county's advisory committee.	*"PLUS students will present Direction and Forum results to [County]'s opioid settlement advisory committee [once] each year so youth voice is part of the county's planning."*
Coordinate with public health and behavioral health departments	PLUS works alongside county partners. The PLUS Team promotes the wellness center and county youth services and reduces stigma. PLUS students do not counsel peers.	*"The PLUS Team will promote [County] youth services and the school wellness center through QR code campaigns and self-referral forms. Health information will come from [County] Public Health."*

HOW COUNTIES SOLICIT AND REPORT

COUNTIES DO THIS	WHERE PLUS FITS	SAMPLE LANGUAGE
Allocate funds locally through a county plan, an advisory committee or a request for proposals	Ask your county how it allocates. If it issues a request for proposals, use its headings. If not, send a short partnership proposal to behavioral health or public health.	*"[District] requests a partnership with [County Department] to bring school-based youth prevention under High Impact Abatement Activity 5 to [number] secondary schools."*
Report each year to DHCS on payments received and activities funded in the prior state fiscal year (July 1 to June 30), through an online form open July 1 to September 30	Offer the county aggregate data before it asks. Direction is anonymous and COPPA compliant and collects no personal information from students.	*"[District] will deliver an annual report to the county by [July 31] listing each expenditure by Exhibit E category, outcomes for each objective and participation counts. Only aggregate data will be shared."*
Encumber or spend Abatement Accounts funds within five years (seven for capital outlay)	Plan a multi-year request. PLUS renewal costs drop after the first year.	*"The request covers [three] school years, within the county's five-year spending window."*

BUDGET LANGUAGE

LINE	SAMPLE BUDGET JUSTIFICATION
PLUS Advisor, 0.1 to 0.2 FTE (substance use share)	"Funds [percent] of a [0.2] FTE PLUS Advisor at each site, matching the share of cycles centered on substance use. Advisors keep monthly time and effort records." A 0.1 FTE covers the PLUS class section and can get the job done. PLUS recommends 0.2 FTE because the added 0.1 lets the Advisor serve on the site's PBIS, MTSS and school safety teams and bring each cycle's data to them.
PLUS Program, first year ($3,495 per site)	"Funds the 2-Day PLUS Program Development Training for a staff team of up to four, the online subscription to Direction and the activity resource database, the PLUS curriculum and one conference registration."
PLUS Program, each year after ($1,495 per site with a three-year agreement)	"Continues the subscription, the annual conference registration and one 2-Day training registration for a new staff member each year."

LINE	SAMPLE BUDGET JUSTIFICATION
PLUS Advisor Institute ($1,495 registration plus lodging and travel)	"Prepares the PLUS Advisor to teach the PLUS class and lead its activities through the year. The Institute is held each June in Temecula."
Prevention activities	"Funds campaign materials, feeder school transportation and family Forum interpretation and childcare. These lines are entirely substance use prevention."

Writer's note. DHCS asks counties to supplement current efforts, so show what your district already pays and charge the county only the substance use share. Ask your county contract manager whether it accepts a percentage share of a shared position and of a subscription, what time records it expects, and whether it allows indirect costs. Keep naloxone, treatment and harm reduction out of the PLUS budget.

Writer's note. The full sample proposal for a fictional district, Cobalt Springs Unified School District, on the Funding PLUS page shows these pieces assembled into one county partnership proposal. Prices are from plusprogram.org/costs. Confirm them before you finalize the budget.

SOURCES

- DHCS, California Opioid Settlements: Allowable Expenditures (PDF)
- DHCS, Opioid Settlements Allowable Expenditures page
- DHCS, Allocating Opioid Settlement Funds: Guiding Principles for Participating Subdivisions (PDF)
- DHCS, California Opioid Settlements 101, August 2026 (PDF)
- PLUS Program Costs