PLUS PROGRAM · SAMPLE GRANT · COUNTY PARTNERSHIP

SAMPLE OPIOID SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL

COBALT SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

SAMPLE APPLICATION FOR A FICTIONAL SCHOOL. FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY.

ABOUT THIS SAMPLE

Cobalt Springs Unified School District, Tierra Vista County and every school named here are fictional. Every local figure in this sample is invented. The facts about PLUS and Direction are accurate. Writer's notes appear in quoted boxes after each major section.

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 to participating cities and counties. Those funds must be spent on opioid remediation uses listed in Exhibit E of the national settlement agreements. At least 50 percent of each calendar year's funds must go to six High Impact Abatement Activities. One of them is "interventions to prevent drug addiction in vulnerable youth." Exhibit E also lists "funding for evidence-based prevention programs in schools" as a Core Strategy. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) oversees compliance, and each city and county reports its expenditures to DHCS once a year. There is no single state application. A school district usually reaches these funds by proposing a partnership to its county behavioral health or public health department, or by answering a county request for proposals. Counties set their own timelines, so status depends on the county. PLUS fits this funding because it gives a district a student-led prevention structure that measures substance use on campus every month and turns that data into prevention activities at every school.

> **Writer's note.** Start by learning how your county or city allocates its settlement funds. Many counties have an opioid settlement plan, an advisory committee or a request for proposals. If your county issues a request for proposals, use its section headings in place of the ones below. This sample is written as an unsolicited partnership proposal to a county behavioral health department.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Cobalt Springs Unified School District requests $250,470 over three school years from Tierra Vista County Behavioral Health Services. The funds would support youth substance use prevention through the PLUS Program at the district's three middle schools and three high schools. The work focuses on vaping, cannabis and fentanyl awareness.

The district is adopting PLUS Districtwide in all six secondary schools and pays most of the cost from Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) supplemental and concentration funds. County settlement funds would add a substance use prevention strand that the district could not fund on its own. The strand includes Direction substance use questions every month, three substance use cycles a year at each school, student-designed prevention campaigns, feeder school talks led by high school PLUS students and evening family Forums co-hosted with Tierra Vista County Public Health.

PLUS is a prevention program. It does not provide treatment, cessation services, counseling or naloxone distribution. Naloxone access and staff overdose response are managed by the district's health services under separate policy and are not part of this request.

ALIGNMENT WITH ALLOWABLE USES

PROPOSED ACTIVITY	SETTLEMENT CATEGORY	SOURCE WORDING
School-based prevention through PLUS at six schools	High Impact Abatement Activity 5	"Interventions to prevent drug addiction in vulnerable youth"
PLUS substance use cycles and Direction data	Exhibit E, Schedule A, Core Strategy G.2	"Funding for evidence-based prevention programs in schools"
Prevention campaigns designed by students	Exhibit E, Schedule A, Core Strategy G.1	"Funding for media campaigns to prevent opioid use"
PLUS at middle and high schools	Exhibit E, Schedule B, Part II, G.9	"School-based or youth-focused programs or strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in preventing drug misuse"
Family Forums on substance use and fentanyl	Exhibit E, Schedule B, Part II, G.10	Community-based education or intervention for families, youth and adolescents at risk

The request supplements county prevention work. The district funds the PLUS class, most Advisor time and the PLUS Districtwide fees. County funds pay only the substance use share and the substance use activities.

> **Writer's note.** Map every activity to an Exhibit E category in your county's own terms. Ask county staff which category and fund they would charge. Counties must meet the 50 percent High Impact Abatement Activity floor each year, so a proposal that fits HIAA 5 helps the county meet its own requirement. Do not claim a category that does not fit.

STATEMENT OF NEED

Cobalt Springs Unified serves 14,200 students. Its secondary schools enroll 3,350 students in grades 6 to 8 and 4,620 students in grades 9 to 12. Sixty-four percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Tierra Vista County is mostly suburban and rural.

MEASURE	VALUE	SOURCE AND YEAR
County overdose deaths, ages 10 to 24	14 (up from 5 in 2021)	County Public Health, 2025
Share of those deaths involving fentanyl	86%	County Public Health, 2025
Grade 11 students who used cannabis in past 30 days	15%	CHKS, spring 2025
Grade 11 students who vaped in past 30 days	14%	CHKS, spring 2025
Grade 9 students who used a prescription pill not prescribed to them, lifetime	6%	CHKS, spring 2025
Grade 9 students who know a pill from a friend can contain fentanyl	41%	CHKS custom module, spring 2025
Drug and alcohol suspensions, grades 6 to 12	212	District SIS, 2024-25

In spring 2026 two pilot schools used Direction. Direction surveyed a new representative sample of less than 10 percent of each campus each month with the same binary questions. The results describe the student body and not individual students.

DIRECTION PULSE QUESTION (PILOT, FEB TO MAY 2026)	WREN VALLEY MS	LARKSPUR HS
In the last 30 days, someone offered me a vape, cannabis or a pill	14%	29%
In the last 30 days, I have seen students using drugs or vaping on campus	31%	58%
I know an adult at school I could talk to about drugs	47%	39%
I know that a pill from a friend or social media can contain fentanyl	52%	64%

PLUS Forums at the pilot schools named vaping among the top four critical issues in three of four months at Larkspur High School. Students at Wren Valley Middle School raised pills shared at parties and fear of telling an adult.

The district's gap is prevention that reaches every secondary school with the same data and the same structure. Current prevention depends on assemblies and one-time events. Schools do not measure substance use between CHKS administrations, so they cannot tell whether a prevention activity changed anything.

> **Writer's note.** Use county data from your public health department and your own CHKS and discipline data. Reviewers at a behavioral health department know the county numbers well, so connect them to what your students report. Never present Direction results as data about individual students.

PROGRAM DESIGN

THE PLUS STRUCTURE AT EACH SCHOOL

PLUS (Peer Leaders Uniting Students) is an evidence-based school climate program used in California schools for about 25 years. It uses youth participatory action research. Students gather and analyze data about their own school and lead the response alongside adults. Risk factors such as vaping, substance use, bullying and exclusion are measured alongside protective factors such as connection, belonging and caring relationships.

At each school a PLUS Team of 25 to 30 students meets in a dedicated class section funded by the district. The Advisor selects students who reflect the student body. A PLUS staff team of an administrator, a counselor or PBIS lead and the PLUS Advisor runs the program schoolwide. Each Advisor is funded at 0.2 FTE. That covers the class section plus 0.1 FTE for collaboration. The collaboration time lets the Advisor serve on the site's PBIS and MTSS teams and its school safety committee.

PLUS runs a 30-day cycle nine times a year, starting with an August pre-cycle. Each cycle has four steps.

1. **Protective factors.** Students lead youth development activities during the school day that build connection and belonging.
2. **Data integration.** Direction surveys a new representative sample of less than 10 percent of the campus with the same questions each cycle. A student-facilitated Forum gathers qualitative data from 40 to 50 high school students or 25 to 30 middle school students. A new group attends each month. The Forum identifies the top four critical issues.
3. **Action planning.** Students review both kinds of data and plan the activities the campus needs. A cycle report goes to the principal, counselors, the PBIS and MTSS teams and the district office.
4. **Engagement.** Students carry out the activities with the campus, share the data and measure again the next cycle.

Information moves up from each PLUS class to the site administrator, the MTSS and PBIS teams, the district office and the school board. Decisions come back down to the schools.

THE SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION STRAND

County funds add five prevention activities to that structure. They address vaping, cannabis, alcohol and fentanyl.

1. **Substance use data every cycle.** The Direction substance use questions above run in all nine cycles at all six schools. The district dashboard shows results by school, grade level and student group. District alerts flag results that need attention.
2. **Three substance use cycles a year.** Each school centers three cycles on substance use. October covers vaping and cannabis. February covers fentanyl and counterfeit pills. April covers alcohol and parties before prom and summer. When substance use appears among the top four issues at a Forum in another month, the team adds a prevention response to that cycle.
3. **Student-designed prevention campaigns.** PLUS Teams design campaigns from their own Forum and Direction data. Fentanyl facts come from Tierra Vista County Public Health. Students design the message and the delivery. They do not give medical guidance.
4. **Feeder school talks.** High school PLUS students deliver prevention talks at feeder middle schools and in grade 5 classrooms at feeder elementary schools. The talks come from the Direction activity resource database, which includes a feeder school vaping talk delivered by older PLUS students.
5. **Family Forums.** Each school hosts an evening family Forum each year on substance use and fentanyl, in English and Spanish. PLUS students facilitate the Forum. A County Public Health educator presents the health information. The PLUS Team also promotes the school wellness center and county youth services through QR code campaigns and self-referral forms. PLUS students do not counsel peers.

> **Writer's note.** Describe the structure once, then show exactly what the county's money adds. Behavioral health reviewers will look for clear lines between prevention, treatment and harm reduction. Keep PLUS on the prevention side and name who handles everything else.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND TIMELINE

WHEN	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
Spring before Year 1 (district funds)	PLUS class added to each master schedule; Advisors select PLUS Teams	Principals, counselors, Advisors
June before Year 1 (district funds)	PLUS Advisor Institute in Temecula	Six Advisors
August, Year 1	Five-day on-site rollout: 2-Day training, data implementation day, activity implementation day, final follow-up training	PLUS staff teams, district office
August, each year	August pre-cycle; Direction substance use questions loaded for all sites	Advisors, district coordinator
September to May, each year	Nine 30-day cycles at six schools	PLUS Teams

WHEN	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
October, February, April	Substance use cycles and campaigns	PLUS Teams, County Public Health
November and March	Feeder school talks	High school PLUS Teams
January to March	Family Forums at all six schools	PLUS Teams, County Public Health, Advisors
Quarterly	Data brief to the county	District coordinator
July 31, each year	Annual outcome and expenditure report to the county	District coordinator, business office

GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	BASELINE	TARGET, YEAR 3
1. Fewer offers of substances on campus	HS students offered a vape, cannabis or pill in last 30 days (Direction)	29%	18%
1. Fewer offers of substances on campus	MS students offered a vape, cannabis or pill in last 30 days (Direction)	14%	8%
2. Greater fentanyl awareness	Grade 9 students who know a pill from a friend can contain fentanyl (CHKS)	41%	75%
3. Stronger connection to adults	Students who know an adult at school they could talk to about drugs (Direction)	39% HS, 47% MS	60% at each level
4. Lower use	Grade 11 past 30-day cannabis use (CHKS)	15%	11%
4. Lower use	Grade 11 past 30-day vaping (CHKS)	14%	10%
5. Family reach	Families attending substance use Forums each year	No Forums held	600 across six schools

> **Writer's note.** Use baselines from your own data. Counties report outcomes to their boards and to the public, so choose measures your district can collect every year and explain in plain terms.

EVALUATION AND REPORTING TO THE COUNTY

MEASURE	TOOL	HOW OFTEN	WHO REVIEWS
Offers, use seen on campus, fentanyl awareness, adult connection	Direction pulse questions	Every 30-day cycle	PLUS Teams, PLUS staff teams, district coordinator
Top critical issues and student ideas	Forum records	Every cycle	PLUS staff teams, district office
Past 30-day use and perceived harm	California Healthy Kids Survey	Every other year	District office, county
Drug and alcohol incidents	Student information system	Quarterly	District office
Campaigns, feeder talks and Forums held; students and families reached	Activity logs and sign-in sheets	Each event	District coordinator
Substance use time and spending	Time and effort records; ledger	Monthly	Business office

The district will report to the county in three ways.

1. **Quarterly data brief.** A two-page brief with Direction trends for all six schools, the top Forum issues and the number of activities held and people reached.
2. **Annual report by July 31.** Cities and counties report to DHCS each year on the prior state fiscal year, July 1 to June 30. The online reporting window opens July 1 and closes September 30. The district's report arrives by July 31 so the county has its numbers in time. It lists each expenditure by budget line and Exhibit E category, outcomes against each objective and participation counts.
3. **Annual presentation.** PLUS students and the district coordinator present results to the county's opioid settlement advisory committee or Board of Supervisors when invited.

Direction is anonymous and COPPA compliant. It collects no personal information from students. The district will share only aggregate results with the county.

> **Writer's note.** Ask county staff what they must report to DHCS and in what format, then build your report around it. Offer the data before you are asked. A county that can show its board clear results is more likely to renew the allocation.

PARTNERS AND ROLES

PARTNER	ROLE
Cobalt Springs Unified	Funds PLUS class sections, 70 percent of Advisor time and most fees; runs the program; reports to the county
Tierra Vista County Behavioral Health Services	Funds the substance use strand; receives reports; connects schools to county youth services
Tierra Vista County Public Health	Provides fentanyl and substance use facts; presents at family Forums (in kind)
PCE Solutions (PLUS Program)	Training, Direction platform, curriculum and activity resource database

The district and county will sign a memorandum of understanding that sets the amount, the reporting schedule and data sharing terms.

EVIDENCE BASE

PLUS meets ESSA Tier 2 (moderate evidence). A quasi-experimental study used propensity score matching to compare 153 students in a year-long PLUS elective at six high schools in one California district with similar peers. Participation significantly improved attendance (Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness). Related studies show how PLUS integrates youth participatory action research into schoolwide PBIS to prevent bullying and improve school climate (Abraczinskas et al., 2022), how student research informs district decisions (Cohen et al., 2019) and how PLUS affects school climate and student engagement (Gauna, 2017). University research teams at UC Berkeley, the University of Oregon and the University of Florida continue to study PLUS. A five-year University of Oregon study of student voice in California high schools, funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, is underway.

> **Writer's note.** Be accurate about the evidence. The PLUS studies measure attendance, bullying and school climate. They do not measure substance use outcomes. Present PLUS as evidence-based school prevention infrastructure that builds protective factors and carries substance use prevention to every campus. Let the county decide whether that meets its standard for an Exhibit E category.

BUDGET

COUNTY REQUEST

LINE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
1. PLUS Advisor time, substance use share (30% of 0.2 FTE, 6 sites)	$43,200	$43,200	$43,200	$129,600

LINE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
2. PLUS Districtwide fees, substance use share	$3,590	$3,590	$3,590	$10,770
3. On-site rollout training, substance use share	$6,000	$0	$0	$6,000
4. Advisor extra duty for Forums and feeder talks	$7,200	$7,200	$7,200	$21,600
5. Prevention campaign materials	$9,000	$9,000	$9,000	$27,000
6. Transportation for feeder school talks	$4,800	$4,800	$4,800	$14,400
7. Family Forums: interpretation, childcare and materials	$7,200	$7,200	$7,200	$21,600
8. Data analysis and reporting to the county	$6,500	$6,500	$6,500	$19,500
Total county request	**$87,490**	**$81,490**	**$81,490**	**$250,470**

DISTRICT CONTRIBUTION (LCFF SUPPLEMENTAL AND CONCENTRATION)

LINE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
PLUS Advisor time, remaining 70% (6 sites)	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$302,400
PLUS Districtwide fees, remainder	$8,375	$8,375	$8,375	$25,125
On-site rollout training, remainder	$14,000	$0	$0	$14,000
PLUS Advisor Institute (6 Advisors)	$14,970	$0	$0	$14,970
Total district contribution	**$138,145**	**$109,175**	**$109,175**	**$356,495**

PROJECT TOTAL	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
County request plus district contribution	$225,635	$190,665	$190,665	$606,965

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Line 1. Advisor time ($43,200 per year). The recommended staffing is 0.2 FTE per PLUS Advisor. At an illustrative $120,000 salary and benefits, that is $24,000 per site and $144,000 for six sites. The county is charged 30 percent. The basis is the planned calendar. Three of nine cycles center on substance use (33 percent), and Direction substance use questions run in every cycle. Not all time in those cycles is substance use specific, so the district charges 30 percent. Advisors keep monthly time and effort records. The district pays the other 70 percent.

Line 2. PLUS Districtwide fees ($3,590 per year). PLUS Districtwide costs $1,495 per school site per year plus $2,995 per year for the district subscription. For six sites that is $11,965 per year. Each site

receives the subscription with unlimited Direction and the activity resource database, the PLUS curriculum, one conference registration and one 2-Day training registration for a new staff member each year. The district office receives one conference registration. The county is charged 30 percent, rounded to the nearest dollar. The district pays $8,375.

Line 3. On-site rollout ($6,000 in Year 1). Five on-site training days at $3,500 per day ($17,500) plus an illustrative $2,500 for trainer travel and lodging, for $20,000. Days 1 and 2 are the 2-Day training. Day 3 is data implementation, Day 4 is activity implementation and Day 5 is a final follow-up training. The county is charged 30 percent.

Lines 4 to 7. Substance use activities. Line 4 pays six Advisors 20 hours each at $60 to run evening family Forums and supervise feeder talks. Line 5 provides $1,500 per school for printing and materials for student-designed campaigns. Line 6 covers 12 trips a year at $400 for high school PLUS students to reach feeder schools. Line 7 provides $1,200 per school for interpretation, childcare and printed materials at each family Forum. These lines are 100 percent substance use prevention.

Line 8. Data and reporting ($6,500 per year). A district research analyst at 0.05 FTE, using an illustrative $130,000 salary and benefits, prepares quarterly briefs and the annual report.

District contribution. The district pays the PLUS class sections, 70 percent of Advisor time, the rest of the fees and rollout and the PLUS Advisor Institute. The Institute is held each June in Temecula. Registration is $1,495 per Advisor. Lodging for three nights at $250 is $750 and travel is $250, for $2,495 per Advisor and $14,970 for six. Optional PLUS Team student leadership training is not included. A district that wants it should request a quote.

> **Writer's note.** Confirm the cost allocation with your county contract manager and your district business office before you submit. Ask whether the county accepts a percentage share of a shared position and of a program subscription, and what time records it expects. Ask whether the county allows indirect costs on a subrecipient agreement. This sample charges none. Use your actual salaries. Keep the district contribution visible. It shows the county that its money supplements work the district already funds.

SUSTAINABILITY

The district already pays most of the PLUS cost and will keep paying it. The class sections are in the master schedule, and the Direction substance use questions continue at no added cost. If county funding ends, the substance use cycles continue inside the regular PLUS calendar. Activities that need added money, such as transportation and family Forum costs, would move into the district's LCAP or into a renewed county allocation. Counties must encumber or spend Abatement Accounts funds within five years of receipt, so the district will ask the county about a second allocation during Year 2.

> **Writer's note.** Counties prefer partners who build on existing work. Show what the district keeps funding and what would end without the county.

SOURCES

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