

Draft Resources from Opioid Data Work Group

December 2025 Status Update

Background

The Opioid Data Workgroup (ODW), which includes representatives from regional opioid abatement councils (ROACs), state agencies, and experts working on opioid and substance use disorders, began its work in September 2023 in response to the need expressed by leaders in several ROACs to have a more centralized approach to data. The ODW sent a letter to the COAC requesting a data and learning system ([Data Proposal Letter](#)). After the COAC voted to allocate funds from the Infrastructure Share, the ODW continued to meet to develop the vision and scope for the data and learning system. Unfortunately, the COAC does not have the ability to complete a vendor solicitation to move forward with the creation of the statewide data and learning system.

Why Are These Materials Being Shared?

This update is being shared to describe progress made by the ODW in identifying a desired vision and scope for a data and learning system, with facilitation and subject matter support provided by Lauren Gase (Founder & Principal Consultant, [Mindful Metrics](#)).

While the COAC does not have the ability to create the statewide data and learning system at this time, the Department of Law is sharing the ODW's foundational materials with the hope that they are supportive to ROACs for their internal planning purposes as well as other entities with the interest in building on this foundational work to support an integrated approach to data, learning, and improvement to address the opioid crisis in Colorado.

Feedback from Opioid Data Work Group on Desired Components for a Data and Learning System

Vision for the Statewide Data and Learning System

The [ODW outlined a vision](#) for how data can be used as a part of opioid settlement funds. The vision focuses on

- *Building Public Trust and Engagement.* The public, including people with lived experience, families impacted by substance use, and community advocates, can easily access and understand how opioid settlement funds are being used and the impact they are making.
- *Empowering Local Leaders.* All Shares, especially ROACs and local governments, have access to timely, actionable information that helps them make better decisions and improve outcomes.
- *Creating a Culture of Learning and Support.* Partners working to address the opioid epidemic have regular opportunities to share what's working, discuss challenges, and collaboratively solve problems.
- *Improving Decision-Making and Outcomes.* State-level decision-makers, including the Department of Law (DOL) and the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC), have a statewide picture of regional work, opportunities, and challenges. They use data to inform funding strategies, foster alignment around shared goals, and drive continuous improvement.

Data and Learning System: Desired Components

To achieve the vision, the data and learning system should include two primary components:

1. *Publicly Available Data Platform.* A publicly available online platform that visually aggregates, displays, and contextualizes key data points.
2. *Technical Assistance and Support to Use Data.* Technical assistance and support to key partners, including ROACs and local government Shares, to support the use of data for planning, learning, and improvement. Technical assistance should be responsive to the needs of partners and support the creation of evaluation/learning plans and sustainable processes and structures that support data use.

Data and Learning System: Desired Principles & Scope

Development and implementation of the data and learning system should be anchored in the following principles:

- *User-Centered:* Designed with input from a wide range of stakeholders and tested with end users in mind.
- *Grounded in Equity and Lived Experience:* Includes disaggregated data and storytelling that reflects the lived experiences of communities most impacted by the opioid crisis.
- *Learning and Improvement-Oriented:* Provides information that supports decision-making and continuous growth, not just retrospective reporting.
- *Transparent and Publicly Accessible:* Provides clear, understandable, and meaningful information about how funds are being used and the results they are generating at the local, regional, and statewide levels.

- *Engaging and Informative*: Uses compelling visuals, narratives, and both qualitative and quantitative data to bring insights to life.
- *Streamlined*: To the extent possible, leverages existing systems and aligns with current data collection practices.
- *Adaptable and Sustainable*: Built for longevity, the system is intended to evolve over time as new priorities, data needs, and opportunities are identified and should support ongoing adaptations.

It will be important for the data and learning system to be anchored in a conceptual framework. One potentially useful framework is the draft [state-level theory of change](#).

Once fully built the data and learning system should include the following five types of information:

1. **Community context**. Information on the local conditions and assets that help shape strategy selection, such as population characteristics, social determinants of health, community assets and services, and resource gaps.
2. **Strategy implementation**. Information on what is being done, how strategies are being implemented, and the quality or fidelity of that implementation, such as strategy type and setting, delivery methods, and partners or subrecipients involved.
3. **Strategy reach**: Information on how many and who are being reached, such as participant demographics and geographic reach.
4. **Short-term outcomes**. Information on early indicators of change, such as changes in knowledge or awareness, behavior changes, and improvements in access to care or organizational practices.
5. **Long-term (population) outcomes**: Information on long-term outcomes, such as overdose rates and deaths.

To support usability and advance equity, where appropriate across data types, information should be disaggregated by:

- **Geography**. At minimum, the system should provide information at the state level and for each of the 19 Opioid Settlement Regions.
- **Demographic characteristics**, such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation.
- **Priority populations**, such as individuals living in rural areas, individuals who are pregnant or parenting, individuals who are low-income, and individuals who are unhoused.

Data Sources

There are a variety of existing data sources available, including data on community characteristics and resources, attitudes and behaviors, the treatment system and treatment utilization, and health outcomes. While a wide variety of data points are available, these data are frequently presented separately. The data system should support partners in exploring data in a more integrated way to get a holistic understanding of community needs, assets, trends, and opportunities so that data in can be used for planning, learning, and evaluation.

The ODW supported the development of a list of existing data points and data sources collected by public health, behavioral health, health care, justice, and other systems, which can be used as a starting point for development of the data and learning system ([draft Opioid Data Inventory](#)).

The ODW provided input on a list of performance measures that have been included in the October 2025 State Share and [Infrastructure Share funding opportunity](#) announcements. Such performance measures can provide insight on infrastructure built, individuals reached, and short-term outcomes of the opioid settlement funds.

We recognize that the data and learning system will not be able to include all data sources or work with all partners. Initial work should be prioritized based on:

- The vision for the system, the goals and intended use of the system, and information needs of Colorado stakeholders.
- The aim of maximizing use of the data and learning system—and capitalize on critical opportunities to augment data practices and data-related needs for key stakeholders, including state, regional, and local decision-makers.
- Feasibility in accessing, analyzing, and aggregating data.

Key stakeholders should be involved in development of the data and learning system—and be engaged once the system is developed (through the provision of technical assistance) to support use of data for evaluation, learning, and improvement.