



# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF **OVERDOSE RESPONSE**

## **Baltimore City Overdose Response Community Engagement Plan**

### **Overview**

On August 29, 2024, Mayor Scott issued an Executive Order that details the approach for how Baltimore will use opioid settlement funds to combat the opioid and overdose crisis across the city. A key part of this plan is the development of a City Overdose Response Strategy—a roadmap that details the things the City is going to do to help save lives, identify our strengths, and support healing in our communities. To ensure this strategy reflects the real needs of the people of Baltimore, the City has created a Community Engagement Plan. This Community Engagement Plan outlines a two step approach for how the City will work with the community to gather input and adjust the strategy based upon what is learned.

### **Listening to the Community**

The City is committed to making this process fair, open, accessible, and centered on those most affected. The approach is grounded in the following values:

- 1. Baltimore Centered:** The knowledge, experiences and resiliency, of the people and communities of Baltimore, especially those most impacted by the overdose crisis, will be central to the approach.
- 2. Accessible Participation:** Everyone should have a chance to be heard. There will be multiple ways for input, including listening sessions, online forms, interviews, and focus groups, and include options for confidential input and translation. These sessions will include interpreters, be held at convenient times and accessible locations, and address barriers that might keep people from taking part.
- 3. Centering Lived Experience:** The voices of people who use or have used drugs, their families, and communities most affected by overdose are especially important. The City will actively reach out and work to remove barriers so these important voices are heard.
- 4. Transparency and Accountability:** The findings and how community input influences programs, priorities, and funding will be shared in public forums and on the City's dedicated webpage for restitution fund information.

## Goals of Community Input

Through this engagement process, the City aims to:

1. Learn about residents' experiences with addiction, overdose, and related services.
2. Understand community priorities and what people think are the most urgent issues for attention and investment.
3. Integrate community input into decision-making about how resources are used and the funds are spent.
4. Create a fair and open system for sharing information about how the City is responding to addiction and overdose.

## Activities for Community Input

The City will host a variety of events and activities to hear directly from Baltimore City residents, families, service providers, and people with lived and living experience of drug use and overdose. These will be advertised widely with advance notice, including through community organizations and online tools:

- 1. Community listening sessions:** The city will host a variety of events and activities to hear directly from Baltimore City residents, families, service providers and people with lived and living experience of drugs and overdose to hear from residents in person how the overdose crisis has affected their communities, what challenges they face, where they have seen successes and their ideas for additional solutions. Handouts and fact sheets will be available for background information and to inform discussion.
- 2. Online forms:** for people to share their concerns, identify assets, and provide suggestions about the City's overdose epidemic.
- 3. Interviews with city agencies and service providers:** to understand how services are working well and what can be improved.
- 4. Focus groups with people with lived and living experience:** to learn from people who use or have used drugs about their concerns, how well current services work, and ideas for making things better.

## Ongoing Engagement

After gathering initial community input, the City will create ongoing opportunities for conversation and knowledge exchange through regular check-ins, updates, and more opportunities for people to get involved in building a healthier, safer Baltimore. Ongoing engagement will also include the City reporting on how information learned from the community was incorporated into decision making concerning how resources are used and funding was spent.

