



**Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority**  
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## NEWS RELEASE

### **Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority Receives National Award for Opioid Settlement Allocation Efforts**

*October 19, 2023* – The Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) has received the “*Award for Excellence in the Application of the Opioid Litigation Principles*” for the 3rd quarter of 2023 in recognition of its opioid-settlement programs.

The award is given to state or local governments that exemplify the [Principles for the Use of Funds From the Opioid Litigation](#), a set of recommendations developed by faculty at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with a coalition of organizations across the substance use field that include physicians, addiction medicine specialists, and recovery, treatment, and harm reduction providers. The Principles have been endorsed by more than 60 organizations from across the substance use field.

The OAA was the only entity in the United States to receive the award this quarter. The awards were introduced in the first quarter of 2023.

“Virginia didn’t ask to be at the epicenter of the opioid crisis, but we were,” noted State Senator Todd Pillion, chairman of the OAA Board of Directors. “Now we are committed to be a national leader in bringing the crisis to an end. We are grateful to receive this award from Johns Hopkins and the Principles Coalition because it recognizes the substantial efforts Virginia has made to save lives, restore families, and help communities heal.”

Sara Whaley, a coordinator for the Principles project at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, noted the selection committee was particularly impressed with the OAA’s “Gold Standard incentive” program for cities and counties. Under this program, the OAA provides guidance and financial assistance to cities and counties

that commit to strictly safeguard their shares of opioid settlement funds only for efforts to abate and remediate the opioid crisis.

The Principles provide planning and process-level guidance for state and local policymakers on how to effectively spend money from the opioid settlements, and include the following:

1. Spend the Money to Save Lives
2. Use Evidence to Guide Spending
3. Invest in Youth Prevention
4. Focus on Racial Equity
5. Develop a Fair and Transparent Process for Deciding Where to Spend the Funding

About the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority: The OAA was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2021 to oversee the distribution of 55% of Virginia's total settlement funds. Of the remainder, 30% is distributed directly to cities and counties and 15% to the Commonwealth. The use of funds is restricted by court orders and state statute, with the restrictions aiming for the funds to be used for opioid abatement efforts. Since the OAA began operating in 2022, it has awarded \$23 million to 76 cities and counties, and \$11 million to state agencies for efforts to abate and remediate the opioid crisis.

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