

# Information for State and Local Health Departments

## Opioid Rapid Response Teams

The Department of Health and Human Services and our law enforcement partners are committed to combatting the national opioid crisis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps are working together to support state and local agencies when there is a spike in opioid-related overdoses or closure of a clinic where patients are prescribed opioid therapy. This effort demonstrates HHS' commitment to ensuring patients have access to appropriate services.

### What is an Opioid Rapid Response Team?

ORRTs are specialized teams of public health professionals who can provide rapid, short term (28 days) support to jurisdictions experiencing spikes in opioid-related overdoses or the closure of a clinic where patients are prescribed opioid therapy. Teams support public health partners while also working to build a jurisdiction's long-term response capacity.

### What is the structure of an Opioid Rapid Response Team?

ORRTs are able to offer technical expertise in epidemiology and surveillance, clinical provider outreach, communications, policy and partnerships, community outreach, and capacity-building from CDC and the Commissioned Corps. The size and makeup of teams can be tailored to the needs of the situation. Teams will join public health staff in the community where assistance is requested. The requesting public health authority provides overall leadership for the response, while the ORRT field team provides technical assistance under the jurisdiction's direction and authority.

### What can an Opioid Rapid Response Team provide?

After evaluating a requesting jurisdiction's needs, CDC may deploy an ORRT in coordination with federal agencies to:

- Provide urgent communication to individuals affected or at heightened risk of opioid-related harms.
- Provide clinicians and other providers with appropriate resources about recommended opioid prescribing practices, guidance for safe, patient-centered opioid tapering, screening for opioid use disorders, and opioid use disorder treatment options available.
- Provide epidemiology assistance for overdose surveillance as well as risk factors and protective factors for overdose.
- Conduct targeted outreach to at-risk groups and provide broader messaging to the public at large about public health and public safety in the context of the opioid crisis.
- Assist with capacity building for long-term opioid response.



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Who can request an Opioid Rapid Response Team?

Officials with authority for public health can request ORRT assistance.

- State and territorial public health authorities
- Local public health authorities, in coordination with the state authorities
- Elected tribal leaders of federally recognized tribes

## Can a local jurisdiction request an Opioid Rapid Response Team?

Yes, CDC responds to direct requests from local jurisdictions. When a local jurisdiction requests an ORRT, CDC is committed to ensuring the state is aware of the request and is appropriately engaged in any response.

## What is the role of the requesting public health authority?

The public health authority provides overall leadership of ORRTs while benefitting from a collaborative relationship with the deployed team. The public health authority generally retains custody and control over all data collected as part of the response.

## Who pays for an Opioid Rapid Response Team?

CDC will pay for lodging, rental cars, flights, meals, and equipment for federal responders.

## How to request an Opioid Rapid Response Team

To request ORRT assistance, please contact the CDC Emergency Response Operations Center at 770-488-7100 and ask for the Opioid Rapid Response Team POC. The ORRT program will set-up a brief call to discuss the situation. For questions, contact the Opioid Rapid Response Team at [ORRT@cdc.gov](mailto:ORRT@cdc.gov).