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A New Tool Aims to Help Communities Spend Their Opioid Settlement Money Wisely.

The dashboard helps local governments estimate how much money to expect and, based on that, offers evidence-based recommendations on how best to spend it.

“Something so boring it’s genuinely kind of hot,” joked the comedian John Oliver as he dove into the topic of opioid settlements earlier this month on his HBO show, “Last Week Tonight.” Oliver, in a departure from his usual format, was looking at the massive task before state and local governments to allocate and spend the billions of dollars coming their way.

Thousands of state and local governments have been awarded more than $50 billion to be paid out over 18 years by companies accused of pumping opioid painkillers into communities and leaving millions addicted or dead. “Theoretically,” Oliver said of the money, “it will be used to mitigate the damage that opioids are doing. […] But when you don’t have a plan for your money, it can be easy to spend it in a thoughtless way.”

That’s where the National League of Cities is hoping to help. Last week, NLC debuted a new tool to help municipalities and counties estimate the total amount their communities can expect from the national $26 billion opioid settlement with the pharmaceutical manufacturer Johnson & Johnson. The interactive dashboard also offers data-backed investment recommendations based on the amount a jurisdiction can expect in settlement dollars.

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Route Fifty

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