

City of Kennett Invests Opioid Settlement Funds in Youth Drug Prevention Program

D.A.R.E. program will benefit from national class action settlement funds

KENNETT, MO (June 6, 2025) Mayor Jake Crafton announced today that the City of Kennett has received \$6,855.68 from a national opioid class action settlement — funds that will be directed toward the city’s longstanding D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program.

The funds were secured thanks to the initiative of City Clerk Jan McElwrath, who spotted the settlement notice, consulted with the city attorney, and applied for the funding on Kennett’s behalf.

"I'm delighted to recognize Ms. McElwrath for her sharp eye and initiative in pursuing settlement proceeds — even though Kennett wasn’t originally named in the suit,” said Mayor Crafton. “These funds are earmarked for drug prevention programs in schools, and our D.A.R.E. program fits that description perfectly.”

Kennett Police Officer Anthony Weaver, who leads the Kennett D.A.R.E. program said the new funding will strengthen the city’s ability to reach students at a critical age.

“Our program gives children tools to resist peer pressure, avoid risky behaviors, and make good choices,” said Officer Weaver. “As someone who works closely with students, I see the temptations they face every day. This support means we can do more — update our materials, expand our outreach, and help kids better understand the real risks of drug use.”

Weaver has been with the Kennett Police Department since 2016 and assumed this role in 2019. At that time, he told the Delta Dunklin Democrat that he was extremely grateful for the opportunity. “This gives me a chance to help my community, and it also helps give me a chance to do something I am passionate about,” Weaver stated. “Life is about purpose, and I believe I have found my purpose, not only when I became a Police Officer, but when I took on the role of being the D.A.R.E. Officer,” he added.

The D.A.R.E. program, founded in 1983, is a cooperative effort between law enforcement and educators that now includes science- and evidence-based curriculum such as the “keepin’ it REAL” program. The approach emphasizes building decision-making, communication, and refusal skills that are proven to reduce youth involvement with drugs, alcohol, and violence.

The opioid settlement stems from a series of lawsuits brought by states, cities, and counties across the U.S. against major opioid manufacturers and distributors, whose practices were found to have contributed to the nationwide opioid crisis. Funds from the

settlement are intended to support prevention, education, and recovery initiatives in communities hardest hit by the epidemic.

“This is a small but meaningful investment in our kids,” Mayor Crafton said. “We’re putting this money exactly where it can make a lasting difference — in classrooms, through a program that gives young people the knowledge and confidence to stay drug-free.”

For more information about Kennett’s D.A.R.E. program, contact the Kennett Police Department.