Lived Experience at the Center

A framework for how states should use tech harm settlement funds

Who we are

We are the parents who lost children to products designed to maximize engagement. We are the young people who grew up inside those products. We are the experts and researchers who know exactly how these products were designed to work, why they cause harm, and what it will take to make them safer.

No settlement fund can repair harm without both kinds of knowledge: lived experience of what these products did, and technical expertise. Both, along with clinical recommendations, belong in the conversation. This framework is written for attorneys general, so that every dollar recovered from technology companies reaches the families, young people, and communities it was meant for.

Why now

Attorneys General have been incredible partners in holding Big Tech accountable. In August 2026, a bipartisan coalition of 51 attorneys general settled with Meta for roughly $12.2 billion over ten years. That could rise to $17.1 billion if other platforms reach comparable deals. To ensure that the settlement money is used to fully compensate families and to serve the original goals of the litigation, these funds must be used to support regulatory/enforcement work, research, public education, implementation of child-safety programs, and development of policy recommendations. More settlements will follow, against other social media platforms and, increasingly, against AI products used by children.

The settlement is a step forward, not the finish line. But the money is real, and how states spend it will decide whether it meaningfully starts to repair the harm tech companies have caused. Tobacco and opioid settlement funds too often disappeared into general budgets or into programs designed without the people they were meant to serve, or even to minimize further scrutiny into companies' business practices. We cannot let that happen here. We look forward to continuing that work with you.

How settlement funds should be used

1. **Fund enforcement.** Support independent research, data access, and investigation and enforcement capacity including hiring technologists and others with technical expertise. That way the next harm, including from AI products, is caught early, and tech companies are held accountable for their products before they cause more harm.
2. **Address both repair and prevention.** Where the settlement allows for state legislatures to appropriate the funds, the money should go towards programs with a proven track record of preventing harm and/or supporting impacted individuals.

3. **Account for every dollar.** Families should never have to wonder where the money went, who received it, or whether it made a difference. States should publicly report how settlement funds are allocated at each step of collection and distribution, and what they achieve, so the public can see the money is working and hold policymakers to account for stewarding these funds.

4. **Add to existing funding, never replace it.** Settlement funds should expand what states do, like enforcement, education, and public services, meaning the funds will not be a replacement for something already funded.

5. **Let those harmed help decide.** Those closest to the harms should have the greatest say in how these funds should be used to prevent harm. Create standing independent oversight councils to advise state attorneys general on the best use of the resources that prioritize the inclusion of bereaved parents, young people, and survivors. Give them a real vote on allocations, not a one-time listening session. In addition to subject matter experts, at a minimum, each advisory body includes:

    1 person who experienced online sexual exploitation
    1 person who experienced image-based sexual abuse
    2 people harmed by algorithmic or product design (such as eating disorder content, suicidal ideation content, or cyberbullying)
    2 survivor parents (parents who have lost their children to online harms)
    2 impacted parents (parents whose children have experienced acute online harms)

6. **Keep the companies responsible out of the decisions.** To preserve the integrity of this settlement, the social media companies whose products caused these harms must not have any role in deciding how the funds are distributed, whether directly or through the organizations, programs, or partners they fund.

Our ask

We are asking attorneys general to turn this historic legal victory into a lasting commitment to children and families.

> The harm was designed. The repair must be designed too, and it must be designed with the young people, families, advocacy organizations and communities who lived through it at the center.