

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program and Evaluation Plan Narrative

Program Overview

The overall goals of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program are to improve public safety and public order in Belltown and Skyway and to reduce criminal behavior by the program's participants.

The program, which drug offenders and potential offenders (“social contacts”) access through referral by law enforcement officers, provides harm reduction-oriented, on-demand, comprehensive services and case management as an alternative to booking and prosecution to facilitate improvements in the lives, health, and opportunities of participants.

LEAD is governed by a Coordinating Group, which is made up of representatives from the Seattle Mayor’s Office, the King County Executive’s Office, the Seattle City Attorney’s Office, the King County Prosecutor’s Office, the Seattle Police Department, the King County Sheriff’s Office, The Defender Association – Racial Disparity Project, the ACLU of Washington, and community advisory boards. Please see the LEAD logic model for a complete depiction of the program and its desired outcomes.

Context, Assumptions, and Guiding Principles

The following context, assumptions and principles have guided LEAD’s program and evaluation design.

Context

- LEAD stakeholders share the belief that an alternative to existing enforcement strategies for low-level drug and prostitution offenders is needed. The goal of LEAD is to provide a more effective, less jail-reliant response to the public safety issues posed by street-level drug activity.
- This model has not been tried yet in the US.
- Rigorous evaluation of LEAD has the potential to help make the case for similar policies and programs, and for the reallocation of public resources for public safety uses other than arrest and prosecution of low-level drug offenders.
- Evaluation findings are intended to contribute to the replication and scaling of LEAD. Therefore, evaluation efforts should be rigorous and able to stand up to external scrutiny, and results should create knowledge about the program’s implementation and outcomes that will facilitate LEAD’s replication and scaling.

Assumptions, Beliefs, and Guiding Principles

- Addiction and poverty are drivers of crime.
- Drug crime can best be addressed through a public health approach combined with sufficient resources.
- Improvements in the health and life conditions of participants due to the delivery of services will result in less criminal behavior and that, in addition to criminal justice system related cost savings, reduced recidivism will improve public safety and/or perceptions of public order.
- A harm reduction approach is critical.
- Social contact referrals are desirable in order to create opportunities for law enforcement officers to help connect people to services without involving an arrest.

Referral and Intervention Activities and Approaches

Activities and Services Provided

- Law enforcement referrals
 - In Belltown, eligible low-level drug and prostitution offenders will be referred by the Seattle Police Department's West Precinct.
 - In Skyway, eligible offenders will be referred by the King County Sheriff's Office.
 - Eligible offenders will be enrolled in LEAD according to program availability.
 - At the beginning of each month, service providers designate the number of people the program has capacity to serve and will inform SPD's West Precinct and the KC Sheriff's Office which days of the month they can process referrals. On other days of the month LEAD-eligible offenders cannot be enrolled (and will thus follow typical booking procedures) instead of being referred to the program. Officers will not know until they return to the precinct/Sheriff's office with the potential divertee whether the program is accepting referrals that day.¹
 - Eligible offenders never enrolled in program because of resource constraints will serve as a control group for evaluation purposes.
- Individual intervention plans
- Intensive strengths-based case management
- Peer outreach and counseling
- Well-funded, client-directed, comprehensive direct services (housing, treatment, education, job development and stipends)
- Legal advocacy
- Inclusion of neighborhood public safety leaders
- Leadership development training

¹ For rationale behind this design, please see Appendix.

Key Approaches

- A harm reduction approach should be used for all referrals and service provision.
- Meet people where they are at each encounter. Referrals and service provision should address each individual's immediate and stated needs, and should be provided without delay, purchased on the private market where necessary to avoid waiting lists.

Outputs

Outputs can be viewed as the indicators or evidence that the program's intended activities have been implemented. Measurable outputs for the LEAD activities described above include:

- Individual case plans developed for 100% of participants
- Direct and timely connections made to legal services, employment, housing and transportation as needed
- Case management meetings conducted
- Peer counseling program established for all participants
- Community advisory board meets monthly
- Leadership training curriculum is developed and implemented

Outcomes

As a result of the activities provided in LEAD, it is hoped that participants will experience the following short-term (<1 year), intermediate (2-3 years), and long-term (4-5 years) outcomes:

Short-term

- Decreased criminal activity other than drug use
- Decreased harm to self and others from drug and alcohol use
- Diversion savings
- Increased psycho-social functioning
- Improved physical health
- Reduction in ER visits
- Greater individual aspirations

Intermediate

- Increased housing stability
- Increased educational attainment
- Increased job and community leadership opportunities
- Increased involvement with families, community institutions and civic life
- Decreased open-air drug dealing in Belltown and Skyway

Long-term

- Decreased recidivism rates
- Decreased demand for social services in catchment area
- Improved relationship between the police and those policed
- Increased satisfaction of residential and business leaders with public safety
- Public safety resources freed up for other uses

Impact Assessment

The evaluation plan developed by LFA Group and provided as a separate attachment addresses measurement of these outcomes, including specific indicators that demonstrate progress toward and achievement of these outcomes, and information about the tools, methods, and resources necessary to collect outcomes data.

Fidelity Testing

Fidelity testing in the first few months of LEAD's implementation will ensure that the program is being implemented as planned, and will document the processes by which participants are referred to the program and connected to services. Fidelity testing will include assessment of the following:

- Procedures followed for referring participants to LEAD with respect to both law enforcement officers and service providers
- Demonstrated commitment to harm-reduction framework for all service provision
- Referrals made and services provided, along with a study of the correlation between participants' stated needs and referrals made/services provided
- Number of case management sessions conducted
- Percent of participants for whom individual case plans are developed
- Establishment of Community Advisory Board, along with an assessment of its role and functioning
- Establishment of peer counseling program and documentation of its outreach, activities, and participation levels
- Establishment of leadership training curriculum and documentation of outreach, trainings provided, and participation levels

For more information contact:

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