

Marion County Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD)

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) is an innovative pilot program, developed to address low-level drug and quality of life crimes in downtown Salem and in East Salem on Lancaster Drive. LEAD diverts people with frequent low-level offenses into community-based treatment and support services – including housing, healthcare, job training, treatment, and mental health support – instead of the traditional criminal justice system.

A unique coalition of leaders representing law enforcement, health and human services, prosecution, and local government collaborated to create this pilot program. These leaders, among others, participate in the Marion County Justice Reinvestment Council, which governs the program. LEAD's goal is to improve public safety by reducing the criminal behaviors of program participants.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are frequently asked questions about LEAD. If you have further questions, contact

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What is LEAD?

LEAD is a pre-booking diversion program that allows law enforcement officers to redirect frequent low-level offenders to community-based services instead of jail and prosecution. LEAD participants are directly connected to a service navigator by police officers upon contact. Navigators further connect participants to necessary services immediately. LEAD's goals are to reduce the harm a person with frequent offenses causes him or herself, as well as the harm that the individual is causing the surrounding community. This public safety program has the potential to reduce recidivism for low-level offenders and preserve expensive criminal justice system resources for serious or violent offenders.

How does LEAD differ from other diversion programs?

With LEAD, law enforcement agencies, public officials, and community organizations work together in implementing a new approach to addressing low-level crime committed by repeat offenders. The diversion in LEAD is made at the pre-booking stage, in hopes of bypassing the costs and time entailed in booking, charging, and requiring court appearances of an individual. LEAD provides participants with immediate case management services and access to additional resources in a coordinated and supportive manner.

Who is eligible for diversion into LEAD?

Chronically service-resistant individuals who are arrested for eligible offenses within the specific geographic areas of downtown Salem and Lancaster Drive may be diverted into LEAD. Eligible offenses include low-level drug offenses and quality of life crimes, such as trespass, disorderly conduct, and other minor non-violent crimes. Individuals with certain person crimes in their histories are ineligible for LEAD.

Who designed LEAD?

LEAD is a collaborative effort among diverse stakeholders, including the Marion County District Attorney's Office, the Salem City Attorney's Office, the Salem Police Department, the Marion County Sheriff's Office, Marion County Board of Commissioners Office and Health Department, Salem Health, Marion County Public Defender, and the Association of Public Defenders.

Who runs LEAD?

Stakeholder consensus and decision-making is coordinated via LEAD governance, planning, and work groups. LEAD is entirely voluntary and any party may choose to withdraw from LEAD at any time.

Who provides services to LEAD participants?

The LEAD navigator is employed by the Marion County Health Department. The position "meets people where they are," providing coordinated case management and referrals to community services delivered by numerous agencies. Substance abuse and mental health services are provided by Marion County Adult Behavioral Health and Bridgeway Recovery Services, in addition to homeless outreach and placement, skills training enhancement and employment assistance. Marion County Health Department has been providing treatment services including medication assisted treatment for more than 40 years. Bridgeway Recovery Services has provided treatment services since 2009, and was recognized in 2011 with a state clinical treatment endorsement specific to corrections. Both Bridgeway and the Marion County Health Department have been involved with the Marion County Reentry Initiative since 2010 and will adhere to harm reduction principles and make every effort to connect participants with immediate access to services.

How will we know if LEAD works?

LEAD stakeholders are committed to rigorous program evaluation. Evaluation will consider, among other factors, whether LEAD has resulted in reductions in drug use, recidivism, law enforcement contact, and the use of the hospital's emergency department and other emergency services.

How much will the LEAD pilot program cost the City of Salem and Marion County?

LEAD stakeholders obtained grant funding of \$83,103 from Willamette Valley Community Health to pilot the program, with a commitment to build the ongoing program costs of the navigator position, program coordination, and treatment costs into future budgets.

How long will LEAD be implemented?

LEAD will begin on March 1, 2018. The pilot program is anticipated to run for a full year, while being evaluated. Positive outcomes will result in stakeholders seeking additional funding to sustain and expand the program.

Have programs like LEAD been implemented elsewhere?

LEAD was inspired by "arrest-referral" programs in the United Kingdom. Those programs have recently been implemented in virtually every police department in the United Kingdom, because pilot projects proved to be so effective. Seattle/King County developed the first LEAD program in the United States in 2011, followed by Santa Fe, New Mexico in 2014. Since that time, more than a dozen communities have launched similar programs.