



# Law Enforcement-Assisted Diversion (LEAD) in Seattle

Presented to the Public Safety Committee

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# BACKGROUND

## 4-year pilot program launched Oct 2011

- Originated from racial disparity lawsuit.
- Lack of coordination in local drug enforcement.
- Goal: divert low-level offenders to community-based treatment and support services.

# PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT

## Collaboration between:

- The Racial Disparity Project.
- Seattle Police Department.
- Seattle City Attorney's Office.
- Seattle Mayor's Office.
- The ACLU of Washington.
- The King County Prosecutor's Office.

# PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT

## Working Group

- 18 months.
- Memorandum of understanding & protocol.
- Connecting low-level offenders to services.
- Common solutions.

# PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT

*All of the sides realized we all had our own mission: we were throwing them in jail and not doing anything else; [the Racial Disparity Project] was suing and not doing anything else; prosecutors were prosecuting but not doing anything else.*

- Former Interim Seattle Police Chief Jim Pugel

# PROGRAM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

## Step 1: Identify potential clients

- Either through arrests or “social contacts.”
- ~20% of LEAD participants are non-arrest referrals.
- Developed method for identifying qualifying individuals.

# PROGRAM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

## Step 2: Pre-Booking Diversion

- Officer contacts LEAD caseworker, forwards files to the responsible prosecutor.
- Caseworker performs initial assessment.
- Individual is free to leave.
- Individuals can also be referred post-booking.

# PROGRAM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

## Step 2: Pre-Booking Diversion

- Officers – not prosecutors or judges – are given substantial, street-level discretion in identifying individuals for the program.
- “...uniquely deep knowledge about the people they regularly encounter...”



# PROGRAM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

## Step 3: Social Service Intervention

- Caseworkers develop individual intervention plans.
- LEAD contracts with local non-profit addiction treatment provider.
- “Immediate access” model.

# PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

## Policy Coordinating Group

- Makes decisions by consensus through MOU.
- Voluntary participation.
- Some LEAD components operate loosely under Seattle's 2012 City Center Initiative (CCI).

# PROGRAM FUNDING

## Pilot Program:

- 2-year grant commitments.
- \$950,000 annually.
- Renewal options up to 4 years.

# PROGRAM FUNDING

## 2014 City Budget:

- \$1.1 million in Human Services Department.
- 50% staff, 50% services.
- 250 expected to be served in 2014.
- Anticipated expansion using General Fund.

# ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

## Officer Buy-in

- “Harm reduction” mindset.
  - Relapse is part of recovery.
  - No longer “one strike and you’re out.”

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

*Here we are getting calls from police officers who are like, “So and so is in the alley smoking crack, and you need to be down here right now.” And it’s like, “yeah, so and so’s been in the alley for the last twenty years smoking crack, and us coming down here at 6 a.m., or responding to your call, that’s not what we do.*

- Anonymous LEAD caseworker.

# OUTCOMES

## Through 2013:

- 155 people assisted.
- Majority men, majority drug-related.
- Evaluation planned.

# EVALUATION METRICS

- Levels of participation in drug and criminal activity.
- Cost-savings to local criminal justice, health and social service systems.
- Success of participants' ability to attain housing, jobs and education.
- Rates of recidivism.
- Levels of trust between the police and communities in which LEAD is implemented.
- Overall net impact on public safety resources.



# LESSONS LEARNED

## March 2014 Report:

- Identification & recruitment of key partners.
- Garnering officer support.
- Training, especially for caseworkers.
- Communication.
- “Peelian Principles”

## QUESTIONS?

Overall, LEAD is based on the principle that low-level criminal behavior is best addressed through the provision of social services, and not through arrest, prosecution and incarceration.



# CITY CENTER INITIATIVE

## “Multi-Disciplinary Team” (MDT)

- Helps facilitate “intensive coordination among City departments and service providers.”
- Expects to serve 150 adults in 2014.
- Distinct from LEAD, but similar philosophy.