

# Marion County Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD)

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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 the Four Corners area near Lancaster Drive. LEAD diverts people with frequent low-level offenses into community-based 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

- Paige Clarkson, Deputy District Attorney, at [pclarkson@co.marion.or.us](mailto:pclarkson@co.marion.or.us)
- Lana Winnie, Health & Human Services Program Manager, at [lwinnie@co.marion.or.us](mailto:lwinnie@co.marion.or.us)
- Jan Calvin, LEAD Program Coordinator, at [calvin.jan@yahoo.com](mailto:calvin.jan@yahoo.com)

## 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. Diversion 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 the Four Corners area near 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, the Marion County Board of Commissioners Office, Marion County Health and Human Services, Salem Health, Marion County Public Defender, and the Marion County Association of Defenders.

**Who runs LEAD?**

Stakeholder consensus and decision-making are 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 Marion County Health and Human Services. 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 and Human Services 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 Marion County Health and Human Services 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 considers, among other factors, whether LEAD has resulted in reductions in drug use, recidivism, law enforcement contact, and 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 began in April 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 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 two dozen communities have launched similar programs.