We are
the Drug
Policy
Alliance.

## Additional Information on LEAD

**How Does The Program Work?**
There are a number of jurisdictions that have indicated interest in piloting LEAD in Colorado and the LEAD model is flexible and different communities can adapt it to their particular local contexts and needs. Through collaboration among stakeholders that include law enforcement, district attorneys, public defenders, City and County Community Service Departments, and community stakeholders, all stakeholders make decisions via memorandum of understanding. The basic program looks as follows:

1. Police officer encounters a low level offender for whom probable cause exists for an arrest, offers the program, and contacts a LEAD case manager.
2. The LEAD case manager meets the police and the potential client. Initial screening is conducted.
3. Officer relinquishes custody of the person to the LEAD case manager. Officer sends the arrest record/screening document to appropriate attorney.
4. The attorney (City Attorney's Office, County Prosecutor or District Attorney's Office) has final authority on client eligibility. Presumption is that the charge will NOT be filed as long as the individual completes the initial LEAD intake assessment within 7-30 days of referral.
5. Service provision would include:
   - Screening, Intake and Assessment
   - Intensive Case Management
   - Harm Reduction Services
   - Individual Intervention Plans
   - Basic Needs, i.e. food, clothing, housing, treatment services
   - Job training, employment supports, education supports

### Supporting Organizations:
Drug Policy Alliance
Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition
Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police
Law Enforcement Action Partnership
Law Enforcement Leaders
Public Safety Chief Mike Butler, City of Longmont Dept. of Public Safety
Boulder County Public Health
Pueblo Human Relations Commission
Colorado Providers Association
Denver Justice Project
Harm Reduction Action Center
Colorado Health Network
CannAbility Foundation
Elephant Circle
Young People In Recovery
Denver Relief Consulting
Vicente Sederberg LLC
Rocky Mountain Morpheus Project
Sisters of Color United for Education
Students for Sensible Drug Policy at CU Denver

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### What is LEAD?

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) is a harm reduction community-based program that seeks to accomplish the goals of reduced criminal behavior and improved public safety and order by connecting low-level drug offenders with treatment and wraparound services to improve health outcomes and reduce recidivism rates. The program, after a local stakeholder process to identify the ideal demographic, gives law enforcement the option at their discretion to refer certain individuals that could be arrested for low-level drug offenses to intensive case management services instead of following the typical criminal justice cycle of booking, detention, prosecution, and conviction. LEAD is not a city or county wide approach but one that targets the most needed demographic. A growing number of states and many cities across the country have begun have begun implementing the LEAD program and are seeing promising returns on investment in the reduction of criminal behavior from program participants. Supporting the LEAD line item will allow Colorado's law enforcement the ability to focus on serious crime while playing a key role in linking people to services instead of funneling them into the justice system.

### Why A Harm Reduction Approach?

In Colorado, and nationwide, we have a revolving door of systematic recidivism for low-level drug offenders. The current incarceration-based approach for these individuals forces our State and local governments to continue to utilize high cost institutions such as jails, prisons and hospitals to treat low-level offenders who have co-occurring behavioral health needs rather than utilize lower cost behavioral health diversion programs that have shown to reduce recidivism. This costly cycle of booking, prosecuting, and jailing individuals dependent on drugs who commit low-level, non-violent offenses, does not address the core problem of drug dependency and has had limited effectiveness in improving public safety and public order. This cycle continues to exacerbate many of the budget problems we are facing as a State through recurring costs in our jails, prisons and our emergency rooms.

### Program Costs and Return on Investment

The average cost per client in Seattle and New Mexico is roughly $6,000 per year for case management, coordination, and wraparound services for the client. After an extensive review of the program they found they had **statistically significant reductions in all outcomes** for the LEAD group compared to the control group on average yearly criminal justice and legal system utilization:

- *Recidivism:* LEAD participants were nearly **60% less likely to reoffend** than a control group of non-LEAD participants.
- *Jail Bookings***:** LEAD participants had **1.4 fewer jail bookings**.
- *Jail Days***:** LEAD group spent **39 fewer days in jail**.
- *Incarceration:* LEAD group had **87% lower odds** of prison incarceration.
- *Cost Reduction:* From pre- to post-evaluation entry, LEAD participants showed substantial cost reductions (-$2100), whereas control participants showed cost increases (+$5961).
- *Housing:* LEAD participants were **89% more likely to obtain permanent housing** after engagement in the program.
- *Employment:* LEAD participants were almost 50% more likely to be training for employment, actively employed or retired and 33% more likely to have income/benefits following engagement in the program.

The cost-benefit impact of the LEAD program in Colorado will be more evident in the long-term as the upfront investment of intensive case management and support services pays off in reduced recidivism and cost to the current systems over time. Other long-term positive impacts include support to end chaotic drug dependency and related criminal activities, improved wellbeing of individuals, family and community, and positive contribution to earnings and economic productivity through re-integration to society and job market.

**Please support the LEAD line item to allow Colorado the ability to move individuals from the chronic "revolving door" of drug-to-incarceration and ER-visits toward long-term, sustainable recovery and livelihood.**

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