

**LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTED DIVERSION (LEAD)**  
**BRIEFING MEMO**

**What is LEAD?**

LEAD is a pre-booking diversion program that allows officers to redirect low-level offenders engaged in drugs or prostitution to community-based services instead of jail and prosecution. LEAD participants will be able to utilize needed services immediately. LEAD's goals are to reduce the harm a drug offender 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 rates for low-level offenders and preserve expensive criminal justice system resources for more serious or violent offenders.

**Who designed LEAD?**

LEAD is the result of an unusual collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Collaborators include the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Seattle City Attorney's Office, the Seattle Police Department, the King County Sheriff's Office, the King County Executive, the Mayor's Office, The Defender Association, the ACLU of Washington, and community members. The collaboration of these stakeholders was motivated by a shared dissatisfaction with the outcomes and costs of traditional drug law enforcement.

**Who runs LEAD?**

As noted, LEAD is the result of a collaboration among a number of stakeholders. All stakeholders sit on LEAD's policy coordinating group, and the group makes decisions by consensus via a memorandum of understanding. LEAD is entirely voluntary, and any stakeholder may choose to withdraw from LEAD at any time.

**Who will provide services to LEAD participants?**

LEAD stakeholders have contracted with Evergreen Treatment Services (ETS) to provide services to LEAD participants. ETS has provided addiction treatment services in Washington for over 30 years, and has been actively involved in federally-funded research projects. ETS' REACH Program has been a key provider in the delivery of "Street" Outreach services to chronically homeless and chemically addicted adults in Seattle for 15 years. ETS will follow harm reduction principles and will attempt to provide immediate access to services.

**How will we know if LEAD works?**

All LEAD stakeholders are committed to evaluating the program rigorously. The evaluation will consider, among other factors, whether LEAD has resulted in reductions in drug use and recidivism, whether LEAD is more cost-effective than criminal justice

processing, and whether LEAD has had a positive impact on a community's quality of life.

### **How much will LEAD cost the City of Seattle?**

Nothing. LEAD stakeholders obtained funding from private foundations to implement the program. Its funders include the Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Vital Projects Fund, RiverStyx Foundation, and Massena Foundation. The foundations have committed to providing \$950,000 per year to implement LEAD.

### **Do community members support LEAD?**

Community members strongly support LEAD. LEAD will be piloted first in Belltown, and then in Skyway (in partnership with the King County Sheriff's Office). Members of both communities have participated in the program's design, and will continue to provide feedback about the program. For example, the LEAD Community Advisory Board in Belltown includes representatives from the Belltown Community Council, Belltown Business Association, Downtown Seattle Association/Metropolitan Improvement District, Recovery Café, YWCA, and Millionair Club Charity.

### **For how long will LEAD be implemented?**

LEAD will formally begin on October 1, 2011. The program is anticipated to run for two years before an evaluation is begun, and to continue with foundation funding for an additional two years while the evaluation is conducted and analyzed. If LEAD is found to be effective, an ongoing source of funding will be sought.

### **Have programs like LEAD been implemented elsewhere?**

LEAD is modeled on "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. In one study of 128 individuals, program participants experienced a 47% reduction in use of opiates and 73% reduction in crack use. The programs also resulted in reduced recidivism (67% of those in the program were re-arrested less often following referral to the program than before).