

ROLE OF COMMUNITY PUBLIC SAFETY GROUPS



Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD®) is a community-based diversion approach with the goals of improving public safety and public order, and reducing the criminal behavior of people who participate in the program. The following are principles to achieve public safety outcomes that meet the needs of the community through continuous, meaningful engagement of community public safety groups.

Clearly define the goal of LEAD® as improving community health and safety. Though LEAD® uses human services tools, it is not another human services program – it is an alternative strategy to improving community health and safety. This clearly articulated goal is the underpinning of a strong partnership with community public safety groups that are usually influential in the development of public policy.

Don't oversell what can be accomplished with available resources. Existing human services are rarely adequate in meeting the needs of the entire population of people who are struggling with addiction, mental illness, and/or homelessness. It's important to be transparent and honest about the limits of what can be accomplished until housing, treatment and other resources are made more fully accessible to people who are actively using drugs and/or have criminal history.

Encourage community representatives' attendance at LEAD® operational workgroup meetings. This allows community Leaders to be recognized as a partner in engaging the issues driving problematic behavior by addicted/ill individuals. Community representatives can identify priority locations or individuals, and contribute their knowledge of issues affecting particular participants. This allows them to report back to their own constituencies on what is working and what needs to be enhanced or more robustly funded/supported to achieve the outcomes they want to see. When community representatives attend the operational workgroup meetings, sensitive information about participants is shared on a need-to-know basis; attendees must not share it outside meetings unless required by organizational duties.

Develop channels for easy transmission of information. While community representatives are welcome at operational workgroup meetings, attendance may be too burdensome, so alternative channels of information exchange need to be developed, so neighborhood concerns can feed into decisions about where to concentrate resources, and planned responses can be communicated back to the neighborhoods. The project manager and officers should also regularly attend meetings of key community safety groups to absorb concerns and report out on program development, obstacles, & progress. Transparency is more important than 100% success.

Supplement “data-driven” processes for focusing resources with qualitative information from all neighborhoods. Basing decisions on where to concentrate LEAD® policing and case management resources on calls for service or crime trends alone will result in under-serving communities that have barriers to calling 911 and where crime is under-reported. Continuous dialogue with neighborhood Leaders is critical to supplement standard “data-driven” prioritization processes.