



NEW ORLEANS

ABOUT LEAD

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) offers an alternative to arrest by providing intensive, low-barrier case management for people who commit law violations related to unmet behavioral health needs, substance use, or homelessness. LEAD seeks to increase equity and reduce harm within communities by reorienting the systems that shape health and safety. We believe that care transforms communities.

HOW WE WORK

Since 2017, LEAD New Orleans has been offering police officers in the 8th district, and now the 6th and 7th districts, the opportunity to divert individuals out of the jail system via a warm handoff to case managers at the scene of an offense or the social referral of a “familiar face,” and into long-term case management. Prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, municipal system actors, and community providers join police in this collaboration to ensure that cases are diverted out of the legal system and clients receive care in their communities. LEAD is an innovative approach to public safety grounded in the belief that health and wellness requires connection over punishment.

OUR PARTNERS

New Orleans Police Department
New Orleans Health Department
Office of Criminal Justice Coordination
City Attorney’s Office of New Orleans
Orleans Parish District Attorney
Orleans Public Defenders Office
Orleans Parish Sheriff’s Office
Metropolitan Human Services District
Councilmember Helena Moreno
Councilmember J.P. Morrell
Councilmember Lesli Harris
Travelers Aid Society
NAMI SELA
Vera Institute of Justice

CONTACT

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GOALS OF LEAD



Reorient collective response to public safety concerns and behavioral health issues



Eliminate racial disparities at the front end of the criminal legal system



Improve public safety and public health through evidence-based harm reduction models



Reduce the number of people entering the legal system for low-level offenses that stem from behavioral health needs, substance use disorder, or poverty



Inspire commitment to structural investments that expand community resources, and reduce taxpayer spending on unnecessary jail stays



Improve trust and confidence in law enforcement and the criminal justice apparatus

RECIDIVISM REDUCTION

IN 2019 IN NEW ORLEANS, ONE YEAR OF LEAD RESULTED IN:

- 79% reduction in police summons
- 35% reduction in arrests
- 72% fewer overall days in jail
- 90% reduction of days spent in jail per participant

IN 2023, OVER 4 YEARS, LEAD NEW ORLEANS RESULTED IN:

- 53% reduction in arrests
- 58.8% public safety rate

CONNECTION TO SOCIAL SERVICES

NAMI and Travelers Aid Society provide LEAD case management services to our participants. Through July 2024, they have worked with **140 people** to facilitate connections to temporary and permanent housing, substance use disorder treatment, mental health services, medical care, securing essential documents, applying for benefits, transportation and food assistance, and providing court support. Our case management model is long-term, grounded in harm reduction, and is designed to support people on their own terms.

