



Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) SF

As of 2015, a staggering **40%** of those returning to jail in San Francisco within three years were drug offenders

In 2016, drug and alcohol offenders in the city's Tenderloin and Mission districts comprised **37%** of drug- and alcohol-related incidents in the city.

On average, as of 2015, there was a **6-week wait** for individuals seeking residential treatment and a **5-day wait** for individuals seeking medical detox

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD)

LEAD SF is an innovative pre-booking diversion program that refers repeat, low-level drug offenders, at the earliest contact with law enforcement, to community-based health and social services as an alternative to jail and prosecution. San Francisco's LEAD program focuses on the Tenderloin and Mission districts where a significant percentage of the City's drug incidents occur.

In August 2017, the City received a 26-month grant award from the Board of State and Community Corrections to implement LEAD SF as a multi-agency collaborative project. It is overseen by a [Policy Committee](#) composed of partner agency representatives and co-chaired by District Attorney George Gascón, Chief of Police William Scott, and Director of the Department of Public Health, Barbara Garcia.

Mission of LEAD SF

The goal of LEAD SF is to better meet the needs of individuals with a history of substance abuse and low level drug offenses by:

1. Improving health and housing status of participants
2. Reducing the recidivism rate for low-level drug and alcohol offenders
3. Strengthening collaboration with city and community based partners

How does LEAD SF Work?

Rather than being arrested, LEAD SF diverts eligible participants at the point of contact with law enforcement into the City's expansive network of harm reduction-based rehabilitation services, including behavioral health services (substance use disorder and mental health treatment), physical health services, transitional housing, employment, and other relevant services.

Years in the Making: The SFDA's Office, the Sentencing Commission, and LEAD SF

In 2011, the Sentencing Commission of the City and County of San Francisco (SFSC), an initiative of the San Francisco District Attorney's Office, began a four-year process to study the design and implementation of a formalized, non-punitive law enforcement-assisted pre-booking diversion program for low-level drug offenders. During the same time, the SFSC also assessed the feasibility of replicating the LEAD program (based on a model implemented in Seattle) in San Francisco.

An analysis completed for the SFSC explored the feasibility, benefits, and cost of implementing LEAD and found that, "San Francisco has the necessary tools and systems to meet the challenge of successfully implementing such a program." The SFSC concluded its study in July 2015, echoing the researchers' recommendation that San Francisco implement LEAD as "an evidence-based and fiscally prudent approach to lowering recidivism and increasing public safety."

Later, the Workgroup to Re-envision the Jail Replacement Project also recommended implementing LEAD on a pilot basis in the Tenderloin and Mission neighborhoods.

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