

ROLE 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 improve 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. While LEAD uses human services tools, those are rarely fully adequate to meet 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.

Continuously report back to community safety groups. The LEAD project manager and LEAD-involved officers should regularly attend meetings of key community safety groups to absorb concerns about particular locations and individuals, and report out on program development, obstacles, & progress.

Encourage community representatives' attendance at LEAD operational workgroup meetings. Community representatives' attendance at operational workgroup meetings allows community leaders to be recognized as a partner in understanding and helping to engage 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 information outside meetings unless required by organizational duties.

Develop channels for easy transmission of information to and from community safety groups. While community representative are welcome at operational workgroup meetings, attendance may be too burdensome for many neighborhood leaders and business owners, 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. Transparency about what is being attempted 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. Involving leaders from such neighborhood in continuous dialogue is critical to supplementing standard "data-driven" prioritization processes.