

# DIVERSION OPTIONS FOR BROWARD COUNTY

## PRE-ARREST DIVERSION PROGRAMS CAN HELP WITH:



Police Staffing Shortages



Access to Services



'Frequent flyers'



Overpopulated Jails



Clogged Courts



Public Safety

## BACKGROUND

At one time, an officer's job was well defined as law and order. Nowadays, officers are unrealistically required to be social workers, emergency medical technicians and counselors, in addition to their official duties. Police have also been facing staffing shortages exacerbated by COVID-19 and the "great resignation" as well as community retaliation after the murder of George Floyd. These factors have made an already stressful job exponentially harder.

Diversion—a program to divert or deflect someone from the criminal justice system—is generally used for low-level offenses in order to prioritize police time, court resources and jail space for serious offenses and violent crimes. In addition to these benefits, diversion has also been found to repair relationships between communities and police, connect individuals with needed services and, ultimately, reduce recidivism. In this sheet, we will focus on three pre-arrest diversion models that have proven successful and cost-effective.

## PRE-ARREST DIVERSION EXAMINED



**Police-initiated diversion** allows the police to refer someone to an intensive case management program in lieu of arrest and the traditional criminal processing. The most common police-initiated diversion program, currently operating in 52 U.S. state jurisdictions, is known as **LEAD** (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion).



In a **co-responder** model, a behavioral health clinician and/or emergency medical personnel accompanies law enforcement on patrol. This provides an immediate, on-scene support to an individual in need, as opposed to police-led diversion which generally provides support after police contact. Co-responders respond to a variety of calls if a mental health crisis is at issue.



**Community responders** divert individuals by requesting trained, non-law enforcement professionals to respond to certain calls for service that do not require a badge and gun. This program takes the co-responder model and removes the police officer from the equation. Community responders only respond if safety is not at issue.

## THE FACTS

All three models—by their very nature—reduce jail admissions and backlogs in the courtroom. Further, although evaluation data is limited, some peer-reviewed studies and individual jurisdictions have found these models to provide additional benefits (as indicated in the below table). Several Florida jurisdictions are already using or exploring these diversion models and could be resources for Broward County. Other communities around the nation, [such as Denver, Colo.](#), have found that because each model offers its own benefits, it would be most effective to implement more than one model, or even all three.

LEAD	Co-Responder	Community Responder
Statistics		
<p>Reduction of recidivism by <a href="#">58 percent</a></p> <p><a href="#">Increase</a> in connection of an individual to services</p> <p><a href="#">Reduction</a> in hospital transports</p> <p><a href="#">Lower</a> criminal justice and health care costs</p>	<p>Reduction of average time on call from <a href="#">185 mins to 136 mins</a></p> <p><a href="#">Increase</a> in individuals engaging in behavioral health services</p> <p><a href="#">Reduction</a> in mandatory psychiatric holds</p> <p>Reduction of use of force from <a href="#">12.1 percent to 4.2 percent</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Reduction</a> in police calls for service</p> <p><a href="#">Little to no</a> need for police backup</p> <p><a href="#">Reduction</a> in repeat callers</p> <p>Lower potential of <a href="#">escalating</a> a situation</p>
FL Jurisdictions		
<p><a href="#">Tampa Bay - Exploring</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Gainesville</a></p> <p><a href="#">Jacksonville</a></p> <p><a href="#">Fernandina Beach</a></p> <p><a href="#">Pinellas County</a></p> <p><a href="#">Miami-Dade</a></p> <p><a href="#">Tallahassee</a></p> <p><a href="#">Tampa - Exploring</a></p>	<p><a href="#">St. Petersburg</a></p> <p><a href="#">Orlando</a></p>

## BROWARD COUNTY STATISTICS

Avg calls for service per year - Ft Lauderdale	<a href="#">200,000</a>
Avg inmates booked into jail per year	<a href="#">44,117</a>
Avg daily jail population	<a href="#">3,176</a>
# of felony drug cases in 2019	<a href="#">3196 (416 dismissed/acquitted)</a>
# of misdemeanor cases in 2019	<a href="#">14,432 (3,400 dismissed/acquitted)</a>

## ACTION STEPS

Officers cannot solve all the underlying problems in society, but they should have the tools available to assist someone in crisis properly.

These diversion methods have been found to support the police and the community better, as well as increase public safety.

### ACTION STEPS

- 1 Designate a champion
- 4 Find funding
- 2 Gather key partners
- 5 Talk to other jurisdictions
- 3 Collect data
- 6 Pilot program

## CONTACT US

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