



West Virginia

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion

Linking community members to life-saving services.



WEST VIRGINIA OFFICE OF
DRUG CONTROL POLICY
WV Department of Health & Human Resources

What is LEAD?

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) is an evidence-based pre- and post-arrest program aimed at redirecting low level offenders away from incarceration and into treatment centers to receive care for their underlying substance use disorder (SUD). LEAD is a community-based system of response that involves coordinated efforts between local agencies including law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys, public defenders, case managers, and community stakeholders.

Why is LEAD good for your community?

LEAD is shown to reduce recidivism and ease the workload of law enforcement and judicial professionals. It is low to no cost, uses existing staff, and requires no additional resources. LEAD reduces local government costs associated with processing individuals with SUD in the legal and justice systems. Individuals with an SUD who would be better served by the behavioral health care system are diverted from the legal system, helping them get the assistance they need.

LEAD allows funding and community resources previously used to punish individuals to rehabilitate and address the underlying cause of crimes committed to support a person's SUD. By treating the underlying causes of an offense, there is decreased likelihood that the individual will reoffend. Communities will experience lower criminal activity and lower fatal overdose deaths because individuals with SUD are linked to services that treat their disorder and facilitate lifelong wellness.

Who does it take?

Establishing a new LEAD program in a community takes support from key stakeholders, the local sheriff, the regional comprehensive behavioral health center, and a state LEAD representative. Additional community members can include the mayor's office, prosecuting attorney, public defenders, judges and magistrates, and local business leaders.

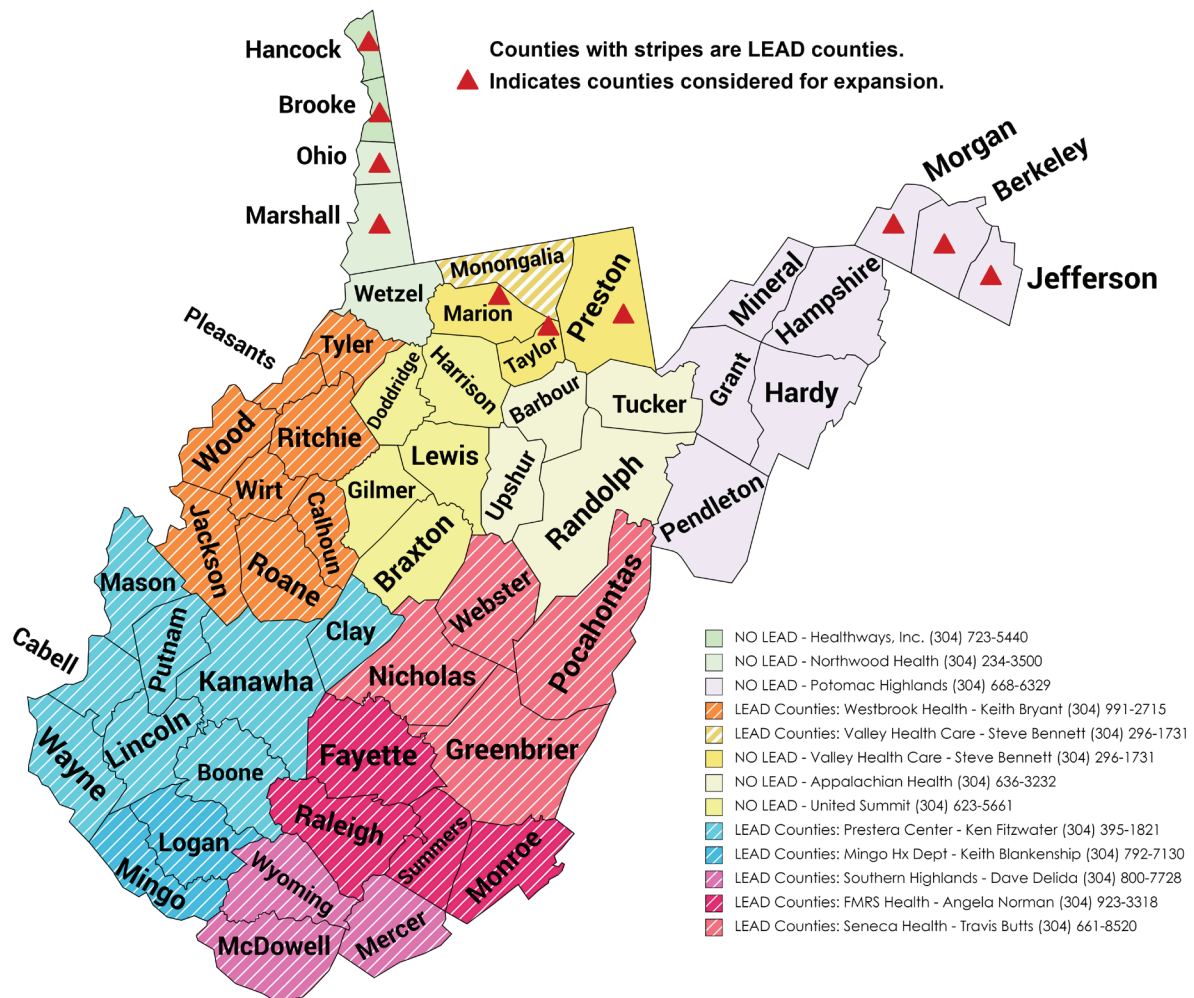
How to set up a LEAD program:

1. Convene stakeholders in targeted area - Statewide LEAD Coordinator, local law enforcement, and behavioral healthcare partners are essential to the LEAD program.
2. Discuss logistics (trainings schedule, diversion procedure, reporting protocol) and formalize partnerships (i.e., Memorandum of Understanding).
3. Designate a primary contact at a behavioral healthcare facility.
4. Train law enforcement on LEAD program and best practices for diversion.
5. Raise awareness with law enforcement and within the community.
6. Launch program in targeted area (city, county, region).
7. Collect data.
8. Track and monitor progress.
9. Schedule regular law enforcement trainings.



Where is LEAD in West Virginia?

The map below shows the regions where LEAD is active and the contact information for each region's coordinator.



Want to start LEAD in your area?

Contact the state LEAD coordinator, Gary Krushansky at Email: Gary.D.Krushansky@wv.gov.

Gary serves as Strategic Planner for the West Virginia National Guard, Liaison to the ODCP and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Coordinator for the state of West Virginia and the ODCP.

Lead Success:

Efforts are being made to expand LEAD to Marion, Ohio, Preston, and Taylor counties and include one additional comprehensive behavioral health center by the end of 2023. In 2021, 512 individuals were redirected from incarceration into treatment. In 2022, there were 867 redirections.

