



SNOHOMISH COUNTY
Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

About Our Program

Snohomish County LEAD began in 2020 after we recognized an ever-present problem in our community: individuals with behavioral health issues cycled again and again through the criminal legal system leaving community members frustrated and police overburdened while the health conditions of many vulnerable individuals remained unaddressed. To address this, Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney's Office received a grant from Washington Health Care Authority to start LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) as a pilot project.

LEAD gives police officers and prosecutors the ability to divert individuals away from jail when committing low-level misdemeanors that may stem from mental illness, substance use and extreme poverty. They are instead connected to care through dedicated case managers who work to address the root cause of the person's challenges and connect them to appropriate care.

LEAD's work is rooted in harm reduction principles which aim to reduce the level of harm that can be associated with unmanaged behavioral illness, including drug use. Rather than demanding abstinence, harm reduction focuses on opportunities to incrementally change behaviors that cause harm to oneself or others.

Snohomish County LEAD is committed to keeping the community and our stakeholders informed. This report is one of our efforts to fulfill that commitment. We welcome your comments and questions.

From The Director

During 2025, we were able to consider a large number of self-referrals from people who had not been referred to LEAD by a member of the legal system but were searching for support and needed a break in the cycle of arrests. We typically only accept self-referrals for a short period of time, but this year gave us some room to be innovatively responsive to community needs. This will be an option we continue to offer as long as capacity allows.

We take our commitment to Snohomish County seriously and continue to ensure that we show up when we say we will, address an unmet need and fill a void where others are not able to step in. Collaboration is the key to our work and this year we joined many partners in supporting our clients through uncertain times. While we don't always have the ability to resolve large issues, we have stood alongside many people as they resolved significant legal issues, endured devastating medical diagnoses, tackled mounting financial stressors and worked towards long term self-sustainability, all while reducing impacts on the legal system and remaining responsive to our partners.

While new challenges surely await us, we look forward to another year of this community-minded work.



ASHLEY DAWSON, LICSW

Program Director
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Law Enforcement Partners

Arlington Police Department
Bothell Police Department
Brier Police Department
Everett Police Department
Edmonds Police Department
Lake Stevens Police Department

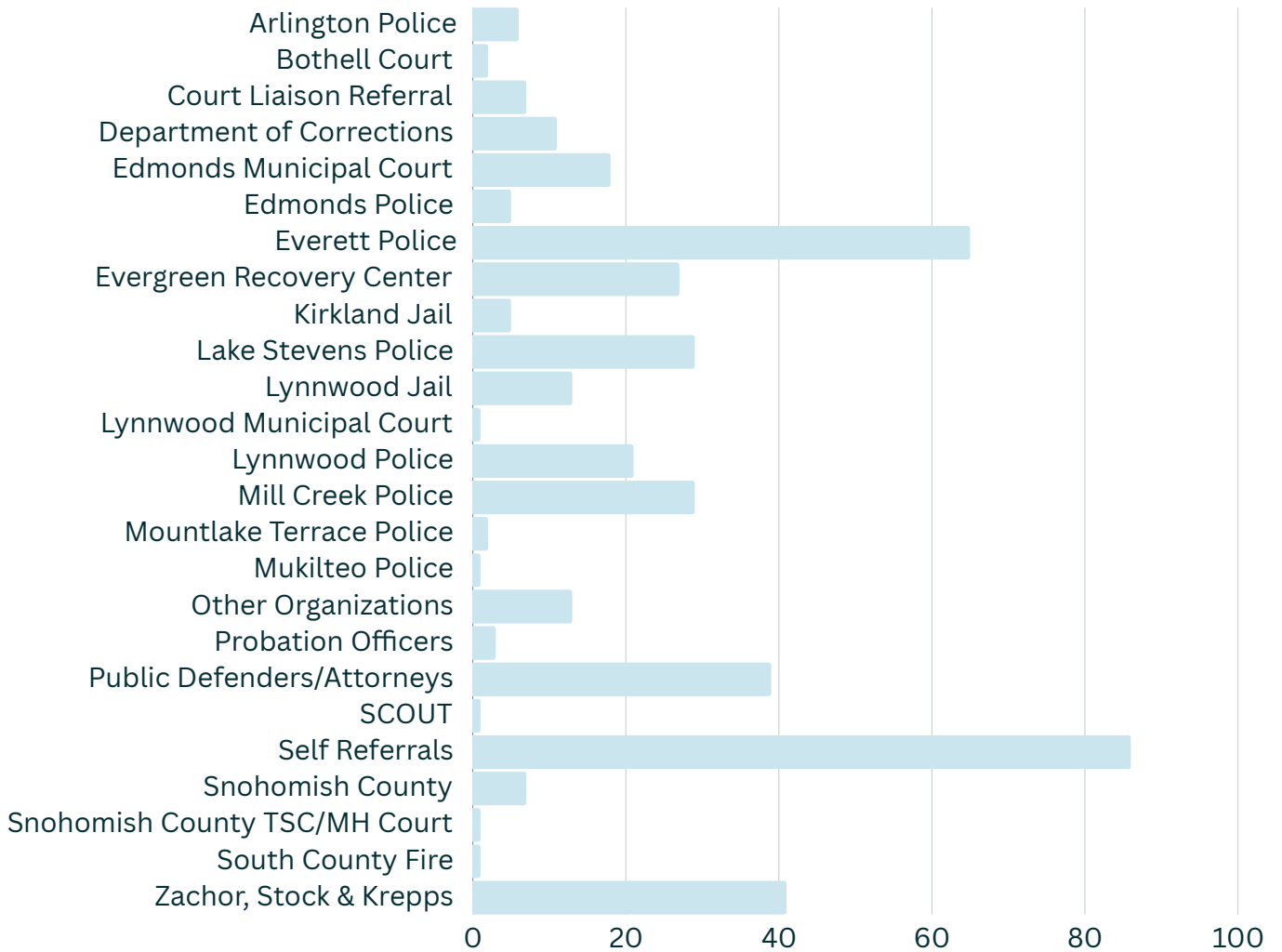
Lynnwood Police Department
Mill Creek Police Department
Mountlake Terrace Police Department
Mukilteo Police Department
Snohomish County Sheriff's Department
Snohomish Police Department

Community Partners

Carnegie Resource Center
Community Health Center
Downtown Everett Association
Esther's Place
Everett Gospel Mission
Hands of HOPE, Northlake
Christian Church

Hope 'N Wellness
Feldman & Lee
Ideal Option
Jean Kim Foundation
Snohomish County PDA
South County Fire
Zachor, Stock & Krepps Legal

2025 Referrals Per Source



433 total referrals made to Snohomish County LEAD in 2025

Referral Pathways

Participants come to us through multiple avenues. Each referral receives the same vetting to make sure they are a good fit for the program.

SOCIAL CONTACT REFERRAL

Officers or other members of the legal system refer people whose law violations may be related to behavioral health issues without waiting for a potential arrest.

PREBOOKING REFERRAL

The participant is arrested and instead of booking in jail for the eligible misdemeanor crime, they are diverted by the officer into to the LEAD program.

SELF REFERRAL

People who interact with LEAD staff and are interested in long term support can proactively contact LEAD to receive support if they have a history of law enforcement involvement and meet eligibility criteria.

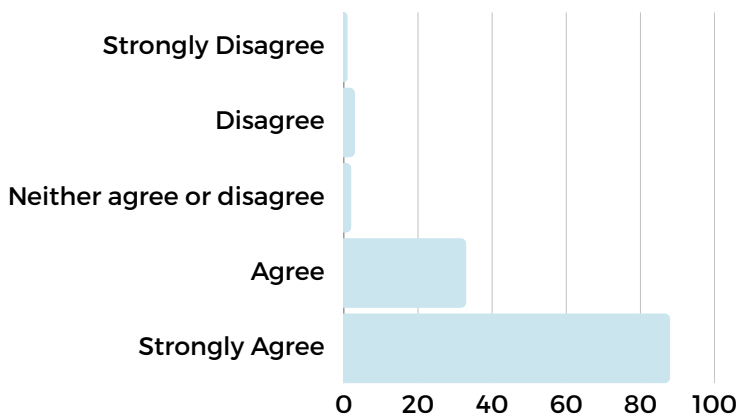
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community partners have the opportunity to refer presumptively eligible people to LEAD without police involvement and without using the emergency response system.

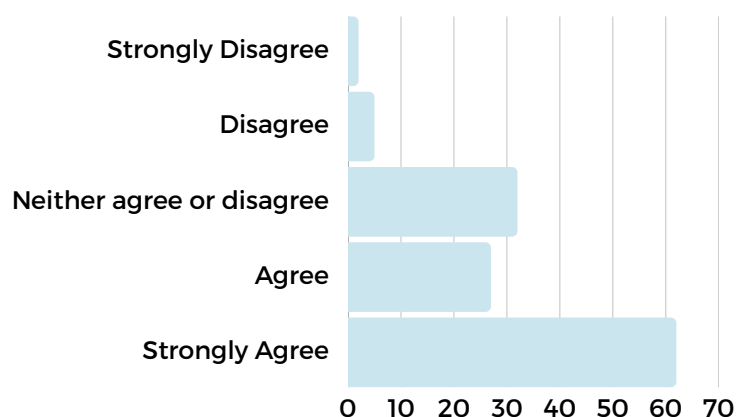
Client Feedback

129 participant surveys were completed in 2025. They were asked to respond to the below statements with one of five options: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree.

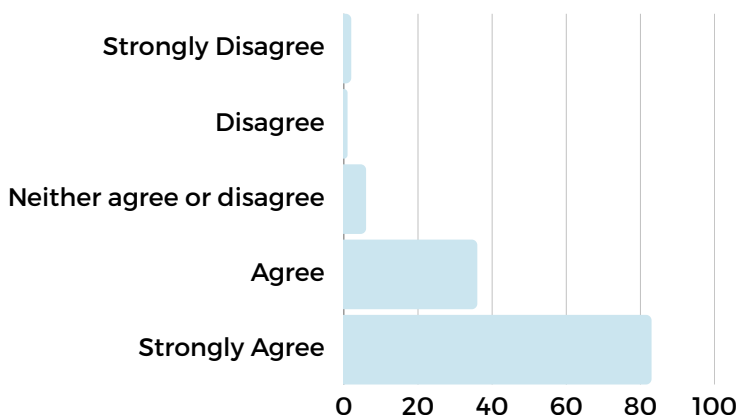
LEAD IS HELPING ME WORK TOWARD MY GOALS



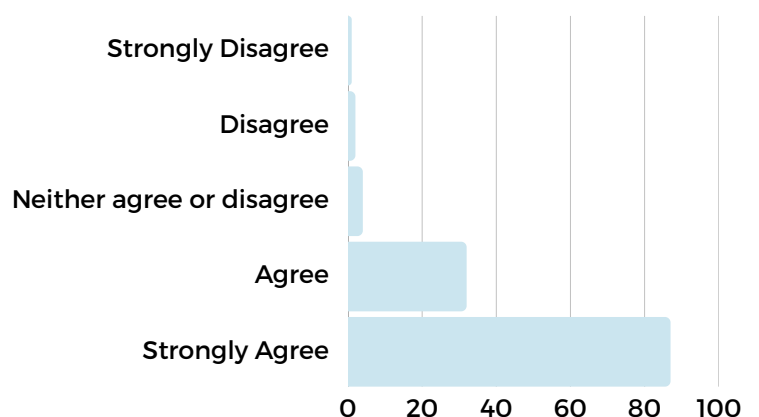
I'M HAVING FEWER ARRESTS/CITATIONS



I'M SEEING POSITIVE CHANGES IN MY LIFE



SERVICES OFFERED ARE HELPFUL



Case Management

We contract with Evergreen Recovery Centers and PDA (Purpose.Dignity.Action) for our case management. Case managers provide direct services to a caseload of approximately 20-25 individuals. Case managers provide screening, outreach, long-term engagement and supportive services for participants through intensive case management activities and collaboration with LEAD partners, service providers, housing providers and other community organizations.

Our staff includes:

- 1 Program Director
- 1 Program Assistant
- 7 Case Managers
- 1 Recovery Navigator
- 1 Intake & Screening Specialist
- 1 Case Management Supervisor
- 1 Court Liaison Specialist
- 1 Senior Case Manager



Sharonta Pickering
Case Manager

“Working as a LEAD Case Manager has been a profoundly humbling and rewarding experience. I have had the opportunity to meet clients where they are in their lives and support them as they work toward goals and dreams; they once believed were out of reach. I have been privileged to witness clients transitioning out of homelessness, reducing involvement with the criminal justice system, and achieving greater financial independence and stability. These milestones reflect not only their resilience, but also the power of consistent support and advocacy. At the same time, I have stood alongside clients during some of their most difficult moments, including relapse, legal setbacks, and significant mental health challenges brought on by complex life circumstances. These experiences have reinforced the importance of compassion, patience, and trauma-informed care. This program has given me a deeper understanding of the impact of second chances and has affirmed my belief that, with the right support and opportunities, individuals can change their circumstances and create meaningful, lasting change in their lives.”

Client Story

J.K. reached out to LEAD in October of 2023. She was living in her vehicle and in need of help with pending legal issues, mental health struggles, and substance use disorder. J.K. met with her case manager and discussed goals of finding housing, clearing up her legal issues, applying for the Aged, Blind or Disabled Cash Program, and getting dentures.

J.K.'s case manager got to work scheduling her dental appointments, coordinating with a housing navigator, and calling courts about her legal cases. J.K. and her significant other were able to move into a shelter with help from her case manager.

Over the course of the next year, her case manager took her to court dates, gave rides to the methadone clinic, gave her gas money so she could make appointments, and helped her apply for permanent housing. J.K. kept committed to the goals she set forth and went to health appointments, got a social security card, and worked with her attorneys to address court cases.

In April of 2024, J.K. and her significant other were asked to leave the shelter they were staying at for not complying with rules. Luckily, J.K. and her case manager had been working hard to get her an apartment at Clare's Place that she was able to move into a week later. This time had its emotional ups and downs – issues at Clare's Place were common and her significant others arrests tested her focus on the goals she set.

Later in 2024, J.K. began regularly attending Burlington Community Court and participating in treatment as well. In March of 2025, Lynnwood Court closed and dismissed all of her open and active Lynnwood cases, citing her amazing progress in Burlington as the reason. J.K. now is working through her Everett cases which will likely go the same way. J.K.'s case manager will continue to help her navigate through what's next and is impressed with her progress.

-Submitted by a Snohomish County LEAD Case Manager

Recovery Navigator Program

The Recovery Navigator Program, which continues to function as an expansion of our LEAD team, focuses on long term case management as well as short-term connections to support.

The BHASO funding that supports our RNP also allows us to have a full time Court Liaison Specialist who has a presence in several municipal, district and therapeutic courts throughout the county. By having a court presence, Snohomish County LEAD can be seen as a viable resource for prosecutors and probation officers as well as a self-referral option for defendants without other supports.

Our partnership with Washington State Department of Health as a Naloxone provider continued in 2025. Our Recovery Navigator Program Coordinator focuses on training and distributing Naloxone to the community along with educating people on important harm reduction measures.

We handed out **1586** kits of Naloxone in 2025.
There were **24** overdose reversals reported.
112 individuals were trained on overdose response.



Community Outreach

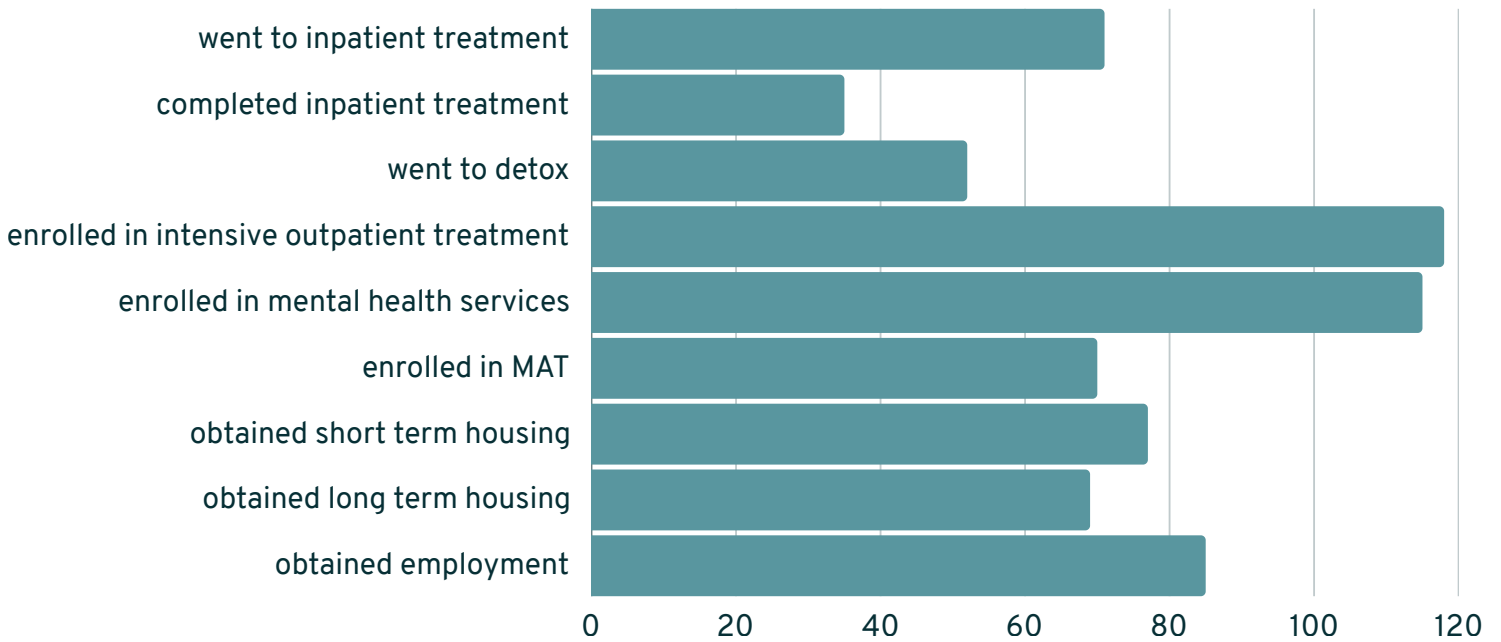
As part of our ongoing efforts to stay visible in our community, Snohomish County LEAD had a presence at several community events, some with the goal of being readily available to people in need and others purely with the intention of community awareness, ensuring conversations about substance use, mental health and naloxone are all normalized by continual awareness and open communication. These events included:

- Spring Into Recovery
- National Night Out
- Everett Street Fair
- Verdant Community Health Networking Event
- Carnegie Resource Center
- Point in Time Count
- Everett Faith in Action
- Lynnwood Cops and Clergy



Outcomes

NUMBER OF CLIENTS CONNECTED TO SERVICES BY TYPE



601

Participants were served in 2025. This number includes new referrals and existing participants.

16,534

Staff recorded encounters with participants which include in-person visits, texts, phone calls, emails and care coordination.

Funding

Snohomish County LEAD is funded by 3 grants.



Bureau of Justice Assistance COSSUP



North Sound BH-ASO

Future Plans

Evaluate Missed Diversions: Through a research study with PDA in Seattle, Snohomish County LEAD will be a test site for evaluating missed opportunities for diversion among local law enforcement agencies. We hope this will lead to larger conversations with line officers and eventually result in even more opportunities for LEAD referrals instead of arrest.

Utilize Technology for Analysis: Through our client tracking software system, Julota, we have the ability to analyze program outcomes and streamline our intake and data recording processes for staff usage. We hope to dive deeper into exploration of Julota's functions in order to create better reports and ensure record-keeping reflects the many facets of our day-to-day work and interactions with clients and the systems they frequent.

Community Court Partnerships: Following a thriving partnership with Edmonds Community Court, we have been asked to join at least two other Community Courts being created in Snohomish County. We intend to have a presence in the courts, participate in robust discussions and accept LEAD referrals for those who need services beyond the Community Court case manager supports already in place.



Deputy Police Chief, Dean Thomas
Lake Stevens Police Department

“Partnering with Snohomish County LEAD allows our officers to address underlying causes of repeat low-level crime by connecting individuals with treatment, social services, and housing assistance. This enables our officers to be more efficient by spending less time on minor offenses and focusing more on serious public safety issues. While attending the Operational Work Group meetings, I truly appreciate listening to the inspiring success stories of individuals with prior high recidivism rates. It is first-hand confirmation that LEAD truly is a valuable asset to our Snohomish County community.”



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MORE INFORMATION

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