



# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

## Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY\*

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL            R  
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Henry

### A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning  
**Implementing Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion in Baltimore**

FOR the purpose of expressing support for an expansion of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program nationwide and requesting that law enforcement and other stakeholders appear before the City Council to discuss how the LEAD program could be implemented in Baltimore, what partnerships and structures need to be put in place to allow LEAD to succeed, and how to provide it with the necessary human and financial resources.

### Recitals

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, or LEAD, is a public safety program designed to use human resources tools to address public order problems that do not respond well to a traditional prosecution and punishment approach. The LEAD program allows street level police officers to divert individuals committing low-level crimes, typically minor drug or prostitution offenses, away from formal arrest and prosecution and instead into an intensively managed social services program.

Officers can avoid arresting the same people over and over for non-violent addiction driven offenses, and offenders can be directly connected to social services providers with the ability to provide drug treatment services, housing, or other interventions that can remove the root causes of disruptive behavior more effectively than an encounter with the criminal justice system could.

LEAD has proven to be effective in its primary goal of reducing offenses and improving public order. The nation's longest running LEAD program in Seattle has shown a 58% drop in recidivism among its participants compared to similar individuals instead processed through the traditional criminal justice system.

In Seattle, LEAD has also helped to improve relations between the Police Department and heavily policed communities by positioning the Department as a partner genuinely interested in improving

both public order and the lives of offenders as well as the community, rather than a punitive external force focused on arrest statistics more than actual problem solving.

With improved outcomes for communities, participants, and community-police relations, LEAD is a program worth taking a hard look at for any city. What it is not though is a straight out of the box, one size fits all, solution to every crime and policing problem in every community.

In order to succeed the LEAD program requires genuine buy-in and cooperation from a range of stakeholders, including street level police officers, the police command staff, prosecutors, political leaders, service providers, and business and community leaders. It also needs adequate resources to ensure that participants receive timely and targeted interventions without detracting from others' ability to get needed assistance.

LEAD has been successful elsewhere, and could potentially work well in Baltimore if properly implemented. That implementation will require a broad effort on the City's behalf. Discussions about its feasibility and how to establish the framework necessary for LEAD to succeed should begin immediately.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council expresses support for an expansion of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program nationwide and requests that law enforcement and other stakeholders appear before the City Council to discuss how the LEAD program could be implemented in Baltimore, what partnerships and structures need to be put in place to allow LEAD to succeed, and how to provide it with the necessary human and financial resources.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Police Commissioner, the Health Commissioner, the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the District Public Defender for Baltimore City, the Commissioner of Housing, the Administrative Judge for the Baltimore City District Court, the President and Chief Executive Officer of Behavioral Health System Baltimore, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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