LEAD SEATTLE · KING COUNTY | COLEAD

QUARTERLY REPORT

Q3 2025 • JULY - SEPTEMBER

CITYWIDE

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SUMMARY

CITY-WIDE, YEAR-TO-DATE

990

CLIENTS

At the end of Q3 2025, LEAD/CoLEAD's Seattle roster contained 990 clients.*

23,604

SUBSTANTIVE MEETINGS

These figures blend CoLEAD and LEAD outcomes; frequency of meetings increases with CoLEAD because participants are available on site.**

440

REFERRALS

LEAD/CoLEAD received 440 referrals for individuals needing support.



Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4

A CLOSER LOOK

* This includes active clients who are working with case managers on goals, as well as a smaller number of outreach clients who are in a rapport-building process with case managers. It also includes a small number of alumni clients who may be largely stabilized and self-sufficient, but for whom continued case manager support is beneficial as they set up their lives — even if it's just a few check-ins per year.

** LEAD has undergone a series of performance evaluations to test client outcomes, recidivism, and other metrics. One study found that each meeting between a participant and case manager increases that person's likelihood of gaining shelter or permanent supportive housing. The actual likelihood of gaining these resources depends on many factors, including the regional supply of shelter and housing.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CITY-WIDE, YEAR-TO-DATE

533 Connections to behavioral health programs

2,210 Connections to substance use treatment

3,662 Connections to legal services

562 Steps taken toward financial self-sufficiency



A CLOSER LOOK

For some LEAD clients, any substantive engagement with a case manager is a huge win. For all LEAD clients, every substantive meeting with a case manager is one step closer to stability.

LEAD clients often face additional barriers to housing, shelter, and other resources. For many LEAD clients, a LEAD case manager is the first form of interpersonal support in years. As a result, LEAD case managers are often required to engage in the slow task of building rapport and trust with LEAD clients before the arduous work of resource acquisition begins.

BUILDING INTO THE NEW YEAR

Throughout Seattle, LEAD works with a diverse set of partners, including law enforcement, other service providers, and community-based ambassador teams such as We Deliver Care (WDC) and BIA Ambassador teams. Coordination between these partners tends to resemble a tried-and-true method: law enforcement and community-based ambassador teams provide an ongoing response to emergent community concerns, and as they do so, they identify high priority people whose community impact stems from complex factors. LEAD takes referrals for these individuals and, using best-in-class case managers, creates plans for recovery and walks alongside individuals until they are stable. The ultimate goal: create a collaborative continuum of care that addresses both community and client needs.

Because of LEAD's significant 2025 budget constraints (see Q2 2025 report for more details), the number of individuals for whom LEAD can provide this intensive case management is vastly outpaced by the number of individuals who need it. As 2025 continues, LEAD has focused on utilizing valuable case management spots for individuals whose recovery, stability, and behavior change would make the biggest positive impact for Seattle communities. Despite many successes, Seattle's neighborhoods continue to feel the effects of the sheer quantity of individuals in need of support vastly outpaces the work that LEAD is funded to do — especially in neighborhoods like the Chinatown-International District (CID).

Starting in mid-2025, the City of Seattle directed LEAD to utilize its CoLEAD program in the CID. CoLEAD is a small, lodging-based service provider within the LEAD framework that can expedite a person's care plan; by pairing intensive case management with lodging, case managers and clients engage much more often and with fewer of the impediments that come with street-based case management. The result of this design is that clients can meet their goals more quickly and experience a smoother path into permanent housing. Working closely with WDC, REACH's neighborhood outreach, other LEAD teams, and CID community partners, CoLEAD spent Q2 and Q3 of 2025 bringing over 40 individuals into its lodging — all individuals who were frequenting the CID neighborhood.

At the time of writing, LEAD service providers are over capacity, which limits the rate of work that can occur. Thankfully, LEAD was allotted additional funds to LEAD's 2026 budget, which will help address the severe deficit that LEAD operated in throughout 2025. Although the number of individuals in need of long-term case management will continue to outpace LEAD's capacity in 2026, LEAD will be able to continue to take priority referrals and work with partners throughout the City to build a system that addresses both community and client needs.

COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX ISSUES

When the We Deliver Care team (WDC) began to provide deescalation services in the CID in 2025, they quickly recognized Jonathan. He was someone they had consistently encountered in the 3rd Ave area, but all they knew was that he slept outside and moved around between neighborhoods. In the CID, businesses identified Jonathan as a highly impactful person with visible behavioral health issues, involvement in the informal economy, and a consistent presence in the neighborhood. Realizing that he was a high priority person, different teams working in the CID — WDC, LEAD, and REACH's neighborhood outreach — began to coordinate around him.

Because of Jonathan's substance use disorder and unaddressed mental health needs, rapport-building occurred slowly. The different teams kept each other up to date and built trust with him, bit by bit. At one point, WDC even located his mother, who brought him supplies. He walked away from the items she brought, not out of rejection, but because his behavioral health needs drew his attention elsewhere. In July of 2025, through steady collaboration and persistent effort, he was nominated and accepted to CoLEAD, the lodging-based LEAD case management team.

Despite having obtained non-congregant lodging and intensive case management via CoLEAD, coordination between teams remained crucial. Jonathan's relationship with his case management team was frail and, in the beginning, they would lose contact with him for days at a time. Each time, CoLEAD and WDC would coordinate, locating him in the CID, arranging an Uber, and guiding him back to temporary lodging. At first, he would not sleep in his room. He preferred to sleep in the CoLEAD lobby, where the world felt less closed in. But the team met him where he was and gently encouraged him forward. With patient presence and motivational interviewing, he started sleeping in his bed.

For Jonathan, small changes created momentum. He soon reached out to his mother, got his ID, and worked with his case manager to navigate the arduous application process for permanent supportive housing, a type of housing unit that comes with onsite mental health support. Just four months after entering CoLEAD lodging, his application was successful and, for the first time in his adult life, he moved into his own apartment.

Now housed, he continues to receive support from his CoLEAD team, who notes his growing responsiveness. In the CID, WDC reports that his once-frequent impacts on the neighborhood have dramatically decreased. Jonathan's journey is far from over, but he now has a place of his own, a support team that he trusts, and is continuing to build connections in his new life. For the first time in a long time, he is looking forward to the future.



ABOUT LEAD & COLEAD

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) is a widely replicated community-based, pre-booking diversion model that was designed and first implemented in Seattle/King County. CoLEAD utilizes the model and lessons learned from LEAD to provide temporary lodging and intensive case management.

PARTNERS

LEAD is governed under an interjurisdictional memorandum of understanding by a Policy Coordinating Group (PCG), to which the project management team reports. The PCG sets policy and approves all operational protocols for LEAD work.

PDA provides project management for Seattle LEAD and subcontracts with REACH, a program of Evergreen Treatment Services, to provide LEAD's outreach and case management services.

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