



Office of Community Health & Safety
2023 Annual Report

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MESSAGE FROM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

City of Pittsburgh Residents,

The City of Pittsburgh created the Office of Community Health and Safety to connect our most vulnerable neighbors with the right services to make our city safer and more just. Our mission is to serve marginalized communities that have been systematically isolated from society and victimized by an unjust system. Through the tireless work of our frontline workers, public safety liaisons, and subject matter experts we hope to address the needs of those living in poverty, experiencing homelessness or housing instability, active drug use, drug use disorder and experiencing mental or behavioral health challenges. It is our goal that our most vulnerable residents can be embraced back by their neighbors and become active members of their communities. In this report, you will find significant progress has been made to expand the capabilities of our office to rise to this challenge over the past year.

Upon entering 2023, the Office of Community Health and Safety employed 10 full-time staff, with only one active program – a program that partners with first responders to address high utilization of 911. Since then, we have expanded to 30 full-time employees and launched several programs, including Co-Response, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, the Trauma Survivor’s Assistance Program, and managed the transition of the Reaching Out on The Streets program into the city.

Co-Response is active every week in one-third of the city, addressing mental and behavioral health challenges and de-escalating crises through co-responding units of police officers and social workers. The Trauma Survivor’s Assistance Program partners with police detectives to respond quickly to surviving community members of traumatic events, including overdoses, gun violence, and more – connecting them to resources in their most challenging moments.

Already underway is a concerted effort to build on this progress in 2024 and beyond. We have successfully secured significant funding to pilot a program responding to opioid overdoses, expand coverage of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, and are rapidly moving to expand the coverage of Co-Response and our homeless outreach efforts to greater portions of the city.

Central to our mission is to listen to the voices of *all* our community members and ensure that our programs serve those in need. Our programs are all voluntary, person centered, trauma informed and built on the principles of harm reduction. Though the challenges we face are formidable, with your partnership we are confident we can truly make Pittsburgh a safer, healthier, and more equitable city.

Sincerely,

Camila Alarcon-Chelecki
Assistant Director, Office of Community Health and Safety
Department of Public of Public Safety

OUR PROGRAMS

Community Engagement and Partnership

Continued community engagement, transparency, and accountability to the community and first responders is critical to building trust and facilitating change in the current response continuum. OCH&S will continue to sustain a collaborative model of program development and evaluation, prioritizing continuous review to ensure that deficits are quickly addressed and used for growth. OCH&S will partner with existing community organizations and prioritize community members who have been harmed and may not engage in traditional meetings. Initial efforts will focus on creation of multiple advisory collaboratives focused on Black neighborhoods most harmed by the war on drugs and systemic racism. The Office of Community Health and Safety community engagement team seeks to build relationships and trust between the office and diverse communities in the City of Pittsburgh while leveraging best practices in community outreach and community engagement. Staff will accomplish their mission by developing programs and other initiatives in partnership with the community to enhance the quality of life, safety, and security of our community.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) is an effective, replicable, and equitable diversion method that provides individuals with intense case management. It is a client-based approach that provides people with substance use disorder and mental and behavioral health challenges, experiencing homelessness and poverty with person-centered social services and intense case management focused on harm reduction and compassion in lieu of criminalization. The goal of LEAD is to break with traditional methods rooted in coercion and punishment to address the needs of individuals experiencing poverty, homelessness, substance use disorder, and mental and behavioral health challenges. LEAD combats racial and ethnic disparities within the criminal-legal system that have been perpetuated by harmful systems, stigmatization and lack of access to services. The initiative ignites a pathway towards criminal justice reform specifically to end harmful policing and criminalizing minorities and vulnerable populations. The mission of LEAD for the City of Pittsburgh is to reduce criminal-legal system engagement, promote individual agency, and provide care and support to people who use drugs, people with mental and behavioral health challenges, and people experiencing homelessness through person-centered social services. LEAD will combat racial and ethnic disparities within the criminal-legal system that have been perpetuated by harmful systems, stigmatization, and lack of access to services. LEAD is currently operating in Zones 1 and 2 and will be expanding to other zones.



Reaching Out on The Streets

The Reaching Out on The Streets (ROOTS) Program aims to reduce the prevalence of homelessness by addressing the social determinants of health, opening opportunities for personal agency, and intervening in critical moments of crisis to reduce criminal legal interactions, increase access to services, and reduce fatal overdoses. ROOTS will incorporate two components at full implementation: street outreach and drop-in sites. The staffing plan and organization align to support these programs. Interdisciplinary Zone Teams will meet the needs of individuals within the hyper-local scope of available services. Interdisciplinary Zone Teams include members from street outreach, sites, and diversion programs that coordinate participant care and are adaptable to complex needs; such as, human services, drug and alcohol treatment, housing, healthcare, behavioral health, and criminal legal navigation.

Post Overdose Support Team

The Post Overdose Support Team (POST) responds to overdoses with teams of certified peer recovery specialists (CPRSs) and case managers to reach individuals at the time of interception with public safety personnel. The response aims to enable the POST team to foster a connection that places the individual in a deescalated state following the overdose, allowing us to begin the work of providing service connections that can lead to long-term recovery. Many people who have overdosed refuse transport to the hospital by EMS. This affords the POST team its opportunity. Trust-building that follows de-escalation is an integral initial step in order to facilitate the willingness of the individual to continue to engage POST staff after EMS has departed. to ensure that the provision of service connections and system navigation may continue. The responding team and follow-up case management staff identifies its primary goals to support safety, recovery, and to provide service connections that aim to treat substance use and/or co-occurring mental health disorders.

Continuum of Support

Through continued collaboration with first responders and community members, analysis of calls for service, mapping of existing services, development of new partnerships, and evaluation of existing models, the Office of Community Health & Safety (OCH&S) will improve upon the existing continuum of resources and responses to address community unmet social service needs that are often encountered by Public Safety partners. First responder social support referrals, case conferencing and review, and service gap analysis will be utilized to enhance this continuum.

Trauma Survivor's Assistance Program

The Trauma Survivors Assistance Program (TSAP) is a partnership between the Office of Community Health & Safety (OCHS) and the three Bureaus of Public Safety. TSAP social workers engage with victims of crime and survivors of trauma to provide emotional support and link them to appropriate trauma and crisis response services to stabilize them and begin the process of healing. TSAP also provides community trauma response following shootings and other instances of violence, providing a supportive debriefing space and linkage to resources in a larger group setting.



Co-Response

The Co-Response program is developed to provide the “right responders” to individuals who are experiencing a mental health or behavioral crisis. Teams consist of a Community Social Worker and dedicated officer who are dispatched to co-respond to individuals in crisis. Through trust-building and the provision of services, Co-Response seeks to reduce the propensity for individuals who experience mental and behavioral health crises to engage in violent behavior and become involved in the criminal justice system. Through the reduction in use of force, the program also aims to increase both the officer and community member’s safety. This will be supported by training Co-Response Officers on Crisis Response Intervention Training (CRIT), a national best-practice model rolled out by the Department of Justice.

People In Need of Support

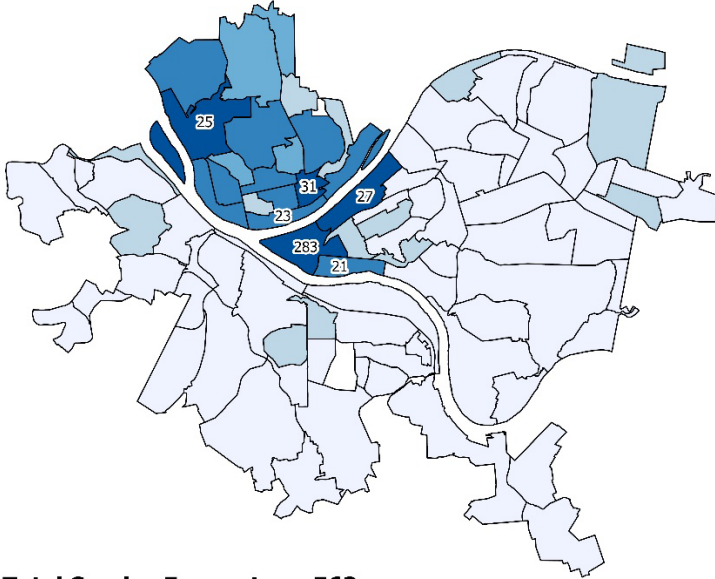
The PINS program developed as a partnership between the three Public Safety Bureaus and the Office of Community Health & Safety. First responders identify and refer City residents who frequently utilize 9-1-1 services to meet their basic needs, as well as individuals who may be vulnerable to harm and need follow up. Community Social Workers and Public Safety liaisons conduct home visits to assess the health and social needs of these residents and develop a plan to link the residents to services and resources (including CIT and FBI cases). High utilizers also known as "frequent flyers" who disproportionately utilize 9-1-1 services place strain upon the emergency response system. By connecting these individuals to long-term services and supports, we relieve pressure on the systems in place to assist people who experience crises. Nationally, these programs are known to provide systems-level cost-savings.



PROGRAM MAPS

PROGRAM MAP #1

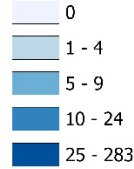
Co-Response Service Encounter Counts by Pittsburgh Neighborhood



Description:

This map displays counts of Co-Response service encounters provided by Co-Response teams in Pittsburgh's Office of Community Health & Safety (OCHS) from April 2023 to April 2024. A service encounter is any time a Co-Response team interacts with a client or responds to a mental / behavioral health PBP call for service. Each team consists of at least one PBP officer and social worker. The counts are aggregated by Pittsburgh neighborhood, and displays 563 Co-Response service encounter locations. The locations are mapped using PBP call for service addresses or locations reported by social workers in the OCHS Julota database. This map does not account for all Co-Response service encounters, as encounter locations may not be recorded or provided due to the nature of the work.

Service Count

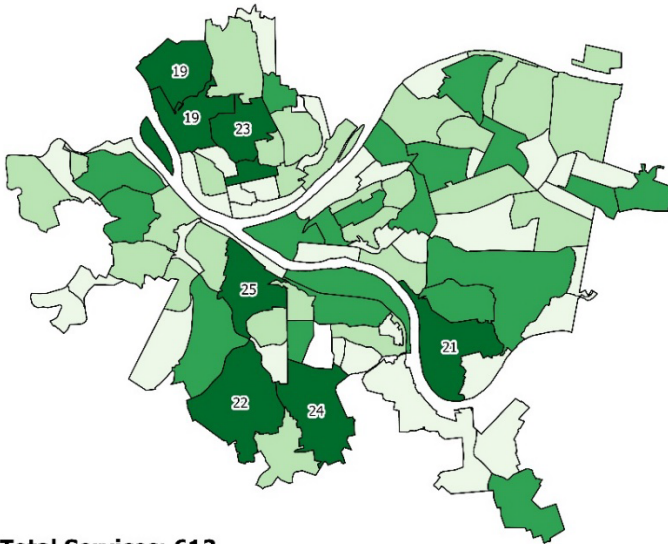


Total Service Encounters: 563

Source: Pittsburgh Bureau of Police CAD Datawarehouse; Office of Community Health & Safety, City of Pittsburgh Julota Reporting Database

PROGRAM MAP #2

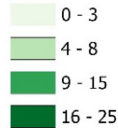
PINS Service Counts by Pittsburgh Neighborhood



Description:

This map displays counts of People In Need of Support (PINS) services provided by social workers in Pittsburgh's Office of Community Health & Safety (OCHS) from April 2023 to April 2024. The counts are aggregated by Pittsburgh neighborhood, and represent approximately 96% of the 612 total PINS services provided. The services are mapped using a participant's home address if available, otherwise a location where the social worker interacted with the participant is used. Service locations are not always available or provided due to the nature of PINS's work prioritizing participant confidentiality serving Pittsburgh's unhoused population.

Service Count

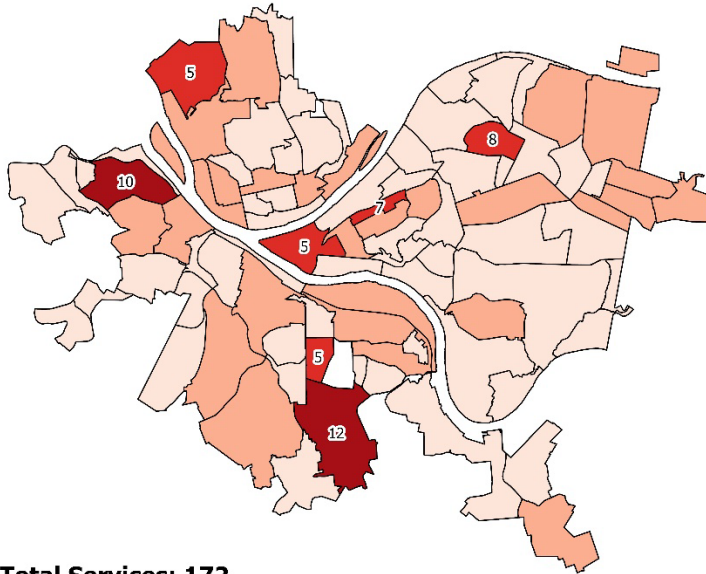


Total Services: 612

Source: Office of Community Health & Safety, City of Pittsburgh Julota Reporting Database

PROGRAM MAP #3

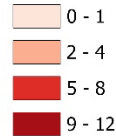
TSAP Service Counts by Pittsburgh Neighborhood



Description:

This map displays counts of Trauma Survivors Assistance Program (TSAP) services provided by social workers in Pittsburgh's Office of Community Health & Safety (OCHS) from April 2023 to April 2024. The counts are aggregated by each Pittsburgh neighborhood, and represent approximately 83% of the 172 total TSAP services provided. The services are mapped using a participant's home address if available, otherwise a location where the social worker interacted with the participant is used. Service locations are not always available or provided due to the nature of TSAP's work prioritizing participant confidentiality and serving populations affected by traumatic experiences.

Service Count

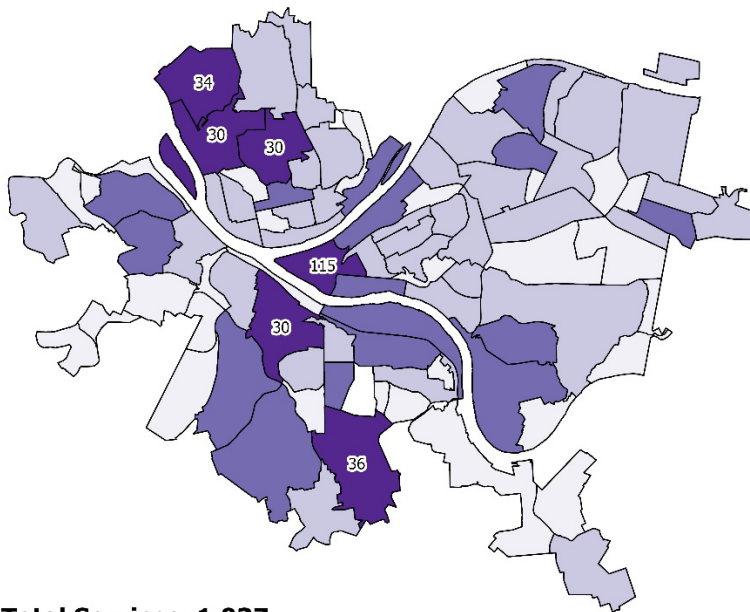


Total Services: 172

Source: Office of Community Health & Safety, City of Pittsburgh Julota Reporting Database

GLOBAL PROGRAM MAP #4

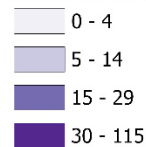
OCHS Program Service Counts by Pittsburgh Neighborhood



Description:

This map displays counts of all services provided by social workers in programs under the Continuum of Support (COS) in Pittsburgh's Office of Community Health & Safety (OCHS) from April 2023 to April 2024. The counts are aggregated by Pittsburgh neighborhood, and represent approximately 93% of the 1,037 total services provided under the three COS programs: Co-Response, PINS, and TSAP. The services are mapped using a participant's home address if available, otherwise a location where the social worker interacted with the participant is used. Service locations are not always available or provided due to the nature of OCHS's work prioritizing the confidentiality of the participants served.

Service Count

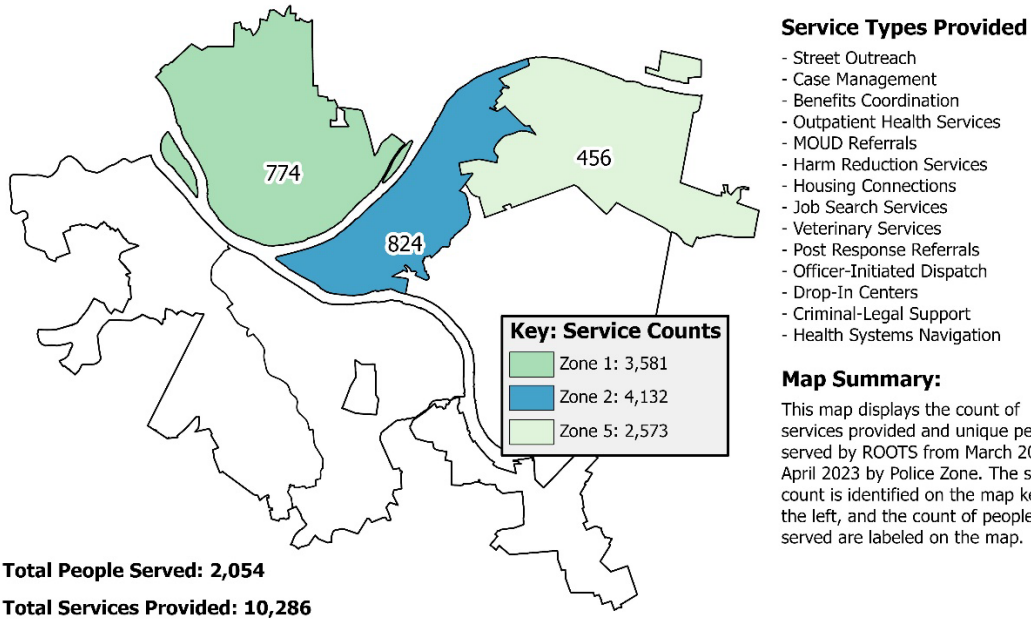


Total Services: 1,037

Source: Office of Community Health & Safety, City of Pittsburgh Julota Reporting Database

ROOTS DATA

Count of ROOTS Services Provided & People Served by Police Zone



*We are currently transitioning ROOTS data collection capacities as part of the larger transition of the ROOTS team into the City of Pittsburgh.

ADDITIONAL DATA

PATIENTS SERVED

- From April 2023 to April 2024, we have opened 1099 services – meaning that there were a total of 1099 enrollments in Co-Response, People in Need of Support, and the Trauma Survivor’s Assistance Program.

REASONS FOR REFERRALS

- For those 1099 services, there were 1,571 reasons for referrals – demonstrating that our teams are tasked with addressing multiple resource gaps when patients are initially referred. In addition, our dedicated field staff often expand their assistance to patients beyond initial referral reasons and resource gaps as they learn more about patients’ unique circumstances.

SERVICE ENCOUNTERS

- Our teams engaged in 6,073 service encounters, meaning that there 6,073 times when they engaged in actions such as meeting with clients, followed-up with them, connected them to resources, and sent them information to address resource gaps.



RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS OF OUR STAFF

Though we detailed our staffing earlier in this report, we would like to highlight that the data presented on this page are the result of a small but highly dedicated team.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR STAFF

Co-Response

- Only 2 out of 545 co-response calls for service used force, for a use of force percentage of 0.36%. This is much lower than national averages and highlights the priority of both officer and community member safety.

- A female client of co-response was unhoused and in a camp that was decommissioned, struggling with both mental health and substance use disorder challenges. She

became ill after camp decommissioning and went to the hospital for treatment. She was arrested upon discharge from the hospital for an open warrant. The co-response unit worked with her during her time in jail and helped her get back to her parent's home after she was released. The co-response unit supported client in getting to the clinic every day. After some time, she left home and relapsed. The co-response unit stayed connected to her and supported her voluntary admission to a behavioral health institution. The client is now housed in a shelter bed and is engaging with housing programs that fit her needs. Client was transitioned to the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program to support her through the criminal justice system and the co-response unit continues to support her until she gets housed.

- Continuum of Support and administrative staff provided support to a migrant crisis at the Greyhound Station affecting 90+ individuals and families, connecting them to resources and transportation to be reunited with their families where possible.
- OCH&S and the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police hosted a Crisis Response Intervention Training (CRIT) session for Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Officers, a national best-practice training designed to assist officers in addressing mental and behavioral health crises.
- Developed a multidisciplinary case conference with DHS to triage services bases on a holistic approach the most complex cases of high utilizers in the downtown area. Working with over 25 complex needs clients.
- Reunification of several chronic homeless cases with their families outside the state.



Trauma Survivor's Assistance Program (TSAP)



- Covered the Garfield Shooting supporting the neighbors that were affected through 1-1 support services, canvassing and providing information on bridge services/resource referral and organized post trauma support events.
- Crisis Case Conference with other Trauma providers to better respond and support victims and survivors of trauma: REACH, GVI, Center for Victims and Neighborhood Resilience Project.
- The Trauma Survivors Assistance Program began holding weekly drop-in hours at Phillips

Recreation Center and Ammon Recreation Center. Drop-in hours allow community members to interact with a mental health professional in a low barrier setting, a safe space to process trauma, and the ability to get connected to long term trauma resources such as counseling and peer support.

- The Trauma Specialist held several Healing Nights in partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation. These healing nights engaged youth in trauma-informed, empowering programming. Most recently, "Girls to Women" was held at Phillips Recreation Center, which featured speakers on topics such as personal hygiene, violence prevention, and mental health coping skills. Over the course of 3 weeks, close to 30 teenage girls attended the series.
- The Trauma Survivors Assistance Program piloted working on-call hours, which began last year. The on-call phone number gives Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Detectives the opportunity to request a TSAP team member on a scene; additionally, community members can call the number to speak with a TSAP team member and self-refer. TSAP team members responded to a fatal overdose and provided crisis support to the surviving family member. They assisted the client with immediate logistical needs, such as calling family, communicating with the medical examiner, and making a safety plan for the rest of the day. The team was then able to follow up with the individual over the following days and weeks and support them through the grieving process.

People In Need of Support (PINS)

- A Community Social Worker worked with a client who had been a chronic high utilizer, frequently calling 911 and City Council. This individual had complex mental health diagnoses combined with physical health challenges and was very disruptive in an apartment community. This has been an ongoing issue for years, with the City of Pittsburgh Housing Authority, City Council,



Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, and multiple other agencies attempting to engage with the client and find solutions unsuccessfully. There were repeated systems failures in attempting to gain housing and mental health support for the client, and the case has been open with OCHS for over a year. The Community Social Worker assigned to the case was finally able to successfully place this client in a supportive housing environment after he was evicted, and was able to secure him a service coordinator and ongoing mental health support.

- A Community Social Worker responded via the Fire Unit in partnership with a Fire Liaison to a real time call of an older multiple sclerosis patient. This individual had a long history of calling 911. Although the individual was linked to a wide range of services, their needs were not being met and they were continuing to be hospitalized frequently. The Community Social Worker was able to coordinate the services that existed and come up with a comprehensive care plan to ensure a more consistent level of care.

Community Engagement



- The community engagement team regularly attends harm reduction resource pop-ups across the city, providing crucial information and support to community members and stakeholders.
- The Office of Community Health & Safety has collaborated with council members to host health and safety resource fairs to engage with community members, local businesses, and frontline workers to provide education about harm reduction and de-escalation.
- We have successfully distributed over 150 Narcan kits, 300 fentanyl test strips, and 100-gun safety locks, contributing to community safety.



- Our team has structured community leadership teams, contributing to discussions and initiatives, particularly in ensuring that the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program (LEAD)

- LEAD launched officially April 11th of 2024 with the support of City Leadership, the Bureau of Police and the Lead Support Bureau. This program will be piloted in Police Zones 1 & 2.
- LEAD began by hiring 3 case managers and a program manager during this reporting period.
- During the 3-week soft launch of the program our case managers received 15 referrals from the most complex needs cases from the launch zones.
- LEAD received \$750,000 funding with the support of Senator Bob Casey's Community Projects to expand the program to other zones
- By providing intense case management, LEAD promotes equity by addressing underlying issues and facilitating access to necessary resources. The implementation of LEAD is expected to have a positive impact on community well-being, promoting rehabilitation, and reducing recidivism.



YEAR IN REVIEW

- Over the past year, we have grown from 10 full time working staff to 30, including managing the transition of the Reaching Out on The Streets team into the City of Pittsburgh.
- We received 888 applications for positions and conducted 140 interviews to ensure the best candidates are serving our communities.
- OCH&S successfully applied to a \$1 million Post Overdose Support Team grant from the federal government to pilot a response to opioid overdoses.
- We received \$750,000 through appropriations to fund the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program and utilized Opioid Settlement Funds to pilot initial staffing.
- Piloted co-response, a program where police officers and social workers address high-acuity mental and behavioral health crises, in Police Zones 1 & 2.
- Engaged in a shift change collaboration with Resolve Downtown team to increase coverage in the PM hours.
- Established a case conference with the Allegheny County Health Department and local providers to provide care for those experiencing chronic homelessness in Downtown Pittsburgh.
- Launched the Trauma Survivor’s Assistance Program, which has provided support to over 100 cases where there have been survivors of traumatic events.



LOOKING AHEAD

The past year has seen the Office of Community Health & Safety take significant strides toward increasing our ability to serve communities in Pittsburgh. Over the next year, we intend to build on that progress and continue to bring our teams to scale and partner with first-responders address critical needs. Below are some highlights of our goals for the next year.

Co-Response:

- Expand Co-Response to Zone 5 and expand to additional zones pursuant to funding provided by City Council and Officers provided by the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police.
- Hold at least two Crisis Response Intervention Trainings (CRIT) for Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Officers.

Post Overdose Support Team

- Pilot the Post Overdose Support Team (POST) in Downtown Pittsburgh, the Southside, and Carrick to connect community members who experience addiction with resources and services.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program:

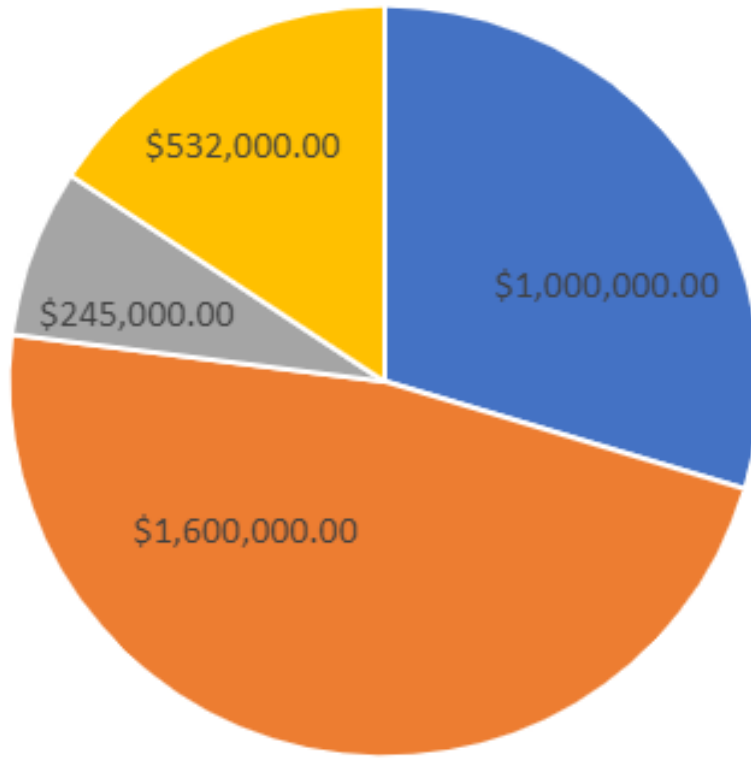
- Continue piloting the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program (LEAD) in Police Zones 1 & 2 to provide resources to eligible participants, preventing furthering penetration into the criminal justice system.

Reaching Out on The Streets

- Finalize bringing the three Reaching Out on The Streets (ROOTS) sites to full staffing capacity, which is nearly complete as of this report.

FUNDING & SUSTAINABILITY

OCH&S Grants and Settlement Funds



■ Post Overdose Support Team
■ Opioid Settlement Funds

■ Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program
■ Bureau of Justice Assistance

WORDS OF SUPPORT

"I wholeheartedly support the partnership between the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police and the Office of Community Health and Safety. We have a mutual commitment to the Co-Responder Program and the LEAD initiative. By combining mental health expertise with law enforcement, this collaboration ensures a compassionate and effective response to community needs, promoting safety and well-being for all residents. Together, we offer a proactive approach to addressing mental health crises and fostering a stronger, more resilient community." - *Chief Scirotto, Chief of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police*

"Since 2019, the LEAD Support Bureau has been working closely with the city of Pittsburgh's Department of Public Safety to support their efforts to launch LEAD. We are excited that after several years of work to establish a policy coordinating group, secure funding, develop policies, hire staff, and train, LEAD has launched in the city of Pittsburgh. It is clear to us that the deep collaboration across sectors--a core LEAD element--will lead to a meaningful and more comprehensive public safety response to lower-level crime driven by unmet mental health needs, substance use, and poverty within the city." - *Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Support Bureau*



“In March of 2023, I was chosen to lead the new Downtown Public Safety Center. When I arrived at the Downtown unit, I immediately realized that this Unit had many challenges. One of our biggest challenges was the gap between services and the Police... and as Police, we only have a few options. As we started working together, we were able to collaborate and provide solutions for several issues that were occurring Downtown. OCHS was able to help many individuals suffering from drug and mental matters before they committed crimes and became a Police problem. With our OCHS partners, we, as the Police, are able to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens in ways the Police just have never been able to do in this city before. I want to Thank the OCHS team for their efforts on the Streets of The Golden Triangle.” - *Commander Novosel, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Zone 2*

“I cannot begin to express the degree to which this program and its staff have positively affected the community we serve experiencing homelessness here in Pittsburgh. The exceptional talents and leadership of Ben Talik and the degree to which Ben and his team seamlessly collaborate with the other key stakeholders working the streets provides for a level of crisis response, mitigation, and participant service alignment far beyond what I have seen since first entering this work nearly 10 years ago. Understanding the degree of challenges associated with substantial changes in the organization over the past year. Even amid this change the organization only seemed to become more and more effective as the year rolled on. I’m looking forward to continuing to expand our collaboration as this program and team grow throughout the year.” - *Dave Lettrich, Found and Executive Director, Bridge to The Mountains*

“Working with OCHS has been invaluable for our team. Our communities are facing increasingly complex issues and our partnership with OCHS has allowed us to engage with community needs in a more impactful way. We have seen over and over that we can provide a more thoughtful response and accomplish more when we work together. We are so grateful for OCHS’s role in our city and feel privileged to join with them.” - *Heidi Allison, resolve Crisis Services*