



Maryland  
Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention  
Regrounding Our Response: A Coordinated Public Safety and Public Health  
Approach to the Opioid Epidemic

10/01/19 Grant Start → 09/30/22 Grant End

## Overview

In 2017, Maryland became the first state to declare an opioid-related state of emergency. From 2016 to 2018, opioid-related overdose deaths across Maryland increased by 13 percent, rising from 1,859 to 2,134. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranked Maryland fourth in the nation for overdose death rates in 2017 (37.1 deaths per 100,000 people), and third for opioid-related overdose deaths (32.8 deaths per 100,000 people). Overall, 88 percent of all unintentional drug overdoses in Maryland involved some type of opioid (heroin, fentanyl, or prescription opioids). Despite a 30 percent reduction in the population of inmates serving drug offense-related sentences in FY 2019, however, this group still constitutes 8.9 percent of the state prison population, at an annual cost to the state of \$17.7 million. Recent studies have suggested that more than 50 percent of Maryland inmates have substance use disorders. The epidemic has caused cascading challenges across criminal justice, medical, and social service agencies, as systems statewide have struggled to meet treatment, housing, health care, and employment needs.

## Grant Focus

- Expand law enforcement diversion and first-responder models that connect individuals to substance abuse treatment and recovery support services.
- Employ the use of alternatives to incarceration programs for nonviolent drug offenders.
- Expand jail-based treatment and effective reentry programs.
- Expand peer support services and recovery housing.
- Increase access to naloxone.
- Prioritize real-time data collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- Link data sets to identify trends and focus resources.
- Develop and disseminate research on opioid policies and interventions.
- Expand models of public health, behavioral health, and public safety information sharing and collaboration at state and local levels.

- Build capacity in underserved regions impacted by the opioid epidemic.
- Strengthen the nation's prescription drug monitoring programs.
- Integrate standardized screening practices into the criminal justice system.
- Educate public safety and criminal justice stakeholders about substance abuse.
- Implementation or expansion of detention-based additional screenings and referrals to service.
- Establishment of multidisciplinary opioid working groups, which along with local program managers will oversee local sites.
- Interagency partnerships, including memoranda of understanding that allow information to be shared easily.

## Program Approach

Regrounding Our Response is a statewide program that will operate in nine jurisdictions disproportionately affected by the ongoing opioid crisis. Six jurisdictions will establish new opioid overdose reduction programs, and three grants will be used to improve existing programs.

The overall objective is to reduce opioid-related overdose deaths in Maryland through efforts in detention facilities and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) programs. The specific objectives are as follows:

- Reduce recidivism of LEAD participants.
- Reduce calls for service for drug-related activity in the target areas.
- Reduce criminal justice costs incurred by LEAD participants.
- Improve police understanding of and responses to issues related to addiction and mental health disorders.

The program sites will create and maintain the following program components:

- Opioid-related crisis and diversion services.
- Implementation of to the LEAD model.
- Use of law enforcement trainers and curricula established by the Maryland Department of Health.
- Peer support, including the use of expertise from practitioners in the planning and implementation of program details.

Data will be gathered and subsequent reports created by the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center (MSAC), a project partner. In addition to using data from ODMAP, MSAC will collect and analyze public safety and service data. The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention management system will record quarterly progress updates.

## Project Partners

- Maryland Office of the Public Defender
- Maryland Department of HealthWest Virginia Bureau of Behavioral Health
- Maryland Behavioral Health Administration
- Maryland Statistical Analysis Center
- Partner jurisdictions
  - St. Mary's County
  - Columbia (Howard County)
  - Westminster (Carroll County)
  - Annapolis City (Anne Arundel County)
  - Hagerstown (Washington County)
  - Cumberland (Allegany County)
  - Belair (Harford County)
  - Wicomico County, Baltimore City

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