

Facilitating the Development of a Pre-Arrest or Deflection Program or Initiative

When preparing to facilitate discussions about developing a pre-arrest or deflection program in your community, there are several items to prepare for in advance. There are many resources, such as the Civil Citation Network¹, and professionals from several other communities who have developed and implemented such programs and initiatives that can be useful in your preparation.

Determine what the community needs are and how it would be benefitted by implementing such a program. Talk to the experts and fine-tune the program to fit the community's needs. Law enforcement data, including traffic offenses, and health demographics, including mental health and substance abuse, are often helpful in this regard. Examine the different pathways², programs and initiative types that are the best fit for the community's circumstances.

Find local champions at all levels who will help support the movement and invite like-speakers to organizations, stakeholders and community members to learn from and to become acquainted with. For example, law enforcement personnel often prefer to hear how deflection and pre-arrest works from other law enforcement officers, who "speak their own language." Prospective co-response teams gain helpful knowledge from established co-responder teams such as law enforcement and social workers. Each profession has certain requirements and obligations that they are able to communicate and better understand.

Be inclusive in planning and have one-on-one conversations, meeting partners and stakeholders where they are in the community. Cultivate relationships. Be sure to include all the partners required to establish and maintain a program, such as the state attorney and law enforcement. Establish community meetings where you, as the facilitator, can bring all involved parties together to educate, inform and answer questions using local, statewide and national data, research and information you have gathered in advance. Keep running documentation to share with everyone, and be sure to uplift each and every voice, from youth and families to elected officials. Be as neutral and objective as possible, bridge conversations and be familiar with

¹ Civil Citation Network. (2023) CivilCitation.com

² Police, Treatment and Community Collaborative (PTACC). *Six Pathways of Deflection*. (2022). <https://ptaccollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/PTACC-6-Pathways-of-Deflection-Onepager.pdf>

meeting dynamics. There are several helpful resources available on facilitation and running meetings.³

Understanding some of the core concepts around change management, and the human nature of resisting change is critical. Realize that the change process takes time, education, patience and persistence. Not taking things personally, finding ways of reducing workloads and being solution oriented are all helpful in managing change. Encourage partners and stakeholders, even if ever so subtly, to be solution-oriented, too. Demonstrate to partners and the community what is in it for them, the short- and long-term benefits⁴, and include them along the way for buy-in and ownership.

Be astute, as politics and push-back often greet new program ideas. Be aware of potential barriers⁵, and possible solutions and encourage potential problem-solving from all who are involved. Motivate and engage others to form sub-committees to develop policies and procedures, memorandums of understanding or agreement, ongoing training, and a review or advisory committee. Be on the lookout for funding opportunities such as grants or the Opioid Settlement dollars.

Consider starting with a pilot program, being meticulous with implementing a data system from the start, to enhance program operations, report successes and secure possible funding. Build upon the successes of the pilot program to expand the eligible offense criteria or geographical areas. Start local, contemplate collaborative regional and statewide applications, and consider promoting local ordinance and legislative efforts. A model law guide is available for review that is very helpful with developing deflection and pre-arrest statutes.⁶

³ The Commons Social Change Library. *Facilitating Meetings: A Guide to Making your Meetings Effective, Inclusive and Enjoyable*. (2019). <https://commonslibrary.org/facilitating-meetings-a-guide-to-making-your-meetings-effective-inclusive-and-enjoyable/>

⁴ Duncan, P. *Benefits of Deflection (Pre-Arrest Diversion) for Criminal Justice and Communities*. (2022). <https://civilcitation.com/uploads/resources/Benefits-of-Deflection-Final-7.pdf>

⁵ Duncan, P and Kopak, A. (2022). *Barriers, Challenges, Solutions and Outcomes to Implementation of Pre-Arrest Diversion*. https://civilcitation.com/uploads/resources/Barriers-Solutions_AK-pd3.pdf

⁶ Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association (LAPPA). *Deflection Programs: Summary of State Laws*. (July 2021). <https://legislativeanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Deflection-Programs-Summary-of-State-Laws.pdf>

Lay the groundwork in advance, preparing with information, data, success stories and champions for the cause.⁷ There are greater chances of success for a deflection or pre-arrest program that has good planning and facilitation, a strong foundation, and incorporates the five main components⁸ of public safety, collaboration, access to services, justice equity and data driven evaluation!

Duncan, P. (9/20/23)

⁷ Duncan, P. *How to Develop a Pre-Arrest Diversion (PAD) Program, Step by Step*. (2023). [/https://civilcitation.com/uploads/resources/CC-Step-by-Step-1.pdf](https://civilcitation.com/uploads/resources/CC-Step-by-Step-1.pdf)

⁸ Civil Citation Network. *What is Pre-Arrest Diversion*. (2022). <https://civilcitation.com/pre-arrest-diversion>