

**Contact: Paris Elliott**  
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Historic Courthouse  
215 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Pueblo, CO 81003



# PRESS RELEASE

**New grant to address jail overcrowding and substance abuse in Pueblo County**  
*Pueblo County awarded \$438,168 to start a pilot program for low-level, repeat drug offenders*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, February 5, 2018

PUEBLO – A \$438,168 grant is aimed at providing a diversion program in Pueblo County. The grant will fund the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) pilot program, an innovative pre-booking diversion program that will refer repeat, low-level drug offenders, at the earliest contact with law enforcement, to community-based health and social services as an alternative to jail and prosecution.

Pueblo County Commissioner Garrison Ortiz hopes the (LEAD) pilot program will be operational by April 2018.

The pilot program will connect individuals with case managers who can provide resources instead of charging an individual with a crime.

The program hopes to reduce the recidivism rate for low-level drug and alcohol offenders in Pueblo County in the first two-years of the program by:

- Making a minimum of 200 pre-booking LEAD contacts
- Making a minimum of 24 social LEAD contacts
- Provide comprehensive case management services, to a minimum of 100 LEAD program participants by providing individual intervention plans to address their substance use disorders and other related mental health and legal services.
- Helping a minimum of 50 percent of participants remain free of additional criminal charges.

My hope is that this grant will help us to address the social issues at the root of the opioid epidemic. In doing so, a new approach to how we handle these type of offenders is critical. You can't do the same thing and expect a different result," Pueblo County Commissioner Garrison Ortiz.

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Those that enter the LEAD Pilot Program will have access to the County's extensive system of care that includes comprehensive behavioral health services, physical health services, transitional housing, employment and other relevant services.

The Pueblo LEAD Pilot Program is a multi-agency collaborative partnership between the Pueblo Board of County Commissioners, the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney, Pueblo County Sheriff's Office, City of Pueblo Police Department, Pueblo County Public Defender's Office, Pueblo City-County Health Department and the Southern Colorado Harm Reduction Association.

"Pueblo County is grateful to law enforcement for their willingness to offer this type of program in the community. What we've been doing regarding opioid addiction isn't working. It's time to try something new, Pueblo County Commissioner Terry Hart said.

The grant monies come from a \$2.6 million allocation from the State of Colorado for LEAD pilot programs to assist law enforcement with redirecting individuals to community-based services instead of jail.

**INTERVIEW  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**WHEN:** Tuesday, February 5, 2018  
1:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Historic Pueblo County Courthouse  
Commissioners' Chambers  
215 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Pueblo, CO 81003

**WHO:** Garrison Ortiz, Pueblo County Commissioner

**CONTACT:** Media requesting interviews or additional information are asked to please contact Paris Elliott, Pueblo County Community Information Manager at [elliottp@pueblocounty.us](mailto:elliottp@pueblocounty.us) or 719-252-8550.

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