

## Trauma-Informed Diversion Program

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Through a collaboration between **Wellbeing & Equity Innovations (WEI)** and the **Marion County Prosecutor's Office (MCPO)**, we aim to disrupt the accelerating cycle of violence in Marion County by implementing a highly innovative, evidence-driven, trauma-informed Diversion Program. *This program is for individuals who have, in their recent history, been shot and subsequently become defendants in Marion County Superior Court.*

### About The Program

Diversion programs offer alternatives to prosecution and conviction that focus on treating the root of the behavior that led to the arrest. These programs have been shown to decrease the probability of future convictions by up to 48%<sup>1</sup>. Participants are identified for participation by law enforcement, prosecution, or the defense attorney. The program specialist then screens the participant for eligibility and assesses their individual needs for support. Once the prosecuting attorney approves their participation, defendants attend both individual and group sessions where trauma informed approaches are used to educate on violence avoidance techniques and coping strategies in addition to connecting them with positive social supports that promote their stability within the community including employment, housing, and mental health resources. Successful completion of the program would allow defendants to receive a dismissal, downgrade, or expungement of their conviction.

### Why Trauma-Informed?

Trauma-informed approaches enhance public safety and can prevent future crime and gun violence by providing critical supports to those most at risk of committing future gun violence. Untreated trauma symptoms are associated with those factors that contribute to crime such as impulsivity and aggression. When trauma is treated, problematic behaviors can be replaced with healthy coping strategies, techniques to regulate emotions, and more flexible thinking patterns to navigate life through non-violent means.

### How Do I Refer My Client To The Program?

MCPO will be screening all new filings for potential inclusion in this diversion program. However, shooting data has not been reliably tracked in the past and it is very likely that many new criminal case filings involve defendants who are eligible candidates for diversion. Therefore, MCPO welcomes referrals from defense attorneys, case managers, and members of our community partner organizations.

If you know an individual who is currently facing criminal charges and was previously shot, please notify **Deputy Prosecutor Rob Beatson** ([robert.beatson@indy.gov](mailto:robert.beatson@indy.gov)) and MCPO staff will screen that case for inclusion in the diversion program. MCPO will then notify that individual's attorney with a decision on participation in our program.



<sup>1</sup> Mueller-Smith, M., & Schnepel, K. T. (2018). Diversion in the Criminal Justice System - University of Michigan. <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/mgms/wp-content/uploads/sites/283/2018/08/Diversion.pdf>