

CASE STUDY

# Familiar Faces Action and Community Transition (F<sup>2</sup>ACT) Program

*Louisville (Kentucky) Metro Department of Corrections*



**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice



**National Policing Institute**  
PURSUING EXCELLENCE THROUGH SCIENCE AND INNOVATION



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**Louisville (Kentucky) Metro Department of Corrections****Current Director:** Col. Jerry Collins**Director during study:** Dwayne Clark**Number of beds/inmates:** 1,798 beds

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## Overview

The **Familiar Faces Action and Community Transition (F<sup>2</sup>ACT)** program helps a specific jail population identified as high consumers or overusers of jail “bed days.” It is not uncommon that certain individuals with acute mental health needs or chronic housing insecurity commit a minor offense or present at a hospital emergency room with a mental health crisis to secure a place to sleep for a few days. In an effort to help these individuals who are sometimes negatively labeled as “frequent flyers,” the Louisville (Kentucky) Metro Department of Corrections (LMDC) decided to reframe their thinking and instead approach this population as “familiar faces.” F<sup>2</sup>ACT’s goal is to provide inmates who fall into this category with a connection to medical and mental health care, housing, and supportive services for substance use treatment they will need to be successful in the community upon discharge.

### **What conditions led to the development and implementation of the F<sup>2</sup>ACT program?**

In addition to individuals suffering from housing insecurity, F<sup>2</sup>ACT seeks to help individuals cycling in and out of jail because of drug and alcohol addiction and mental health issues. The LMDC describes this program as designed to “put a rock in the revolving door” of incarceration. While many of the familiar faces were entering jail on minor offense charges, staff understood that over time, these minor charges would progress into more significant charges.

The primary mission for discharge planning is to assist those individuals being released from custody by connecting them to healthcare and providing them seasonally appropriate clothing, temporary housing, or an overnight shelter coupled with transportation to housing. These steps are taken to ensure that basic needs are met immediately upon release. While these are short-term solutions to a much larger problem, the goal is to work toward interrupting the cycle of reincarceration.

The program began by focusing on ensuring discharged individuals had a supply of medication upon release, because withdrawal was often a precursor to the individual landing right back in jail. While at first the set-up required discharged individuals to return for medication, program staff found that this arrangement was not really meeting their needs because the process was not efficient. In response, program staff transitioned to trusting individuals with a 30-day supply of medication upon release.

There were housing challenges, too. While program staff at first arranged temporary housing and overnight shelters, a recurring problem was that individuals would not always show up at the receiving facility. Program staff found that they needed to provide a bit more support in the transition; now, corrections officers provide direct transport to the receiving facility, something that is a small act but goes a long way to ensuring continuity of care. Program staff

## F<sup>2</sup>ACT Key Program Features

- 30-day supply of medications
- “Warm handoff” to residential drug treatment center, mental health provider, or homeless shelter
- Assistance with enrollment in an Affordable Care Act health insurance plan
- Seasonally appropriate clothing, undergarments, hygiene kits, and a backpack
- Local bus tickets

describe how the last interaction between the formerly incarcerated person and corrections officer upon discharge is a handshake and warm handoff to the service provider, who will then continue to provide support in the transition back to the community.

## How does F<sup>2</sup>ACT exemplify the principles of community-oriented policing?

Community-oriented policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of community partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues (see figure 1 on page 7).<sup>1</sup> Components of community policing include problem solving, development of community partnerships, and organizational transformation.

1. COPS Office, *Community Policing Defined* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014), <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P157>.



**Figure 1. Community policing components**

Source: COPS Office, "About the COPS Office," accessed December 9, 2021, <https://cops.usdoj.gov/aboutcops>.

**Partnerships.** F<sup>2</sup>ACT came about in part from a mayor's office initiative to assemble a team to examine overlapping delivery of services to disadvantaged community members whose lives have been impacted by substance use and mental illness. This dual-diagnosis cross-functional team included multiple partners such as emergency medical services (EMS), the University of Louisville Hospital, LMDC, Metro Corrections, Mental Health Providers, the Homeless Coalition, and the Metro Criminal Justice Commission (see figure 2).

**Problem solving.** As a dual-diagnosis, cross-functional team, these partners recognized that they were separately serving many of the same clients or similar types of clients. When centering the cost of care for these frequent users of services, it became clear that there was a large investment in service dollars for individual care with little or no return on the investment. This reality underscored the need to change policy and practice surrounding care and

treatment of super users. Much like many of the other programs featured in this compendium, F<sup>2</sup>ACT relies heavily on partnerships and community engagement to help address the problem of super use.

**Organizational transformation.** The program seeks to shift the traditional image of the jail setting to one of community, in which jail and program staff provide guardianship. This shift required concerted effort to cultivate appropriate levels of trust among relevant parties. It was important for program staff to be able to communicate and demonstrate a commitment to inmates' well-being.

Under the framework of this program, individuals who have traditionally been seen as incapable of fending for themselves are considered partners in ensuring a successful transition back into the community. Program staff describe this reorientation as one that seeks to give inmates the opportunity to decrease their chances of returning to the jail by encouraging them to be the best people they can be.

**Figure 2. F<sup>2</sup>ACT team partners**



Photo courtesy of LMDC

### Personalized Discharge Planning

*“You know you are doing the right thing when one of the participants asks: ‘Why are you doing this for me? No one has ever helped me like this.’”*

— Mané Martirosyan,  
Offender Services Manager, LMDC

### Challenges

There were predictable challenges to such reorientation. In particular, program staff had some challenges in getting corrections officers on board with a program geared toward helping repeat offenders. Now that the program has been implemented, the corrections officer training at the academy includes training about the F<sup>2</sup>ACT program, the overall idea of compassion, and how compassion and procedural justice can help promote a safe workplace.

*“Officers were skeptical of this initiative until after that first drive of a familiar face to that temporary housing facility. The officers kept looking for that repeat offender to return. He never did. Now officers have volunteered to be the transport officer behind the wheel.”*

— Major Jerry Collins, LMDC (ret.)

While the cost of care for the “familiar faces” population is about three times the average cost for other inmates, overall F<sup>2</sup>ACT is a low-cost program. The challenge of cost was overcome by building relationships with partners who could provide the services this population needed within the community. The reason for F<sup>2</sup>ACT’s success in this area is its strong network of partnerships and concerted effort to engage the community in helping to address the problem of super use.



Photo courtesy of LMDC

### Compassionate Partners



Figure 3. Results of F<sup>2</sup>ACT

CATEGORY	COUNT	PERCENT
<b>Complete success:</b> zero bookings since release	161	22.5%
<b>Success:</b> fewer number of bookings since release	315	44.0%
<b>No change / recidivism:</b> equal number of bookings since release	83	11.6%
<b>Recidivism:</b> greater number of bookings since release	157	21.9%

**66.5%**  
**success rate**

*“Today, corrections leaders must consider what they can do to improve the life of their residents while they are in custody and examine what impact the resident will have on the community when they leave custody. The residents are returning to our neighborhoods. Taking this small step to help vulnerable citizens improves public safety and reduces the jail’s high cost of care. What we are doing is building social muscle.”*

— Former Director Dwayne Clark, LMDC

### Does the F<sup>2</sup>ACT program work?

**Program effectiveness.** To assess program effectiveness, staff rely on participants’ discharge logs and other measures captured in the jail’s record management system to gauge both bookings and bed days in jail before and after involvement with the program.

**Evaluation data.** Data pulled from F<sup>2</sup>ACT participant logs between July 1, 2015 and August 31, 2017, and the jail records management system from July 1, 2013, to August 31, 2019, showed a 66.5 percent success rate (see figure 3). This success rate reflects zero returns to jail in 22.5 percent of program participants and a decrease in the number of bookings for 44.0 percent of program participants.

In other more anecdotal program successes, law enforcement personnel have now reportedly come to recognize the backpack provided to F<sup>2</sup>ACT program participants. As a result, when they encounter these individuals again, they often opt to divert them to services rather than return them to custody.

**Program cost.** F<sup>2</sup>ACT calculates program costs based on a daily in-bed cost per average inmate. Individuals who fall into the category of “familiar faces” have extensive needs; their medical needs, in particular, are greater than those of the average inmate. Considering the need for medical, mental health, and substance use disorder care, it is estimated that the cost of care for this population is about three times the average cost for other inmates. However, the F<sup>2</sup>ACT program is a low-cost initiative. This is because of the program’s strong network of partnerships and heavy reliance on external partners for services. For incidental costs, F<sup>2</sup>ACT staff rely on canteen funds, avoiding the need for additional tax dollars or revenue. Program costs such as clean clothing, shoes and toiletries, and a backpack to carry those items, as well as local transportation bus passes, are covered by funds generated by commissary.



Photo courtesy of LMDC

**Louisville Department of  
Corrections F<sup>2</sup>ACT Pack**

**Staffing.** Staffing constitutes the bulk of the program costs. LMDC began the program with one social worker position, which was repurposed from a vacant civilian position at no additional cost. The repurposing of existing positions is a strategy that has been employed by several of the other featured programs. Once program staff were able to demonstrate the program’s impact, they were able to obtain funding from the Metro Council for additional social worker positions. LMDC now has three full-time senior social workers that work on discharge planning procedures for inmates being released.

**Replication.** LMDC delivers summary workshops on its implementation of F<sup>2</sup>ACT for other jurisdictions that may be interested in learning more. While the availability of partners is key, staff note that technology can expand the community of providers available such as social services organizations that can help enroll and guide individuals via website or an interactive app. F<sup>2</sup>ACT staff members urge others who are interested in replication but who have limited resources to get creative. For example, if transportation presents a hurdle, jurisdictions might consider how Uber or Lyft could help subsidize and support transportation.

**For more information about this program,  
please contact:**

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New logo courtesy  
of LMDC<sup>2</sup>

**F<sup>2</sup>ACT**  
FAMILIAR FACES ACTION & COMMUNITY TRANSITION

**DISCHARGE PLANNING**

- Residential treatment
- Sober/transitional housing
- Substance abuse treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Referrals to community providers
- Insurance enrollment
- 30 day supply of medication
- Kentucky state temporary ID
- Community resource booklet
- Emergency shelter beds
- Intensive outpatient services
- Hygiene items
- Seasonally appropriate clothing
- Backpack to store clothing, hygiene, medications, shoes, etc.
- Warm handoff—Transportation

**SUCCESS**

- Over **1800** participants since June 2015 implementation
- **41%** overall success rate – No arrests since F<sup>2</sup>ACT participation
- **93%** of participants had equal or fewer arrests post F<sup>2</sup>ACT participation

**SAVINGS**

- Reduces recidivism rates of our most familiar faces
- Saves on bed days / daily costs
- Funded through inmate funds

Source: LMDC

**Familiar Faces poster displayed at American  
Jail Association's 38th Annual Conference, 2019**

2. In 2003, when the City of Louisville and Jefferson County were consolidated, the fleur-de-lis was selected as the symbol for the consolidation. The dove is reproduced from the tile wall mural in the exit lobby of the facility based on artwork from an inmate, symbolizing transition.

# About the National Sheriffs' Association

The **National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)** is a professional association, chartered in 1940, dedicated to serving the Office of Sheriff and its affiliates through police education, police training, and general law enforcement information resources. The NSA represents thousands of sheriffs, deputies, and other law enforcement agents, public safety professionals, and concerned citizens nationwide.

Through the years, the NSA has provided programs for sheriffs, their deputies, chiefs of police, and others in the field of criminal justice to perform their jobs in the best possible manner and to better serve the people of their cities, counties, or jurisdictions.

The National Sheriffs' Association headquarters is located in Alexandria, Virginia, and offers police training, police information, court security training, jail information, and other law enforcement services to sheriffs, deputies, and others throughout the nation. The NSA has worked to forge cooperative relationships with local, state, and federal criminal justice professionals across the nation to network and share information about homeland security programs and projects.

The NSA serves as the center of a vast network of law enforcement information, filling requests for information daily and enabling criminal justice professionals—including police officers, sheriffs, and deputies—to locate the information and programs they need. The NSA recognizes the need to seek information from the membership, particularly the sheriff and the state sheriffs' associations, in order to meet the needs and concerns of individual NSA members. While working on the national level, the NSA has continued to seek grass-roots guidance, ever striving to work with and for its members, its clients, and citizens of the nation.

The NSA has through the years assisted sheriffs' offices, sheriffs' departments, and state sheriffs' associations in locating and preparing applications for state and federal homeland security grant funding. The NSA record and reputation for integrity and dependability in such public safety programs among government agencies is well recognized and has led to continuing opportunities to apply for grants on the national, state, and local levels as well as management of service contracts.

To learn more, visit the NSA online at [www.sheriffs.org](http://www.sheriffs.org).

# About the National Policing Institute (formerly known as the National Police Foundation)

The **National Policing Institute** is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to pursuing excellence through science and innovation in policing. As the country's oldest police research organization, the National Policing Institute has learned that police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best, the paradigm of evidence-based policing.

Established in 1970, the National Policing Institute has conducted seminal research in police behavior, policy, and procedure and works to transfer to local agencies the best new information about practices for dealing effectively with a range of important police operational and administrative concerns. Motivating all of the National Policing Institute's efforts is the goal of efficient, humane policing that operates within the framework of democratic principles and the highest ideals of the nation.

To learn more, visit the National Policing Institute at [www.policinginstitute.org](http://www.policinginstitute.org).



# About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than \$20 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 130,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- More than 800,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations and the COPS Training Portal.
- Almost 500 agencies have received customized advice and peer-led technical assistance through the COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, <https://cops.usdoj.gov>.

Jails are communities in and of themselves, whose members are the individuals incarcerated and the correctional staff employed there; they are also part of the broader communities in which they are located, where the correctional staff live and to which the incarcerated population will eventually return. Community-oriented policing is as important in jails as it is in towns, cities, and counties; this compendium of community policing and procedural justice practices and programs, developed by the National Policing Institute and the National Sheriffs' Association, features research and promising practices as well as eight successful programs operated by seven sheriffs' departments that will be illuminating for other agencies nationwide.



**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice  
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To obtain details on COPS  
Office programs, call the  
COPS Office Response  
Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online  
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**National Policing Institute**  
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