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# Prearrest Diversion Task Force |

## MEETING SUMMARY

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**Meeting date | time** *Friday, March 27, 2026, | 10:00 a.m. |*

**Meeting location** *Microsoft Teams*

### ATTENDEES

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**Meeting Facilitator:** Chairperson Kelly O’Meara, MPD, Adam Schutzman, CJCC

**Attendees:**

**CJCC:** Adam Schutzman, Kristy Love, Niloufer Taber, Bailey Maryfield, Sara LaPlante

**PSA:** Tiffany Manley, Kisha Gordon

**MPD:** Kelly O’Meara, Candace Willett

**DBH:** Chad Tillbrook

**USAO:** Katie Sessa, Katey Houck

**DMHHS:** Sakina Thompson

**OAG:** Brian Kim

**DC Council:** Anaiah Mitchell

**DCSC:** --

**DMPSJ:** --

**Community Connections:** John Hogeboom

**Unity Health Care:** Richard Bebout

**Community Bridges:** Mary Costello

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### MEETING DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Prearrest Diversion Task Force is to review and assess best practices around prearrest diversion and to make recommendations for implementing prearrest diversion of certain misdemeanor crimes in the District of Columbia.

***Roll Call and Approval of Meeting Minutes***

A roll call vote was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present. Next, the meeting minutes were considered and approved by the task force.

**Philadelphia PAD Site Visit**

Members of the task force went to Philadelphia on March 24, 2026, to visit the Philadelphia Police Assisted Diversion (PAD) program to learn how Philadelphia successfully implements diversion.



There were several key lessons to Philadelphia’s success. First, the city operates a one stop shop model through the Kensington Wellness Service Center (KWSC) where law enforcement, social services, benefits specialists, and other partners are co-located. This allows individuals to receive immediate support like food, clothing, and housing before addressing longer term behavioral health needs. Second, the team emphasizes intensive case management with case managers working closely with individuals step by step to ensure they remain engaged and connected to services. The program is designed for speed, with intake completed within 15 minutes and placements into treatment facilities occurring in under three hours. Third, the team prioritizes transparency through a public-facing data dashboard that keeps both policymakers and the public informed about diversion in Philadelphia.

Task force members highlighted the range of diversion pathways available for individuals with low-level offenses in Philadelphia. For example, the Wellness Court allows referrals to receive immediate access to food, medical care, and behavioral health assessments rather than waiting weeks for a traditional court appearance. One reason Philadelphia has been able to stay nimble is its placement with the Office of Public Safety rather than the Department of Behavioral Health. This structure enables the program to avoid certain state and federal funding constraints that can limit flexibility. Overall, Philadelphia’s PAD program offers a strong model for consideration as the task force develops its own approach.

### **Prearrest Diversion Decision Points**

A “decision points” document was developed to outline key options at each stage of the diversion process that the task force must analyze and ultimately make recommendations to the D.C. Council. The document is intended to capture the multiple potential pathways recognizing that early decisions will shape downstream program design and implementation. Task force members reviewed the document in advance and were invited to suggest edits and additional considerations.

Within the eligibility section, members identified the need for greater clarity around arrest procedures. Despite their name, many prearrest diversion programs do involve an initial arrest, raising important fourth amendment considerations. Procedurally, the task force will need to determine whether an arrest occurs at the outset, including whether fingerprinting is required, and how the process proceeds from there. There were also questions regarding eligible offenses, particularly in cases of graduated penalties for repeat offenses. For example, a third or fourth offense may no longer be appropriate for diversion. Finally, there is a question of whether an individual can participate in diversion if they are impaired, either by alcohol or substance use. Some other programs provide opportunities for individuals to sober up prior to consenting to participate.

In the referral pathways section, task force members recommended adding a “self-referral” option. Under this model, individuals would not be referred by law enforcement or the community, but could



instead seek services on their own. This approach is similar to what many programs describe as a “walk-in” model, allowing individuals who recognize their need for support to directly access treatment and services without an external referral.

Regarding program structure, there was interest in incorporating additional staff roles that, while not strictly necessary for a diversion program to operate, could significantly enhance its effectiveness and participant outcomes. These roles include:

- **Wellness Coordinator:** A non-clinical, peer-support position focusing on holistic health, recovery, social connection, and empowerment. This individual would help manage day-to-day operations of a center and foster a welcoming, recovery-oriented environment.
- **Benefits Specialist:** This position would assist participants in accessing benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, and other relevant programs. The specialist would help participants navigate complex application processes and ensure they receive the resources for which they are eligible.
- **Legal Services Provider:** This role would provide legal assistance in non-criminal matters, particularly for individuals who cannot afford representation. They could provide support in civil matters including housing issues, family law, public benefit disputes, employment issues, and consumer rights.
- **Outreach Specialist:** Particularly relevant for social referrals, outreach specialists would engage directly with individuals in the community to identify those who would benefit from services and encourage program enrollment. These specialists could also collaborate with law enforcement to help identify individuals who may be at risk of future criminal justice involvement.
- **Specialized Services:** The program could incorporate or partner with specialized providers to meet the needs of specific populations. For example, individuals impacted by domestic violence and/or sexual assault could receive tailored, trauma-informed services from trained professionals.

Task force members emphasized the importance of considering existing community resources. For example, the Department of Human Services (DHS) already deploys outreach teams that engage with the unsheltered population and connect them to services. Any prearrest diversion program in D.C. should be designed to complement, rather than duplicate, the existing efforts.

One suggestion raised was the creation of a Behavioral Health Unit within the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), similar to a model used by the Philadelphia Police Department. However, it was noted that MPD already employs a range of non-arrest approaches. Establishing an entirely new specialized behavioral health unit may present practical challenges at this time.



Within the services section, task force members discussed which services should be provided internally. There was general support for offering immediate, low-barrier services such as food, clothing, and showers, particularly if a drop-in model is pursued. The scope of internal services will likely depend on the staffing model selected by the task force. For example, if the program includes a benefits specialist or a civil legal services provider, those supports could be delivered directly within the program rather than through external referrals.

No changes were proposed for the data collection, program management, and training sections of the document. In the partnerships section, members raised the question of whether to formally include law enforcement partners beyond MPD. D.C. has a unique public safety landscape that includes federal agencies like the U.S. Park Police and U.S. Secret Service, both of which regularly operate in the community. Additionally, regional entities like the Metro Transit Authority could play a role in identifying and referring individuals. There was also a discussion on engaging the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to help facilitate access to free or reduced-cost transit for program participants.

No additional changes were recommended for the legislative or funding sections of the document.

### Closing

The next prearrest diversion task force will take place at the end of April. Due to the updated budget hearing schedule, the meeting will no longer take place on Wednesday, April 22, 2026. Task force members will need to fill out a survey identifying times that they are available to participate in the meeting.

## DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

**Decisions:** The key decision points that will be voted on at the April meeting were determined.

**Actions:**

Item	Agency
Fill out April meeting survey with times that you can attend the prearrest diversion task force meeting.	All
Update and distribute the list of options for prearrest diversion program elements	CJCC
Review prearrest diversion decision points and context documents prior to the next meeting. Be prepared to discuss and vote on program elements.	All