

## The Seattle Drug Market Initiative – DRAFT

The Seattle Drug Market Initiative is a community, law enforcement and prosecution partnership designed to reduce or eliminate street level drug dealing in our residential neighborhoods -- One neighborhood at a time. By reducing/eliminating an open air drug market the crimes and violence associated with drug dealing are reduced and the neighborhood safety and quality of life is improved. The initiative is based on an innovative approach developed in High Point, North Carolina. Following the successes in High Point, the Department of Justice has provided training to nearly twenty jurisdictions nationwide to tailor the approach to individual markets in each city including Seattle.

### Why a New Approach?

It is time to try something different. Years of law enforcement crack-downs, drug sweeps, and arrests have not significantly reduced the drug dealing on streets in our neighborhoods. Chronic street level drug dealing seriously harms neighborhoods and residents and undermines community confidence in the police.

### What are the Components of the Initiative?

Overt open air illegal drug markets are identified through citizen complaints, police calls for service, police follow-ups, and crime data. Undercover police operations make multiple “controlled” buys from **low risk sellers**, with the goal of breaking up the market. **Higher risk drug sellers**, those who are major dealers, have firearms violations, or have violent criminal histories, are prosecuted traditionally through a coordinated effort between city, county, and federal prosecutors. Lower risk drug sellers are “**called in**”, to a personalized meeting and confronted with their criminal behavior, and are given a chance to avoid prosecution by ceasing their drug dealing activity. Low risk drug sellers are offered community support and community based social services help to assist them in redirecting their lives. Those individuals who refuse to stop their drug dealing and other criminal activity are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The community and law enforcement partnership work together to prevent the return of the market and work to improve conditions in the neighborhood.

## How Does This Differ from Traditional Police/Prosecutor Undercover Narcotics Operations?

The Drug Market Initiative differs from traditional police/prosecution undercover narcotics operations in several important ways, in that:

	Under Regular Prosecution	Under Drug Market Initiative
Low Risk Drug Dealers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prosecuted traditionally based on a single criminal event</li> <li>- If convicted, sentenced to prison or ordered into services/ treatment, jailed if fail to comply</li> <li>- Community is rarely involved in prosecution effort and often does not know the end result of their calling police about drug dealing</li> <li>- Prosecution generally not directly focused on eliminating drug market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confronted with their dealing <b><u>before</u></b> arrest and prosecution</li> <li>- Offered mentoring/services/ and treatment <b><u>without</u></b> prosecution. No requirement to accept help, but are required to stop drug dealing or face prosecution</li> <li>- Community engaged in, involved with, and advised of law enforcement effort</li> <li>- Community and law enforcement work in partnership to eliminate the drug market</li> </ul>
High Risk Drug Dealers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prosecuted traditionally, usually as a individual case</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prosecuted on multiple cases through a coordinated city, state, and federal law enforcement effort</li> </ul>

### What is the Community's Role in the Initiative?

The community plays an important role in the initiative by:

- Being watchful of and immediately reporting subsequent narcotics selling activity to the police.
- Reasserting community control over their neighborhood and reinforcing the message that drug dealing will not be tolerated.
- Providing mentoring and other support to low risk sellers who are prepared to cease such activity.
- Helping to direct low risk sellers to resources in the community that can help them.