

# W/B HIDTA Treatment and Prevention Spotlight

City of Alexandria, Virginia



The City of Alexandria through the Alexandria Community Services Board provides substance use treatment to individuals with moderate or severe substance use disorders. The City of Alexandria focuses on individuals under criminal justice supervision in the Alexandria Detention Center who otherwise would not receive services, addressing a critical gap in screening and treatment. Their initiative aims to reduce relapse and recidivism, increase client engagement in social networks, address key recovery factors (health, home, purpose, and community), and provide supervision and treatment to prepare clients to lead healthy lives.

The initiative serves an average of 40 clients a month. Services are intentionally client-centered, engaging each individual to establish rapport, figure out their needs, and get them connected to the appropriate services and resources. Services include medication assisted treatment, psychoeducation, discharge planning, and motivational interviewing.

Staff are dedicated to getting each individual linked to services and expressed the importance of being flexible, as it is not always known when an individual will be released from the jail. Demonstrating this commitment is a recent success story of a client who started on the medication assisted treatment program and was released the next day. Connection happens on day one, and this client was already introduced to available services, which were new to him.

Upon release, staff members made the necessary phone calls to connect the client with treatment. The client successfully engaged in treatment and remains in treatment seven months later. "Staff spend dedicated time with clients talking about their options and what level of care will fit their specific needs. We intentionally engage them in developing their discharge release plans day one," Ellietta Lázaro, a Team Leader and Licensed Clinical Social Worker for the initiative, stated.

Support from the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA has allowed the initiative to focus on clients throughout the jail and allows staff to follow-up with clients after they are released to ensure they are connected to resources and support. The initiative is looking to further expand its services in 2025 by exploring and introducing group therapy and peer recovery support.



**Photo credit: Amy Bertsch, Alexandria Sheriff's Office**