

# Long Beach, CA

## GUIDES Mobile App



Long Beach City Prosecutor Doug Haubert, City Prosecutor Chief Technology Officer Byron Bolton, and Long Beach Police Department Deputy Chief Ty Burford describe a mobile app that enables officers to make real-time, informed, service-related decisions when interacting with individuals experiencing homelessness. The app is a tool to support officers and the broader criminal justice system in delivering more effective, compassionate services—and appropriate enforcement when necessary.

### The Issue

The City of Long Beach, California, and Los Angeles County more generally—like many cities and counties across the United States—face significant challenges serving their large populations of chronically homeless and unsheltered individuals. One significant challenge has been that officers frequently lack access to or even awareness of individuals’ existing case histories and available support services, making it easier to rely on a traditional enforcement model than to connect people to the services they need.

### The Solution

Through a collaboration between City Prosecutor Doug Haubert and the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD), a strategy was developed to create the Government User Integrated Diversion Enhancement System (GUIDES) mobile application<sup>69</sup> to be used on LBPD department-issued phones. The LBPD’s idea was simple: Police officers need a way to refer individuals to services or to know if someone is already connected. The process should be simple, portable, and easy to use in the field.

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69. “Guides Explained,” Long Beach City Prosecutor Doug Haubert, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://cityprosecutordoughaubert.com/guides-explained/>.

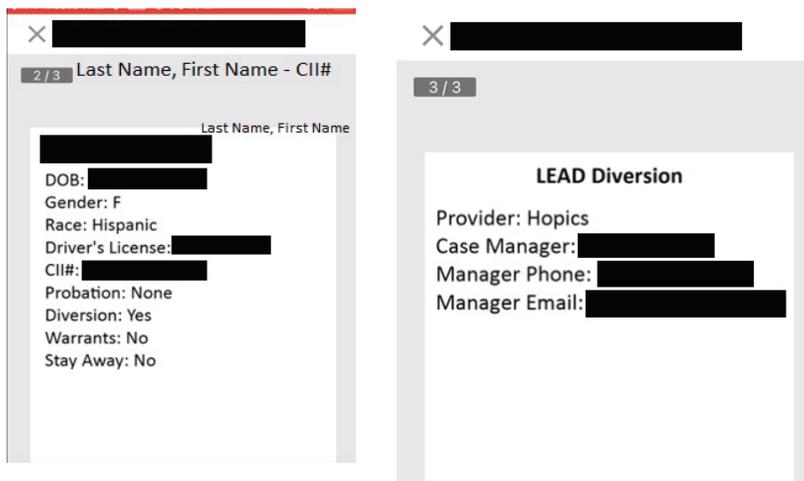
# The GUIDES App

The City Prosecutor’s Office launched the GUIDES app in 2023. The app gives officers in the field quick access to essential information and valuable tools, including a profile directory of individuals and a map displaying the locations of stay-away orders, as well as support and network connections to streamline their work and facilitate community members’ access to services. In addition, the GUIDES app enables prosecutors to receive updates from officers regarding individuals participating in the Prosecutor’s diversion program.

The GUIDES app features a directory of profiles for individuals enrolled in Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) programs, those subject to “stay away” orders, and participants in Priority Access Diversion programs that offer live-in drug and mental health treatment through court-based referrals. Each profile includes key information, such as the following (see figure 14):

- The individual’s most recent booking photo
- The individual’s date of birth, age, gender, race, and driver’s license number
- Any warrants, probation status, and any misdemeanor probation conditions including “stay away” orders
- Services currently being provided to the individual, including the type of program, provider, and case manager’s name and contact information

Figure 14. Sample GUIDES app profile



Source: Long Beach City Prosecutor’s Office

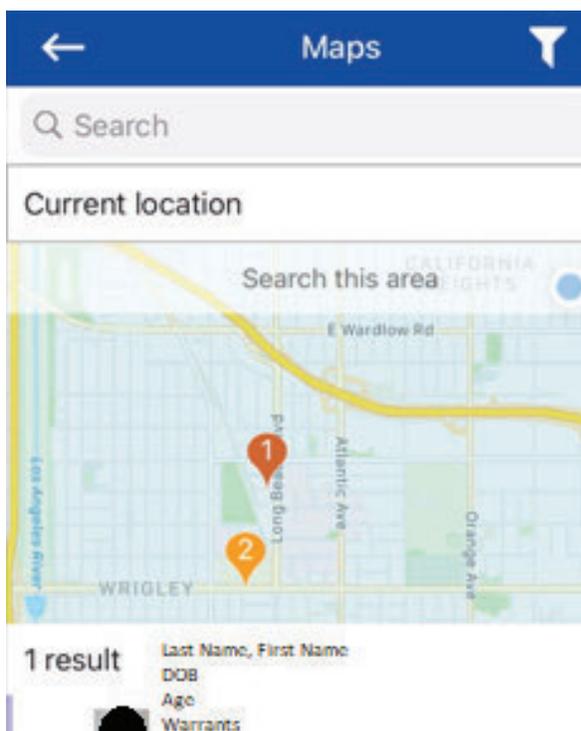
The last profile item serves one of the GUIDES app’s primary goals and most significant benefits to police: allowing officers to connect or reconnect individuals with support services rather than taking them to jail or otherwise connecting them to the criminal justice system. For instance, if an officer finds “Jane Doe” sleeping in a public space, they can look up her information in the GUIDES app and choose to contact her case manager instead of issuing a citation or taking other enforcement action. This approach also helps case managers, who often lose contact with their clients while they are (for instance) waiting for affordable housing

applications to be processed and approved. If Jane Doe needs other services, the GUIDES app includes a section where officers can find vetted providers for services related to homelessness, mental health, and substance use issues.

Officers are prompted to complete a brief form in the GUIDES app database documenting their contacts with individuals, including observations of offenses, notes, and updated photos. If the person is willing, the officer can quickly facilitate the provision of services by submitting a referral to a social worker trained to collaborate with the police department and local non-profits. However, even if the person declines services, the information the officer provides is valuable, as it gives the prosecutor additional context regarding the individual's history, should it become relevant. This documentation can ultimately support accountability by demonstrating to a judge that law enforcement and prosecutors are making every effort to assist someone who may not wish or be able to help themselves.

The GUIDES app also includes a map that allows officers in the field to quickly check, as noted, whether any "stay away" orders are in effect for a given location and identify the individuals subject to those orders. See figure 15.

Figure 15. GUIDES app "stay away" map



Source: Long Beach City Prosecutor's Office

The app automatically uploads data from the Long Beach City Prosecutor's Office database twice daily, and at the end of each day, it also syncs with the Los Angeles Superior Court Database and the Los Angeles County Consolidated Criminal History Reporting System. These data may contain sensitive medical information; however, because the sources are legal and criminal justice entities, rather than hospitals or service providers, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations governing the disclosure of protected health information without patient consent do not apply. Nevertheless, because of the sensitive nature of the information, access to the GUIDES app is restricted to prosecutors and law enforcement.

## The Funding

The GUIDES app serves as an example of how prosecutors can secure funding to create tools and programs that directly benefit law enforcement. In this case, the City Prosecutor’s Office successfully secured a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Smart Prosecution: Innovative Prosecution Solutions (IPS) Program grant.<sup>70</sup> The IPS program provides financial support to prosecutors for developing effective strategies and plans to address and prosecute individuals who commit violent crimes. It also supports the creation of technologies “that enable prosecutors to focus resources on the people and places associated with high concentrations of criminal activity.”<sup>71</sup> The GUIDES app falls into the latter category: By connecting the homeless population to essential services, police can more effectively allocate their resources and attention toward addressing the root causes and perpetrators of violent crime within the community, while simultaneously ensuring that vulnerable individuals receive the support they need to regain stability and safety.

## Lessons Learned

The City Prosecutor’s Office developed and launched the GUIDES app in response to officer input. Recognizing that successful implementation depends on trust and officer engagement, they emphasized that the police department should lead the rollout of the app. At the LBPD, Quality-of-Life officers are among the app’s most frequent users; however, adoption has also spread across other units, demonstrating the importance of department-led engagement and widespread use.

## Measurable Achievements

Nearly one-fourth (at least 180 of approximately 800) of LBPD officers have downloaded and installed the GUIDES app. While the app is used most frequently by officers assigned to the Quality-of-Life team, it has also gained traction across the department, with downloads from a range of divisions—including homicide detectives, reflecting its broader value and versatility.

On average, more than 5,000 contacts are recorded in the GUIDES app each year, primarily generated by Quality-of-Life officers. In the first six months after the GUIDES app was launched, LBPD officers referred more than 80 individuals to services. Currently, there are more than 400 people in the app directory, all of whom are residents of Long Beach and either participate in police and prosecutor-driven diversion programs or are subject to “stay away” orders.

The GUIDES app was awarded the 2023 American City and County Crown Communities Award for its innovative approach to public safety and social services.

## Benefits to Law Enforcement

Haubert and LBPD Deputy Chief Ty Burford said that providing services can make a big difference in getting someone off the street and preventing them from committing further offenses.

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70. “Smart Prosecution: Innovative Prosecution Solutions Program,” Bureau of Justice Assistance, last modified March 14, 2023, <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/smart-prosecution-innovative-prosecution-solutions-program/overview>.

71. “Smart Prosecution” (see note 70).



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“We shouldn’t expect police to know everything. So if we’re going to ask them to respond to every single call and want them to refer folks to services, we need to have something like this app to make it as easy as possible.”

**Doug Haubert,  
Long Beach City Prosecutor**

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The goal of the GUIDES app is to support police in responding to situations involving people experiencing homelessness, substance use, and other quality-of-life issues that extend beyond traditional law enforcement responsibilities. By giving officers in the field immediate access to up-to-date information about available services, the app streamlines the referral process, fosters collaboration with community-based and city partners, and presents multiple pathways for connecting individuals to the support they need—ultimately saving time and improving outcomes for both officers and the people they serve.

Deputy Chief Burford says the app has been well-received as a valuable tool for officers, particularly those focused on quality-of-life issues.

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“For patrol officers in the field, the app makes it easy to access service information, especially when someone may be hesitant to communicate with officers or other city services. This resource enables officers to quickly view whether someone is currently receiving service support and contact a provider or make a referral on the spot. It saves time and increases the likelihood of people receiving the support they need.”

**Ty Burford, Long Beach  
Police Department Deputy Chief**

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Service providers often have a variety of specialties and may not be able to effectively meet the needs of every person an officer encounters. The app streamlines the process for officers to refer individuals to services that cater to their specific needs, including language support; public transportation accessibility; and issues related to physical health, mental health, and substance use. This approach not only increases the likelihood that individuals will accept

services but also enhances police legitimacy by demonstrating a commitment to effective, compassionate intervention. For example, an evaluation of Long Beach’s LEAD program found that individuals who received support through that initiative held more favorable views of law enforcement than those who did not participate—highlighting service-based strategies’ potential to build trust within the community.

The GUIDES app also assists officers in managing individuals who have “stay away” orders. When officers encounter a person subject to such an order, they can quickly access a copy of the order through the app to confirm whether the individual is allowed to be in a particular location. This tool streamlines the process of taking the individual into custody, if necessary, and facilitates submission of the required paperwork to the City Prosecutor’s Office for further enforcement.

## Takeaways and Implementing in Other Jurisdictions

The GUIDES app is available for free download and use by any jurisdiction, as it was developed with a U.S. DOJ grant. Jurisdictions can therefore obtain the app and then work with a software company to have it tailored to their local prosecutors’ and police departments’ specific needs. In addition to sharing information between prosecutors and police, the platform enables users to communicate with other law enforcement agencies. This flexibility creates a wide range of potential uses.

Long Beach is currently working to expand its GUIDES app by integrating local businesses with police-enforced “no trespassing” orders, so that police will be aware of these businesses when they enter a specific geographic area. This app expansion will allow officers to easily hold individuals accountable for violating these restrictions.

**The design of the GUIDES app in other jurisdictions will depend on their specific needs; its adaptability is key.** At PERF’s meeting, participants discussed the potential use of the app to support gang enforcement activities by enabling officers in the field to identify individuals subject to injunctions in any location and the terms of those injunctions, such as probation-directed curfews and “stay away” orders. However, the foundational design work has already been completed thanks to the Long Beach City Prosecutor’s Office. The GUIDES app provides officers with easy access to information, tools, and partners, helping to save them time and making their jobs more manageable.