

COMMUNITY SHARPS DISPOSAL KIOSK INITIATIVE

The Louisville Department of Public Health and Wellness (LMPHW) started Kentucky's first Syringe Services Program (SSP) in June of 2015. The program, known as a harm reduction strategy, provides access to clean syringes and safe disposal of those syringes to people who inject drugs. It also includes a wide array of supportive services including linkage to substance use treatment programs, screening and linkage to care for HIV and viral hepatitis, naloxone distribution and education about overdose prevention, referrals to other social, mental health, and medical resources. It is a proven practice to reduce the spread of HIV and bloodborne diseases.

In 2019, LMPHW expanded safe disposal options for residents by installing three large syringe disposal kiosks in and around downtown. The boxes are secure, and once syringes are placed in a box, they cannot be accessed by anyone except the authorized waste disposal team.



FAQ

Do syringe disposal boxes lead to a reduction in improperly discarded syringes?

Yes! A [five-year study](#) of discarded syringes in a residential neighborhood in Montréal found strong evidence of a reduction in improper discarding of syringes following the installation of disposal boxes, with reductions of up to 98% and significant reductions for areas up to 200 meters from a drop box. Locally, we have seen a decrease in complaints about discarded syringes near the installed boxes.

Will the boxes attract people to the park to inject drugs?

This has not been observed in our current locations. The locations for the boxes are chosen based on current reports of improperly discarded syringes and installing the boxes has not been associated with an increase in drug use in those areas.

What have the experiences been like in other cities that have tried this?

The boxes have been well-received in [Philadelphia](#), [Seattle](#), [New York](#), and [Huntington, WV](#).

Where are Louisville's syringe disposal boxes?

- LMPHW headquarters, 400 E. Gray St.
- Outside the Salvation Army, at S. Brook and E. Breckinridge St.
- Shelby Park, 600 E. Oak St.
- Portland Park, 640 N. 27th St.
- Boone Square Park, 1935 Rowan St.

Why do some people who use drugs improperly throw their syringes away?

Syringes are considered paraphernalia, so some people discard them out of fear of law enforcement. Other people have mental health challenges that prevent them from responsibly handling their injection supplies. However, most people who inject drugs dispose of their used needles and syringes safely, particularly when they are connected to Syringe Services Programs.

Who should I contact for more information?

To learn more about our harm reduction services visit <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/health-wellness>. Questions can be directed to Ben Goldman, Benjamin.goldman@louisvilleky.gov.

