

**WASHINGTON STATE  
MINORITY AND JUSTICE COMMISSION  
COMMISSION MEETING**



**TVW: [HTTPS://TVW.ORG/  
WATCH/?EVENTID=2025071055](https://tvw.org/watch/?eventid=2025071055)**

**FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2025  
9:00 A.M.—12:00 P.M.**



**MINORITY AND JUSTICE COMMISSION  
BIMONTHLY GENERAL MEETING  
JULY 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2025  
9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.**

**JUSTICE MARY YU, CO-CHAIR  
JUDGE VERONICA GALVÁN, CO-CHAIR**

**VIA ZOOM**

**<https://wacourts.zoom.us/j/88003639398>**

**MEETING ID: 880 0363 9398**

**AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER 9:00 – 9:10 a.m. (10 minutes)**

- Welcome
- Introductions and Acknowledgements
  - New Member Welcome: Pilar Escontrías, Seattle University School of Law, Law Student Liaison Faculty Advisor
- Approval of May 16<sup>th</sup> Minutes

**GUEST PRESENTATION 9:10 – 9:40 (30 minutes)**

- **WSCCR Youth Diversion Research Report (HB1391)** – Dr. Lindsey Beach, Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR) and Emma Deneau Researcher

**STAFF REPORT 9:40 – 10:10 a.m. (30 minutes)**

- **Co-Chair Report**
  - **Supreme Court Symposium 2025** – Justice Mary Yu and Judge Veronica Galván
  - **Leadership Retreat** – Justice Mary Yu and Judge Veronica Galván
  - **Co-Chair Transition October 2025** – Justice Mary Yu and Judge Veronica Galván.
- **Staff Report**
  - **Leadership Retreat** – Frank Thomas and Molly Gough

**BREAK 10:10 – 10:15 (5 minutes)**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS 10:15 a.m. – 11:25 a.m. (70 minutes)**

- **Youth Justice Committee** – Katie Hurley and Judge David Keenan
  - **Research and Policy Projects** – Katie Hurley and Judge David Keenan
    - **Gun Possession Cases Research**
    - **Review Hearing Research**
- **LGBTQ+ Committee** – Denise Diskin and Judge Anthony Gipe
  - **Governance Documents and Action Plan Update** – Judge Anthony Gipe
  - **Committee Establishment Next Steps** – Denise Diskin
- **Rules & Legislation Committee** – Sumeer Singla
  - **Committee Re-Structure** – Sumeer Singla and Frank Thomas
- **Education Committee** – Judge Lori K. Smith
  - **Call for Proposals** – Judge Lori K. Smith
- **Outreach Committee** – Bonnie Glenn and Lisa Castilleja
  - **2025 MJC Artwork Selection** – Judge Anthony Gipe

## **LIAISON REPORTS 11:25 – 12:00 p.m. (35 minutes)**

### **MJC Liaisons**

- **Tribal State Court Consortium** – Judge Lori K. Smith
- **Sentencing Guidelines Commission** – Judge Veronica Galván
- **BJA Jail Modernization Task Force** – Judge André Peñalver

**Next MJC meeting: Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m. (Hybrid – Location TBD).**

# Minority and Justice Commission

## 2025 Meeting Dates

All Meetings Available Virtually via Zoom Videoconference

Date	Time	Location
Friday 07/18/25	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Zoom Videoconference In-person: <i>TBD</i>
Friday 10/10/2025	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Zoom Videoconference In-person: <i>TBD</i>
Friday 11/7/25	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Zoom Videoconference In-person: <i>TBD</i>

Please contact Frank Thomas at [Frank.Thomas@courts.wa.gov](mailto:Frank.Thomas@courts.wa.gov) or if you have any questions.



# MINORITY AND JUSTICE COMMISSION

ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

Friday, May 16, 2025

9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

JUSTICE MARY YU, CO-CHAIR

JUDGE VERONICA GALVÁN, CO-CHAIR



## MEETING NOTES

### Commission Members

Justice Mary Yu (Co-chair)  
Justice J. Helen Whitener  
Samaneh Alizadeh  
Judge Charnelle Bjelkengren  
Lisa Castilleja  
Judge Faye Chess  
Jeremiah Chin  
Professor Mark Chinen  
Judge Sara Dannen  
Chad Enright  
Wendy Feng  
Judge Anthony Gipe  
Judge Jaime Hawk  
Katie Hurley  
Nicole Jenkins-Rosenkrantz  
Judge David Keenan  
Judge André Peñalver  
Christopher Sanders  
Judge Lori K. Smith  
Judge Leah Taguba  
Judge Karl Williams

### AOC Staff

Frank Thomas  
Molly Gough  
Kelley Amburgey-  
Richardson  
Mishani Jack-Gonzalez  
Karl Jones  
Wanda Barrett

### Liaisons

Aurora Ocegueda (SU)  
Jenah Smith (SU)  
Emma Tolliver (UW)

### Guests

TVW  
Kitara Johnson Jones  
Latrice Williams  
Larry Jefferson  
Chanel Rhymes  
George Yeannakis

**The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Justice Yu called the meeting to order and introduced herself and Judge Galván.
- The Commission welcomed Professor Jeremiah Chin as a new member and Law Student Liaison Faculty Advisor for the University of Washington School of Law.
- March 28, 2025, meeting minutes were approved as presented.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Gabriel's Challenge – Kitara Johnson Jones, *Founder of Gabriel's Challenge***

- Justice Yu introduced Kitara Johnson a former Commission member and the founder of Gabriel's Challenge.
- The Commission watched the video for [Gabriel's Challenge](#), a community response against fentanyl which was founded by Kitara Johnson after her son Gabriel died from fentanyl.
- Kitara shared her son [Gabriel's story](#) to the Commission noting how this tragedy led to the creation of the community challenge in hopes of creating actionable change.
- She shared how community care and collaboration is needed and how judges have the power to transform lives through diversion practices. Often times there are not enough programs for transition youth ages 18-25 who are still developing.
- Latrice Williams shared her experience volunteering with Gabriel's Challenge and what the steps to the challenge are.
  - We are asking everyone to
    - 1. SHUT IT DOWN! Shut down personal devices and limit use to two hours a day for 36 days.
    - 2. Show Up! Everyday engage in real life, one meaningful face to face activity each day!
    - 3. Shift the Culture
  - Look for ways to interact with others in your Community. A good start is by sharing the Gabriel's Challenge video and texting SHOW UP to 53123 to get involved with the Challenge.
- Everyone can engage with the challenge in their own capacity – “We can't do everything but we can all do something” – Kitara Johnson
- The Challenge organizers will be looking to engage with Spokane schools in the Fall.
- Kitara also shared what Judges can do to help:
  - Direct Into Treatment
  - Refer eligible youth and adults into community-based care instead of formal charges
  - Use local mapping data to identify trusted treatment partners and make immediate referrals
  - Promote Record Relief. Explain sealing and expungement options under RCW 9.94A.640 at sentencing
  - Include clear instructions for Certificates of Restoration of Opportunity in written orders
  - Spotlight successful second-chance hiring during hearings
  - Remind parties that sustained recovery qualifies as a disability under Title I of the ADA
  - Ensure courtroom staff know to accommodate NA meeting schedules and recovery support

- Spotlight successful second-chance hiring during hearings
- Enforce ADA Protections
- Remind parties that sustained recovery qualifies as a disability under Title I of the ADA
- Ensure courtroom staff know to accommodate NA meeting schedules and recovery support
- Provide Plain-Language Resources
- Distribute one-page guides on Narcan training testing strips treatment referrals and legal aid
- Offer materials in multiple languages and accessible formats. Use Data to Drive Equity
- Request reports on diversion referrals sentencing outcomes and sealing approvals by race age and zip code
- Support Community Collaboration
- Open court facilities for mapping sessions or planning events
- Commission members thanked Kitara and Latrice for joining and sharing their stories and information about the challenge.

## COMMISSION CHAIR & STAFF REPORT

### READ Campaign 2025 – Justice Yu

- Justice Yu shared that the Supreme Court and MJC are providing funds to the 2025 READ Campaign. The Campaign invest in young people and increases access to books in school libraries.
- The theme for this year's Campaign is Indigenous Voices, Historic Firsts and the Freedom to READ.
- If Commissioners would like to volunteer to help with the book packing and shipping, please reach out to Laura Edmonston, Frank or Molly.
- Justice Yu thanked the Law Library for their expertise in uplifting new and critical literature.
- New Supreme Court Justice bookmarks are being made and the new bookmarks will go out with the books. Please contact Christine Lawrence if you would like copies.

### NCREF 2025 Virtual Conference – Judge Galván

- Judge Galván provided a brief update on the NCREF 2025 Conference. The conference was moved to all virtual program with a keynote by Isabell Wilkerson.
- Judge Galván encouraged members to attend and support and be present in these spaces. Commissioner participation helps to justify these educational opportunities. Commissioners should be continuing to promote and champion opportunities for judicial education around racial justice.

### 2025 Supreme Court Symposium – Justice Yu and Judge Galván

2025 Supreme Court Symposium  
***TÁĆELŚW SIÁM: A Call to Justice for Indigenous Peoples***  
 \**TÁĆELŚW SIÁM* is a Salish term for welcoming a respected person  
 Wednesday, June 11, 2025  
 8:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Reception 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
 Temple of Justice, Olympia, WA  
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- Justice Yu encouraged Commissioner to attend the Symposium in-person.
- This year's Symposium titled, "TÁCELSW\_ SIÁM: A Call to Justice for Indigenous Peoples" covered tribal sovereignty, self-determination and the various ways the state struggles to fully recognize Indigenous humanity. TÁCELSW\_ SIÁM is a Salish term for welcoming a respected person

### **MJC FY25 Budget Update – Molly Gough**

- Molly shared a budget update with the Commission.
- The MJC annual budget allotment is \$72,000 for the fiscal year which runs from July 1 – June 30. The budget is allocated between Commission and Committee activities.
- Main spending areas are :
  - Commission
    - Symposium
    - In person meetings/Member travel
    - General overhead expenses
  - Education
    - Judicial Conferences
  - Outreach
    - YALF sponsorships & Community Event sponsorships
    - Artwork Program
    - Annual Report
- Expenditures are on track for the year
  - Includes expenditures for:
    - 2024 Artwork award
    - Printing & mailing costs (posters, notecards, annual report)
    - YALF and other event sponsorships
    - Fall, SJCA, and NCREC Conferences
    - Member travel – 11/15 meeting
    - 2SLGBTQIA+ Committee Launch Event
    - Youth Justice Committee's Statewide Diversion Report
    - READ Campaign
  - Anticipated expenditures:
    - Symposium
    - Leadership Retreat
    - Youth Justice Contract Research
    - 2025 Artwork Award
- The budget will close out this fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>
  - If Commissioners have any reimbursements pending or upcoming please submit them to Molly by June 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS**

### **Youth Justice Committee – Katie Hurley and Judge David Keenan**

- ***Statewide Youth Diversion Report*** – Katie Hurley and Frank Thomas
- The final publication of the Statewide Youth Diversion Report is in the meeting packet and published online. Frank thanked the work of the Youth Justice Committee and Report authors, with special thanks to the law students who authored a section of the report.
- The hope is that this report will help to continue and expand work around opportunities for diversion in Washington by making it more clear where and how diversions are occurring in



Washington.

- The report illustrated how little we know at a state level and how well or how poorly opportunities are resourced. Often times the burdens fall on local counties and jurisdictions.
- **WSCCR Youth Diversion Researcher (HB 1391)** – Frank Thomas
- House Bill 1391 which makes technical reforms to diversion agreements and establishes a dedicated line of research at the Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR) for youth diversion studies statewide was passed and funded.
- MJC will partner with WSCCR as they build out their research.
- **Youth Diversion Interim Research** – Frank Thomas and Molly Gough
- MJC has contracted with a graduate student to continue interim research on youth diversion between publishing the Statewide Youth Diversion Report and WSCCR beginning their research under HB 1391.
- The research will help to lay the groundwork for WSCCR's research under HB1391.

#### **LGBTQ+ Committee – Denise Diskin and Judge Gipe**

- **Update on Governance Documents and Action Plan** – Denise Diskin
- Judge Gipe provided an update on the LGBTQ+ Committee. The committee has been working to develop initial governance documents and action plan via a project manager tool.
- The document provides an overview of the Commission and Committee and details the goals for the Committee with specifications around Committee work division. It also details a timeline for Committee work with established milestones.
- The Committee is still in a development phase with Denise holding stakeholder meetings with interested parties across the state. The goal will be to have these meetings and the committee structure finalized by the end of Q3 2025 with Committee membership finalized by Q4 2025.

#### **Rules & Legislation Committee – Sumeer Singla**

- **Community Outreach and Public Input on Justice Policy** – Chris Sanders
- The Rules and Legislation Committee is looking to engage in community outreach before the 2026 legislative session. The committee would like to listen to communities that are impacted by priority policies and have these conversations help guide recommendations to help build trust and confidence in the judiciary.
- **MJC Comment on Open Court Rules Proposals** – Katie Hurley
  - [CrR 3.2/CrRLJ 3.2](#)
  - [CrR 4.1/CrRLJ 4.1](#)
  - [CrR 8.3/CrRLJ 8.3](#)
- The Rules and Legislation Committee added their names to support the rule changes for CrR3.2 and CrR 4.1 and wrote a letter in support of CrR 8.3.

#### **Education Committee – Judge Lori K. Smith and Frank Thomas**

- **Recap: SCJA Spring Conference Program, co-sponsored by SCJA Equality and Fairness Committee:** *Justice by Default? Ensuring Access to Justice for URLs in Motions for Default and Summary Judgments*
- The Education Committee planned the opening plenary session for SCJA conference. The program featured a short presentation from Judge Shah, who explained why unmet civil legal

needs issues has context within racial justice and how race impacts access to civil legal support.

- The presentation also had a section on summary judgement and default instruction in the Family Law Context presented by Judge Katie Loring of San Juan County. Judge Loring helped MJC develop [Civil Default Bench Cards](#) on the topic.
- Judge Breean Begs of Spokane County and Commissioner Jonathan Lack of King County conducted a fun workshop on hypothetical scenarios for the audience to apply their learning from the previous presentation.

### **Outreach Committee – Bonnie Glenn and Lisa Castilleja**

- ***Law Student Liaison Alumni Roster***
- The Outreach Committee has developed a list of past law student liaisons. The goal is to develop a new roster of young attorneys who are interested in and dedicated to MJC's mission to tap into for mentorship opportunities for current liaisons and for Commission or Committee membership.
- A solicitation was sent to the identified past law student liaisons (20). With recent activities and invitation to the upcoming Symposium and MJC meeting. As the attorneys respond the Committee will continue to strengthen the line of communication between the graduated liaisons and Commission and survey what activities might be of interest to them (joining a committee or providing mentorship, etc).
- ***2025 Artwork Request***
- The submission period for the 2025 artwork request has closed. The Committee received 22 submissions from a variety of artists, some youth.
- ***UW NALSA Events: Emma Tolliver***
- UW Law Student Liaison Emma Tolliver provided an update on the two events MCJ co-sponsored this year. Both events and panels were hybrid.
  - In Conversation with Connie Walker and Bree Black Horse on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW)
    - 80 attendees
  - Native Pathways to Law
    - 20 attendees, up from 3 attendees last year.
    - Key Findings: Barriers to law for indigenous attendees included the LSAT's cost, time and access to practice materials and testing centers.
- Emma expressed interest in exploring more opportunities for law students from all the Washington Law Schools to collaborate.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

### **Tribal State Court Consortium (TSCC) – Judge Lori K Smith**

- Judge Lori K. Smith provided an update on TSCC activities, fully detailed in the meeting packet.
  - Chief Judge Cindy Smith attended the Court Equity and Access Program's Self Represented Litigant Summit in Suquamish.
  - TSCC co-sponsored the session "Working with Tribes: New Law for (Involuntary Treatment Act) ITA and Warrants" at the SJCA Spring Conference.
  - TSCC has submitted a proposal for the 66<sup>th</sup> Fall Conference titled "Voices, Visibility, and Vigilance: Leveraging Technology and Legal Protections to Address the MMIW/P Crisis"

### **Sentencing Guidelines Commission – Judge Veronica Galván**

- Judge Galván continues work as MJC rep on the Sentencing Guidelines Commission. The SGC is reviewing criminal sentencing proposals for 2026 leg session. Many of which are the same proposals that MJC supported in 2025.
- SGC is also continuing to develop a race equity analysis tool and framework to leverage in future.

#### **Statewide Jury Demographic Survey – Dr. Patrizia Chirco**

- Dr. Patrizia Chirco provided an update on Statewide Jury Demographic Survey and Pierce County Juror Pay Pilot.
- The pilot concluded with \$1.5 million going to Pierce County jurors. The Pilot is currently in a post-pilot data collection phase. Judges and court staff at Pierce County Superior, Tacoma District and Municipal Courts have been sent a survey for feedback on the pilot.
  - The report on the pilot will be authored by the AOC Office of Judicial and Legislative Relations (OLJR).
- The Statewide report will cover 2023-2024 data and have an increase in scope as new courts have been onboarded.
  - The 2023 Statewide Juror Sommons Demographic Survey Report included data from nine courts while the new report will cover 29 participating courts from 20 jurisdictions.
  - With the data collected Dr. Chirco will be able to map new relationships between data points of gender, income, education, race and ethnicity and disparities in each jurisdiction to identify the unique challenges in each county.
  - Dr. Chirco has begun her analysis, and initial findings are reported in the meeting packet.

#### **CLOSING REMARKS**

- Justice Yu thanked the MJ Commissioners for their work and attendance.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM**

# Informing Data Infrastructure Development for Juvenile Diversion Equity

**Minority and Justice Commission Youth Justice  
Committee**

**Washington State Center for Court Research**

Emma Deneau

July 18, 2025





# Project Scope & Goals

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- Purpose:

- Identify needs for progress report on 2025 Statewide Diversion Report recommendations, with a focus on the racial impacts of diversion.
- Support the development of statewide diversion database.
- Inform semi-structured interviews with community stakeholders in FY 2025-26.
- Seed potential diversion program dashboard.

- Scope of Project:

- Annotated bibliography for national comparison of diversion reporting and research
- Memos on youth diversion context for 7 jurisdictions in Eastern WA
- Thematic summary of 7 county-level memos

# National Comparison of Diversion Reporting & Research

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- Washington lacks centralized system of data collection and reporting
  - Challenges: inter-county variability, agency coordination, and deviations from MJC framework
- National comparison helps identify:
  - Strategies from decentralized states
  - Examples of data dashboards and reporting
  - Privacy and equity considerations

# National Comparison: Highlights from other Decentralized States

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- Oregon (JJIS): Tracks youth dispositions and program demographics, participation, and completion; issues with missing data
- Iowa: Public dashboard but limited methodological transparency.
- Maryland: Annual reports (inter-county variation, but with state oversight); CJAMS, internal data system
- Massachusetts: Decentralized system poses similar issues, but reports outline diversion equity priority and strategic planning



# Best Practices & Key Considerations



- Takeaways from national data reporting and 2024 Sentencing Project briefs:
  - Interagency coordination is essential
  - Prioritize data metrics standardization and privacy considerations
  - Equity-focused design: consider decentralized systems may contribute to inequitable diversion opportunities

# Memos on County Diversion Context

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- Eastern WA Counties Profiled:

- Spokane
- Adams
- Lincoln
- Franklin/Benton
- Walla Walla/Columbia
- Asotin/Garfield
- Ferry/Stevens/Pend Oreille

- Purpose:

- Inform future interviews with community stakeholders
- Identify considerations that impact youth and diversion opportunities

- Data Sources

- Various official sources (WA DSHS, U.S. Census, WSCCR dashboards)

# Memo Themes: Youth Diversion Reporting & Research

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- Reaffirmed limited youth eligibility identified in 2025 Statewide Diversion Report
- Public info on diversion frameworks and specific programs was sparse, but most counties described using frameworks in 2025 report
- Lack of peer-reviewed juvenile justice and diversion research
  - Spokane: only county with internal reports

# Memo Themes: Justice System Contact & Arrest Disparities

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- Large variation in total arrest rate across counties versus Washington State (WSCCR LEDA Dashboard, 2019-2023)
  - Black/BI/AN youth overrepresented in overall arrests
  - Mixed trends for Hispanic youth
    - May be driven by data quality issues
    - Small population sizes limit data accuracy
- For majority of counties, non-diversion court rates (referrals, case filings, & adjudications) were higher versus state total (WSCCR Juvenile Courts Dashboard, 2019-2023)

# Memo Themes: Diversion Rates and Disparities

- 
- Formal diversion rates tended to be higher in the profiled counties vs. statewide (WSCCR Juvenile Court Dashboard, 2019-2023)
  - County-level diverted case rates by race/ethnicity indicate potential disparities (WSCCR Juvenile Court Dashboard, 2019-2023)
    - Highest among white youth and lowest among Black youth; more mixed among Hispanics/Latinos
    - Diversion rates for simple assault cases demonstrated similar disparities; also lower rates among AI/AN youth
    - Data quality issues warrant more robust measures

# Delinquency Risk Factors and Community Deprivation

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- Individual-level risk factors
    - High indicators of economic deprivation (Census & DSHS data, 2023)
    - High rates of foster care placement (DSHS Client data, 2018) and dependency filings (WSCCR Dependency Dashboard, 2023)
    - Top 3 youth issues: substance use, housing insecurity, and mental health (community health reports, local news)
  - Lack of community resources: staffing and funding shortfalls for youth programming and services

# Diversion Data Infrastructure Considerations & Recommendations

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- Progress on diversion reporting & research will require:
  - Identifying and addressing gaps in diversion frameworks/definitions and data collection (e.g., standardized metrics on informal diversion)
  - State investments in data collection capacity for rural counties (staffing shortages, underfunding)
  - Interagency and community organization data coordination
  - Prioritizing youth confidentiality and diversion equity



# Questions?



## Contact:

Dr. Lindsey Beach ([lindsey.beach@courts.wa.gov](mailto:lindsey.beach@courts.wa.gov))

Juvenile Diversion Senior Researcher, Washington State Center for Court Research

Emma Deneau ([emma.deneau@wsu.edu](mailto:emma.deneau@wsu.edu))

Research Assistant, Minority Justice Commission and Washington State Center for Court Research







# Tribal State Court Consortium

July 2025

## Upcoming Events and Education:

- TSCC Spring Regional Meeting will be held Friday, August 29, 2025, at Emerald Queen Casino and Hotel in Puyallup, WA. This meeting is in coordination with National Judicial College's "*Essential Skills for Tribal Judges*" course (August 26-28). There will be parallel education surrounding the Tribal Warrant Act for Tribal Judicial Officers and State Judicial Officers. See below to RSVP.
- TSCC is pleased to be accepted to the Access to Justice Conference, which takes place September 18-19, 2025.  
15 years since the revitalization of the TSCC warranted reflection on "*Tribal State Court Consortium: Building Bridges- Past, Present, and Future.*" Discussion includes CR 82.5 and how it impacts people directly, this message is shared through a lived experience expert and Judge/Educator Mark Pouley. You can register [here](#).
- TSCC's Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, September 28, 2025, at the 66th Annual Washington Judicial Conference in Spokane Valley, WA.

# THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

## Washington State Jail Modernization Task Force

June 30, 2025, Interim Status Report

WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER  
155 NE 100th Street, Suite 401  
Seattle, WA 98125

# THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

## About the William D. Ruckelshaus Center

The William D. Ruckelshaus Center (the Center) is an impartial resource for collaborative problem solving in the State of Washington and the Pacific Northwest. The Center is dedicated to assisting public, private, nonprofit, tribal, and other community leaders in their efforts to build consensus and resolve conflicts around difficult public policy issues. The Center is a joint effort of the University of Washington (hosted by the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy and Governance) and Washington State University (hosted and administered by the Office of the Provost). For more information about the Center, please visit: <https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/about/>

### William D. Ruckelshaus Center Facilitation Team:

Jed Chalupa, Ph.D.	Senior Facilitator
Kevin Harris, MPA, MBA	Senior Facilitator for Health Policy/Associate Professor, Washington State University Extension
Melissa Girbach, MPA	Associate Facilitator

### Contracted Research Team:

Cheryl Ellenwood, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor, Washington State University School of Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs
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### DISCLAIMER

The following report was prepared by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, a joint effort of the University of Washington and Washington State University whose mission is to act as a neutral resource for collaborative problem solving in the State of Washington and Pacific Northwest. University leadership and the Center's Advisory Board support the preparation of this, and other reports produced under the Center's auspices. However, the key themes contained in this report are intended to reflect the opinions of the interviewed parties, and the findings are those of the Center's interview team. Those themes and findings do not represent the views of the universities or Advisory Board members.

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## Acknowledgement

The William D. Ruckelshaus Center's (the Center) facilitation team would like to thank the Task Force members and participating presenters and panelists for their time and focus, good faith efforts and willingness to work towards shared learning and consensus to achieve common goals. This includes those with various forms of lived experience - which helped the Task Force keep on track and focused on how humane jail conditions and different forms of relationships and partnerships are fundamental components necessary to address, mitigate and repair trauma, pursue community safety, improve jail conditions and reduce recidivism rates.

Thanks also to the Washington Association of Counties, and participating and interested legislators who gave their time, energy and input to help advance these important issues around improving county jail systems in Washington state.

While this Task Force focused on county jails, the group recognized the importance and connectedness of tribal and city jails and holding centers, the juvenile detention system, and the state prison system.



## Acronym Definitions

The Center	William D. Ruckelshaus Center
The Facilitation Team	William D. Ruckelshaus Center Project Team
DOC	Department of Corrections
DSHS	Department of Social and Health Services
CJTC	Criminal Justice Training Commission
DRW	Disabilities Rights Washington
Lived Experience	Lived Incarceration Experience
WSIPP	Washington State Institute of Public Policy
HCA	Health Care Authority
WSAC	Washington State Association of Counties

## Executive Summary

Recognizing that many county jails in Washington are old and in disrepair, the 2024 Washington Legislature funded the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (the Center) to conduct a situation assessment and provide support to the Jail Modernization Task Force (the Task Force) through June 2026.

The proviso directed that the Task Force, at a minimum, identifying existing jail facilities in need of upgrades or remodel, any need for building new facilities, and potential funding sources or mechanisms to make the recommendations feasible. Additionally, the Task Force was directed to discuss key issues and reform needs related to employee recruitment and retention and its impact on the jail system, behavioral and physical health needs, diversion programs, and the cost associated with all.

Proviso language established that the Task Force should be made up a diverse group of interested and affected parties including representatives from the four corners of the legislature, the governor's office, the sentencing guidelines commission, corrections and sheriffs, various judicial positions and health care entities, counties, individuals with incarceration experience, and others as deemed necessary. A full list of Jail Modernization Task Force members can be found in [Appendix A](#).

In the proviso language, progress reports were directed be completed by the Center in June 2024 and June 2025 (which is fulfilled by this report). Additionally, a final report due is December 2025.

## The Report

This report provides an update on the progress of the Task Force's work from April 2024 to June 2025. This work is the progress made following 11 in-person and virtual Task Force convenings to date. The primary focus of the report is on the various proposals the Task Force is currently discussing in the aim of solidifying recommendations to be made in December. As this work is ongoing, the Task Force has yet to solidify any recommendations; however, there are many things that the Task Force was able to discuss, come to agreement around, and make significant process towards. The report also highlights various perspectives that are foundational to the principles detailed in proposals. The proposals currently being discussed are organized into the following focus areas: Overarching Funding and Infrastructure Needs, Physical and Behavioral Health Needs, Diversion and Therapeutic Courts, Pre-trial Release, Re-entry, and Correctional Officer and Staff Needs. The Task Force members have made it clear that this report is a progress update, not a final plan of action.

## Focus Areas

### [Overarching Funding and Infrastructure Needs](#)

The [Overarching Funding and Infrastructure Needs](#) section focuses on general funding concepts, ideas, and potential options that would assist in prioritizing jails for funding updates in the short-term, and innovative suggestions for creative funding solutions to expand

evidence-based jail alternatives, treatment options, or services that improve outcomes for currently incarcerated populations long-term.

#### [Correctional Officer and Staff Needs](#)

The [Correctional Officer and Staff Needs](#) section includes examinations of retirement packages, pay, work atmosphere, and innovation as means for recruiting and retaining correctional officers and jail staff. These conversations also addressed public university collaborations, ongoing educational opportunities and legislative requirements.

#### [Physical and Behavioral Health Needs](#)

The [Physical and Behavioral Health](#) section addresses improving the physical and behavioral health of jail populations including considerations for Medicaid waivers/programming and expanding telehealth and peer support programs.

#### [Diversion and Therapeutic Courts](#)

The [Diversion and Therapeutic Courts](#) section addresses opportunities, legal system barriers, peer supports, diversion program standards, and community capacity or constraints surrounding various point of contact for diversion from the jail system in consideration with available resources.

#### [Pre-trial Release](#)

The [Pre-trial Release](#) section address assessment suggestions, evaluation of legislative requirements, legal system collaboration, standardization, and funding options.

#### [Re-entry](#)

The [Re-entry](#) section includes an emphasis on peer supports, as well as assessment/reassessment timing, discharge planning and timing, outreach, short-term lengths of stay issues and related historical barriers. Some proposals in this section are also linked to the Medicaid Transformation Waiver renewal.

### [Future Work](#)

The Task Force will continue to work through December 2025, to refine the proposals outlined in this report to move to recommendations for the governor's office and state legislature to consider. The potential recommendations will be provided in the December 2025 report. Currently the Task Force is looking at hosting a virtual convening to highlight and engage interested and affected parties as a means of bringing awareness of their work in September 2025. This will further help inform state legislators who are preparing for the 2026 legislative session. As funding for the Task Force continues through June 2026, funds will be utilized to disseminate the final December 2025 report.

## Introduction

The Washington legislature funded the creation of a Jail Modernization Task Force (Task Force), in a 2024 [proviso](#), in recognition that jails throughout the state continue to face many challenges. Funding became available for this work starting in April 2024. For a full read of the proviso see [Appendix E](#). The proviso language identified that the Task Force, at minimum, provide recommendations related to:

- Identifying existing jail facilities in need of upgrades or remodel, and any need for building new facilities, and potential funding sources or mechanisms to make the recommendations feasible.

Additionally, the proviso requested the Task Force discuss perspectives about (but not limited to):

- What key components and issues should be included in a statewide jail modernization plan, what existing facilities need upgrades or remodel, and any need for building new facilities,
- Identification of any additional key stakeholders,
- Employee retention issues and potential solutions,
- Impact of overtime, jail atmosphere, emergency response time, inexperienced corrections officers, and how to overcome these challenges,
- The type of and design of facilities needed to house those with behavioral health needs and associated costs of those facilities,
- Available diversion programs and their costs,
- Types of existing behavioral health facilities for those involved in the criminal justice system, the costs of building and running those facilities, how those facilities vary by location, the viability of offering facilities in every county, and potential system improvements to the types of services and supports offered and delivered to those with behavioral health needs,
- Types of services and supports provided to those exiting the jail system, and
- Reforms necessary to create and enhance a seamless transition back to the community following jail confinement.

The proviso called for the [William D. Ruckelshaus Center](#) (the Center) to complete a situation assessment—a typical part of the process to evaluate Task Force members, their perceptions of the issues, their values and belief systems, the history and status of their individual and organizational relationships, and their willingness to engage in a collaborative process in good faith—before subsequently providing facilitative support to the Task Force during their collective meetings. The proviso stipulated that the first Task Force convening occur prior to December 1, 2024.

The proviso established that the Center should complete a total of three reports to be submitted to the governor's office and the state legislature. The first report was a [progress report](#) due June 30, 2024. An additional progress report was directed to be submitted by

July 1, 2025 (this report fulfills that directive). The final report from the Task Force is expected to be submitted on December 1, 2025.

Furthermore, the proviso language stated that the Task Force membership should include representation from:

- Each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the president of the Senate,
- each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
- the Caseload Forecast Council (as an advisory member),
- the governor's office,
- the Department of Corrections (DOC),
- the sentencing guidelines commission,
- the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS),
- the Health Care Authority (HCA),
- the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC),
- the Superior Court Judges Association,
- the District and Municipal Court Judges Association,
- the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys or the Washington Defender Association,
- the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys,
- the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission,
- Disability Rights Washington (DRW),
- a behavioral health administrative service organization,
- an individual with lived experience (interpreted by the Center as an individual with lived incarceration experience),
- two members appointed by and representing each of the following:
  - The Washington State Association of Counties (one representative from both East and West of the Cascade Crest),
  - The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (one representative from both East and West of the Cascade Crest),
- and any additions or modifications informed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) and the Center.

Importantly, among the Task Force membership, there were three people with lived incarceration experience, including both juvenile and adult incarceration as well as both male and female experiences. Representatives from the Caseload Forecasting Commission and the Democratic representative from the Senate were never appointed. Furthermore, following the gubernatorial administration change in 2025, the Task Force lost its original representatives from the governor's office who have not been replaced. A full list of Task Force members can be found in [Appendix A](#). The Center's facilitation team (the Facilitation Team; listed on page i) will continue to recruit Task Force members to fill the current vacancies before the December 2025 report.

The Task Force members have made it clear that this report is a progress update, not a final plan of action. It includes Task Force members' individual proposals with varying levels of support from the rest of the group (represented in voting results from the June 2025 meeting). The Task Force will continue to meet through December 2025 to solidify many of these proposals with the goal of providing more substantial recommendations.

The views presented in this report have been informed by many diverse perspectives from across the state (without over representation of any geographical area, such as the I-5 Corridor), women and men with incarceration experience, the judicial sector (pre-trial and sentencing), the jail workforce, advocacy groups, the healthcare sector, correctional officer training organizations, and state agencies.

The remainder of this report is broken into the following areas: The Process, Task Force Proposals, Next Steps, and Conclusion. The Task Force had significant input in the drafting of this report and assisted in developing much of the language and insights added throughout.

## The Process

The work of the Task Force is divided in three distinct phases: (1) the initial situation assessment interviews, (2) a second round of situation assessment interviews, and (3) Task Force collaborative meetings (continuing through December 2025).

### Situation Assessments

#### Initial Situation Assessment

Receiving initial funding in April 2024, the Center spent April through June 2024 conducting an initial situation assessment. The questions from the situation assessment are included in [Appendix D](#). The assessment consisted of one-hour semi-structured interviews with identified Task Force members. Questions were sent in advance, to give people time to organize their thoughts before the interview. This initial situation assessment provided the Facilitation Team with enough information to complete the requested [June 2024 Progress Report](#) for the state legislature and governor's office.

Additionally, during this time the Facilitation Team engaged representatives from the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC), who originally worked with the legislature to initiate the establishing proviso and provided the Task Force a deeper understanding of the intent of the work.

#### Second Round Situation Assessment

From July to October 2024, the Facilitation Team engaged in a second round of situation assessment interviews to provide a deeper understanding of Task Force members' perceptions, values, beliefs, histories, and willingness to engage in collaboration. This assessment iteration included a mix of in-person and online two-hour interviews. Variations in interview format (in-person or virtual) depended on interviewee availability and logistics, however, the Facilitation Team made every effort to prioritize in-person interviews. Two of the in-person interviews included tours of the Walla Walla County Corrections and Juvenile Justice Center and the Kittitas County Correctional facility and

allowed the Facilitation Team an opportunity to see the internal infrastructure and workings of some of Washington's carceral centers.

The situation assessments indicated some past organizational differences, but nothing extraordinary. While there were many commonalities between the systemic barriers that affect different perceptions of success, the operational differences were often based on jail size and usually associated with rural versus urban settings, as opposed to an Eastern/Western designation.

The situation assessments provided the basis to develop an iterative approach to the subsequent Task Force meetings to address the proviso's goals and intent, as well as the additional needs identified by Task Force members.

## Task Force Meetings

The Facilitation Team began facilitating monthly Task Force meetings in late October 2024 and continued to meet monthly for a total of 11 sessions (7 in-person and 4 virtual) through June 2025. A full list of meetings can be found in [Appendix B](#). The in-person sessions ranged from 5-6 hours (held in varying locations between Seattle and Olympia, Washington) while the virtual sessions ranged from 2-3 hours in length. During these convenings, the Task Force began by working to develop the necessary trust with one another to collaboratively address the proviso's goals and intent.

To inform the Task Force's work beyond their immediate views, the Facilitation Team connected with multiple individuals and entities to provide additional insights into the current state and needs of Washington jail systems. These insights included, extensive engagement with WSIPP's *['Jails and Juvenile Detention Centers in Washington State: Population Trends, Survey of Local Facilities, and Availability of CJTC Courses'](#)* report (published December 2024) (the WSIPP Report), their survey data, and their research team.

Additionally, panel discussions were set up with individuals with lived incarceration experience (in collaboration with [Revive Counseling Spokane](#) and [Weld King County](#)) and correctional officer chiefs and directors from jails across the state. The Facilitation Team also provided information from other states to help the Task Force think through various perspectives and inspire creativity. This research was conducted in collaboration with a faculty member at Washington State University (listed on page ii).

While the discussions were not linear, the structure of the Task Force's progress can roughly be organized into three parts. This included (1) developing deeper understanding and connection between Task Force members and the issues outlined in the proviso while also setting parameters around the Task Force's work; (2) learning from the expertise of Task Force members and others brought in to provide additional insights; and (3) developing proposals to be discussed and refined by Task Force members. During each of these phases, the Facilitation Team documented conversations in a wide array of formats which were used to highlight areas needing further discussion and track overall conversational progress.



### [Building Understanding](#)

The original assessment interviews suggested disparities between opinions and beliefs, including cultural differences and ideologies based on regional, social, and jail governance structures. The Facilitation Team used this information to structure progressively interactive, participatory exercises and learning sessions and the Task Force made remarkable progress in a short time. They came together in a trusted environment to share their experiences, to actively listen and learn from each other with genuine interest, and to begin to work collectively to break down categorical issues and suggest options.

Furthermore, the group quickly discovered that they shared common goals around better institutional and community-based practices, relative to incarceration, with a strong emphasis on a human-centered approach. This gave the members the ability to move relatively quickly into problem-solving work which included a variety of discussion techniques to work through large amounts of information/perspectives while developing the various proposals listed [below](#).

### [Understanding the Jail Incarceration System](#)

As the Task Force began to build understanding among themselves, it became clear that people are often limited within their own professional silos, and do not always have opportunities to look at the entire system from a broader perspective. Therefore, the group began to address the jail system by developing a collaborative understanding of how the system works. The graphic in [Appendix B](#) generally represents the jail incarceration continuum, from investigation and booking, to pre-trial judicial activity, through incarceration and re-entry back into the community. This diverse group of Task Force members were able to bring their different viewpoints, to help align their holistic understanding of the greater system and the interconnectedness of each ‘issue’ along the continuum. While the authorizing proviso language primarily focuses on jail infrastructure needs, it also asks for a broad series of considerations when making recommendations. The incarceration continuum concept helped the Task Force move back and forth between the broader, more expansive issues and the interconnected focus point around jail infrastructure and modernization.

### [Working with Data and Diverse Experience](#)

The Task Force looked at various forms of data and research throughout their work. The [2023 Jail Standards Task Force report](#), the [WSIPP Report](#), and other reference materials, including but not limited to the topics noted in the proviso language, were provided to Task Force members for review as they worked to meet the goals and intent of the legislative ask.

### [WSIPP Data](#)

Following the publication of the WSIPP Report, the Facilitation Team invited WSIPP to present and discuss their findings with the Task Force. This provided the Task Force with a deeper understanding of their findings and how best to use that information to inform decisions. WSIPP subsequently shared additional survey data with the Task Force that illustrated the self-reported facility condition scores of the jails across the state. To see this survey data see [Appendix F](#).

The additional survey data provided by WSIPP sparked new points of discussion that informed some of the proposals that will be discussed in the [Task Force Proposals and Related Context](#) section. Primarily, these discussions raised concerns around the reliability surrounding the self-reported facility condition scores.

#### *Panel Discussions and Added Insight*

The Facilitation Team worked with Task Force members to bring other's experience into several convenings, in the form of subject matter and lived experience panels. These included people recently released from jail, as well as correctional officer and staff experience. Others from community programs provided helpful input, context, and recommendations to the Task Force on a variety of issues.

#### *Discussing Potential Actions*

Based on the Task Force conversations and the proviso language, the group identified seven focus areas that provided organization to their discussions. These focus areas are:

1. Overarching funding
2. Infrastructure needs
3. Correctional officer and staff needs
4. Physical and behavioral health needs
5. Diversion and Therapeutic Courts
6. Pre-trial release
7. Re-entry

The draft proposals presented [below](#) represent the status of work completed as of June 2025. During the June 2025 in-person meeting, the Task Force engaged in a voting process to indicate how much support each proposal currently has and where future effort should focus. The voting process included the following options:

1. Support
2. Need for Further Discussion
3. Opposition
4. Abstain

The votes collected from this voting process are included following the presentation of each proposal. At the start of the voting process, the Task Force stated a desire to highlight that, at this time, the group has only had time to discuss some of these proposals in depth which factors into how they vote. Continuing to work through December 2025, voting is likely to change due to further discussion around these proposals.

To help understand the voting results, some Task Force members used the "Abstain" option because they viewed the proposals as being outside the scope of the proviso's intent (specifically outside the minimum requirements). That said, many Task Force members viewed these areas as important parts of a "jail modernization plan" and addressing issues being faced by jail facilities across the state; issues that are deeply tied to infrastructure and funding needs. The disparities among Task Force members on how much emphasis should be put on these discussion areas will be a continued point of dialog for the Task Force as they continue their work. At times, 'Abstain' was also used

when a Task Force member felt that even with further discussion, they would not have the needed context to vote on a proposal or that their organization did not have a definitive stance on the topic.

## Global Stances and Context

The conversations outline in this section are perspectives put forth by the Task Force that address the issues more globally and provide important context to the overall work completed to date. These perspectives highlight the complexity of the work being asked for by the proviso.

### The Current System Does Not Work

One point of unanimous agreement was that the current jail system is not working. Task Force members discussed research recognizing that the current approach of incarcerating individuals does little to improve public safety, and in-fact can result in people being worse off following periods of incarceration.<sup>1</sup> While this was a point of agreement, Task Force members disagreed on how best to invest in the system to make improvements without a complete overhaul of Washington State's carceral system (which they acknowledged was not the intent of the proviso). However, some felt that such an overhaul is needed.

### Perceptions of Public Safety

It became increasingly clear to the Facilitation Team that many individuals (including many in leadership positions) working across Washington with incarcerated populations recognize that the punishment mentality, that underlies the current system, does not work. Often tied to the idea of 'public safety,' there seems to be a strong disconnect between those working within the carceral system, those who work to provide services to incarcerated individuals, those who have experience being incarcerated, and the larger public. More education is necessary to help the larger public understand that most individuals who are incarcerated (especially those in jail) will re-enter the larger community. Therefore, public safety is increased when incarcerated individuals have their needs met and receive services that improve their ability to be productive and stable members of society.

Some Task Force members shared clear statements that incarcerated individuals are part of the public and their safety should be considered in 'public safety' conversations. However, other Task Force members recognized that some people who are incarcerated need to be separated from the larger community due to their probability of continued threat to public safety. That said, even those who voiced this opinion recognized the importance of providing services to individuals during their incarceration.

Strong leadership will be required to make the changes the Task Force, and many others, hope to make. Leaders will need to be willing to put in the tough work of restructuring the carceral system and educating their constituents on the full perception of public safety. Furthermore, such leadership needs to be dedicated to continued recognition that incarcerated individuals are part of the community and their safety matters. Although, not

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<sup>1</sup> Massoglia, M., and Remster, B. (2019). Linkages Between Incarceration and Health. *Public Health Reports* 134. Pp8s-14s. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0033354919826563>

experienced or put forth by all Task Force members, some cited the Norwegian Model as a more ideal incarceration system.<sup>2</sup> According to these Task Force members, this model improves public safety by maintaining the human dignity of both the staff and incarcerated individuals within the jail system, while providing the necessary services to help this population address their underlying unmet needs and ultimately decreasing recidivism rates.

### Opposition to Increasing the Carceral System's Footprint

Another impactful perspective with significant barring on the progress of the Task Force was opposition to the underlying premise of the proviso itself. For example, Disability Rights Washington (DRW) was vocal in their stance that they did not support the 'Jail Modernization Task Force' goals and intent. This stance comes with a perception that they do not believe state funds should be put towards increasing the Washington State carceral system's footprint (i.e. increasing the number of jail beds throughout Washington, building new facilities, or expanding the capacities of existing jail facilities). Importantly, regardless of their opposition to the proviso and their involvement in the Task Force, DRW attended regularly and engaged in good faith efforts. Furthermore, while DRW was the most vocal about their objections, many Task Force members shared similar perspectives and advocated for alternatives.

Those who agreed with DRW paired their perceptions with recognition that 'modernizing' jails did not have to mean addressing the physical plant itself but finding ways to use jails less and establish alternative options to incarceration. These Task Force members advocated that state funds should be used to provide services for Washington State citizens (including those in jail) to limit the number of individuals involved with the jail system and reduce the likelihood of recidivism. This would ensure that jails are not the only option for individuals to receive needed services and keep people out of jail who do not belong there. Connected, there were also discussions proposing the possibility, that if jail conditions continue to decline across the state, counties will be forced to be innovate and invest in alternative options rather than continue to over emphasis the carceral system as the only means of intervention.

After significant discussion and deliberation, there was strong Task Force support that if funding was to be provided to the jail system, that the legislature first prioritize infrastructure improvements around basic safety and health/hygiene concerns, while working on funding for service delivery both in jails and the community to reflect the root cause to why many (but not all) people in the jail system shouldn't be incarcerated in the first place.

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<sup>2</sup> Waclo, A. M. (2020-21). Ending Mass Incarceration: A Critical Analysis of the Norwegian Criminal Justice System in Search of Carceral Solutions for the United States. *The Cupola: The Undergraduate Research Journal of Christopher Newport University*, 15. pp.284-299.

<https://sail.cnu.edu/omeka/files/original/3fc0e70fcc6c902f163843062ae70444.pdf#page=284>

Humphreys, B. (2024). The Nordic Carceral System: Examining Scandinavian Penal Exceptionalism. *Nordic Review of International Studies*, 2 (2023). pp 72-83. <https://nris.journal.fi/article/view/137965/90215>

### County Financial Strain

Some Task Force members also regularly addressed that, like many public services, jails are often bound by a combination of voter tax and levy rejection trends, as well as lack of public education that results in a one-size ‘lock them up’ position that supports historical status quo. When coupled with service and cost inflation, this often leaves little funding flexibility for counties to invest in their jail facilities and are left with most fiscal and oversight responsibilities for the local carceral system. This results in obvious funding challenges and competition for very scarce resources from general funds. County decision makers often feel detached and left without adequate state fiscal support.

While the constraints counties face financially was of high concern, some Task Force members recognized that continuing to frame jails as the counties’ problem to solve is counterproductive. Better framing would be to focus in on the needs of communities across Washington.

Regionalization was discussed by the Task Force as a potential solution to addressing the financial strain faced by counties. A regional jail facility could allow cities and counties to pool limited resources and potentially reduce their per-bed costs. Building a regionalized facility is particularly appealing to rural counties where facilities have closed or where limited community-based services are available. Mirroring the opinions detailed in the [WSIPP Report](#), Task Force members expressed concern that regionalization would create a myriad of complexities to court appearances, access to council, transportation, patrol officer capacity, facility governance, and the continued expansion of the carceral footprint.

If a county is to consider a regional facility, the Task Force suggests that numerous conditions need to be met. Any regional facility would need to staff a dedicated transportation team to transport individuals to and from their arrest location, detention facilities, court appearances, and desired release location. Transportation staff would also help to maintain patrol officer capacity in rural communities. Task Force members also stressed the need to allow for virtual court appearances, council meetings, and the adequate private space to uphold attorney-client privilege and private interactions with family or other community members. Furthermore, the Task Force discussed the need for a legislative fix to RCW 70.48.090, to allow a regional jail to be operated by a separate and independent jail authority.

## Task Force Proposals and Related Context

The following section presents the proposals Task Force members have developed so far and will continue to discuss. Primarily, the proposals are organized into the seven focus areas the Task Force identified during early discussions. However, following the June 13, 2025, meeting, overarching funding and infrastructural needs were combined into one category as the proposals address the minimum ask of the proviso, while the others are more connected the larger carceral system.

The interconnectedness between the different focus areas means that the various conversations should not be considered in a vacuum, if genuine positive change is to occur at the county or regional level. The Task Force recognizes that both incarcerated

people and those in the jail workforce suffer from basic jail infrastructure and community deficits, as well as systemic barriers and limitations that impact communities and public safety.

The proposals presented below are primarily left in their original draft form, including the background setting and context provided by the Task Force members who proposed them. This ensures a more dynamic understanding of the proposals in their current draft form.

## Overarching Funding and Infrastructural Needs

Task force members recognize that many county jails in Washington are old and in disrepair. At a fundamental level, plumbing, fire and electrical systems, security locks and other infrastructure repairs have often been deferred for years due to funding barriers. Many conversations by the Task Force have revolved around both funding mechanisms and what should be prioritized and addressed if funds become available. However, the Task Force realized early that typical complaints about the lack of funding would be generally unproductive. In addition, the group is aware of the tendency of communities to vote down taxes and levies, in general and specifically for jails. Many of the members responded to this understanding by exploring more unconventional funding sources. The Task Force is acutely aware of and sensitive to the current state budget deficit, as well as probable changes to the availability of federal programs. The members took a pragmatic approach to their proposals, from both short-term and longer-term perspectives.

Jails were traditionally intended for shorter term lengths of stay, to hold people awaiting sentencing or trial, and individuals serving less than a year. For a variety of systemic reasons, individual lengths of stay can sometimes be far longer than intended. This adds to the importance of providing more extensive supports and services, for potentially longer periods of time, which further impacts the need for types of plant capacity. Between 2020 and 2022, misdemeanor-based jail stays during COVID fell significantly across the state, while the people held for violent crimes and more serious charges increased<sup>3</sup>. This also suggests the need for greater layout flexibility, given the breadth of jail population and concurrent staff needs.

The Facilitation Team had the opportunity to visit jails in different parts of the state, to view physical conditions, and their impact on those incarcerated and jail staff. The team was struck by the inventiveness of leadership and staff in attempting to create more humane conditions and supportive services, often under poor conditions, with very limited budgets and decades-old physical layouts.

In addition, older jail facilities weren't meant to address the steady increase of people with behavioral and physical health issues. Jails were originally not built to be crisis intervention or treatment facilities, but the lack of community-based behavioral health facilities frequently encourage law enforcement to deliver people to jails as 'the only place to go'. Some jails face the conundrum of wanting to promote more open space for their general population but retaining individual space to isolate those with behavioral needs who

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<sup>3</sup> WSIPP Jail and Juvenile Facility Study, December 2024.



require temporary separation and supports. The ‘[Physical and Behavioral Health](#)’ section below describes other Task Force proposals that address these issues in greater detail.

#### Proposal 1: General Funding Proposal Summary

Three trends have converged in Washington making it difficult to raise state funds to address the aging local jail infrastructure across the State of Washington. First, local jail populations have substantially changed from their previous primary use as short-term booking facilities and longer-term misdemeanor sentences for local charges to now mostly housing longer term pre-trial detention of individuals on state and federal felony charges. Second, there has been a substantial increase in the number of legislators proposing that the criminal justice system holds people accountable with less reliance on incarceration, especially prior to conviction. Third, on top of the normal challenge of securing state funds for building local infrastructure, there is a current acute demand for state funding to operate local courts, public defense and other related services- all during a current projected multi-billion budget shortfall over the next four years. Parallel to these challenges, criminal justice professionals have identified numerous evidence-based practices different than jail that strongly demonstrate success in reducing recidivism and positively reintegrating participants into their communities. Local jurisdictions are experiencing their own versions of these trends, making it difficult<sup>4</sup> to gain political approval for repairs to existing facilities or scalable funding of successful evidence-based programs that would likely reduce crime and the need for incarceration.

The following proposal attempts to provide a reasonable path forward of remodeling (rather than constructing new) jails to address critical systems in partnership with local funding of both the planning for and the remodeling of facilities, and the implementation of evidence-based programs that will reduce the need for jail cells in the long term while reducing crime and recidivism. The core proposal utilizes low interest loans and loan forgiveness as incentives rather than imposing requirements so that each community’s political voice can make their own choices on how to proceed. Those counties that leverage the state funding and potential loan forgiveness will likely see a resolution of their current facility challenges while making the transition to the pro-social accountability programs that the non-partisan WSIPP has demonstrated saves taxpayer costs and reduces crime, especially recidivism. The proposal potentially bridges the gap between legislators’ interests that has prevented a state-wide solution to this critical problem.

Background: The WSIPP Report documents substantial deficiencies in existing local jail facilities across Washington, based on self-reported surveys from local jurisdictions. The report estimated that most facilities need significant remodeling, ranging in cost from \$20 million to \$54 million/county for individual county jail systems, distinct from the costs to build new facilities.

According to the WSIPP Report, between 2020 and 2022, jail populations fell significantly across the state and the concentration of people held for violent and more serious charges

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<sup>4</sup> There are some exceptions; most notably, Whatcom County voters recently approved (after rejecting two earlier proposals for constructing new larger facilities) a substantial local tax increase for both replacing their current jail and substantially increasing programming that will reduce use of their jail in the short and long term.

increased. Currently 70 percent of the population in local jails is comprised of pre-trial individuals, which means they are not in jail for punishment reasons, are presumed innocent and subject to a presumption of release unless they pose a substantial danger of violent crime in the community, are likely to interfere with their prosecution, or are unlikely to appear at future court hearings.<sup>5</sup>

The current local jail population includes a substantial number of people, who require behavioral health services (including medically assisted treatment for substance-use disorders), which are often not easy to provide within the structural footprints of traditional jails. There are evidence-based treatment programs that can be accomplished while people awaiting adjudication of charges reside outside the jail (electronic home monitoring, alternative treatment facilities, pre-trial supervision, supported supervision (by a community organization and not a court official), day-reporting and personal recognizance with dedicated resources. Based on the evidence gathered by WSIPP, these interventions without jail often provide superior reductions in recidivism and overall crime, but they also cost money. However, both the legal factors that require pre-trial incarceration and the competition for scarce criminal justice resources often preclude local communities from getting the financial and societal benefits of providing the most appropriate treatment and rehabilitation either inside or outside the local jail facility.

**Proposal: State Loan Fund for Jail Remodeling and Recidivism Reduction Facilities:**

The main proposal is to create a revolving loan fund of several hundred million dollars as part of an upcoming legislative capital budget that would provide over several years (akin to a major transportation project) a pool of funds that counties could access to bring their existing jail facilities up to minimum standards<sup>6</sup> and construct/remodel separate recidivism reduction facilities serving people facing pending criminal charges and/or post-disposition. Given scarce state budgetary resources, the fund would likely not be sufficient to fully fund the need, but a competitive system that rewards counties willing to invest local tax dollars and align jail facilities and programming with evidence-based best practices to reduce recidivism would both address the current unmet need and reduce the need for future resource investments as crime goes down due to implementation of pro-social corrections policies.

The loan fund could be administered by the Department of Commerce and be distributed annually based on competitive applications applied to the available funds each year. Considering where the most critical needs are as demonstrated in the 2024 WSIPP report, half the loan funds could be allocated to jail facilities in Eastern Washington and rural counties in Western Washington<sup>7</sup>, the other half would be available to all counties based on the competitive criteria. The interest rate on the loans would be the lowest possible rate

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<sup>5</sup> See Criminal Court Rule 3.2 and related case law.

<sup>6</sup> The actual minimum standards are not currently defined in Washington other than the tort system, but previously Washington has set minimum local jail standards and there is proposed legislation to create an entity with enforcement powers to hold jails accountable to yet undefined standards.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to the rural and urban divide, the application process should consider the limited ability of many sparsely populated rural counties to generate significant revenues from the local sales tax options- thus comparing relative local investments based on ability to raise local revenues, not just the volume of any local match.



sufficient to pay back the loans along with administrative costs- subject to loan forgiveness as set out below.<sup>8</sup> The specific points of competition could be set out in the enabling legislation, but would include at a minimum the following criteria: 1) Documented repair and reconfiguration<sup>9</sup> needs<sup>10</sup> of the jail facility sought to be remodeled; 2) Amount (both proportional to taxing authority available and volume of funds) of local tax funds dedicated to the remodeling project; 3) Age of the jail facility sought to be remodeled; 4) Degree of adoption of any statewide and national jail standards; and, 5) For construction of new recidivism reduction facilities (mental health/substance abuse treatment, crisis triage, sobering, emergency housing, etc. for those either in custody or facing criminal charges), and 6) A developed operational plan and funding structure. One purpose of this loan program is to build on the success of to-date limited legislative funding for facilities that house people who would otherwise be in jail with programs that better address their behavioral health needs at a substantially lower cost to local and state taxpayers due to the availability of Medicaid funding for operations that are precluded for jail populations (except possibly to some extent with the new Medicaid waiver program).

Loan Forgiveness for Counties: As a further incentive for counties to align themselves with evidence-based recidivism reduction policies, the loan fund would forgive interest and principal payments each year up to the amount that the County dedicates in local tax dollars beyond their previous five year average of spending<sup>11</sup> on alternatives to incarceration programs that are based on interventions that have been demonstrated by WISSP to be more effective than jail in terms of cost savings and reduced recidivism<sup>12</sup>.

Other Requirements Aligned with Best Evidence on Reducing Recidivism: The following requirements would likely make such a program more fiscally responsible and attract legislative support from those who disfavor investment in traditional jail facilities and/or are more fiscally conservative.

- A. Disallow use of the state loan funds on feasibility study, design and land acquisition costs, reserving those costs to local jurisdictions and ensuring that most of the funds will be used for actual critical repairs and remodeling after local jurisdictions have demonstrated their financial commitment by accomplishing all the work preliminary to actual construction.

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<sup>8</sup> Including loan forgiveness means the fund would not be perpetual once it was initially funded, but if the requirements of increasing pro-social programming and its proven outcomes of reducing recidivism and crime would reduce the need for jail space going forward as compared to not implementing the programming.

<sup>9</sup> Even if the same number of beds are preserved, some facilities need to reconfigure the footprint of the jail to allow for either more or less minimum- or maximum-security space and sometimes additional spaces for medical/behavioral health treatment and pro-social programming.

<sup>10</sup> Including the likely harms if not addressed and previously attempted mitigation.

<sup>11</sup> Examples include increased spending on drug and other therapeutic courts, supervised and supported pre-trial release, tier I and tier II pre-trial electronic home monitoring, day and night reporting, diversion programs, and operation of the recidivism reduction facilities described above. Increasing spending on these programs will both protect local taxpayers and statewide taxpayers from funding future proposed infrastructure bailouts that could be avoided by implementing increased pro-social criminal justice policies.

<sup>12</sup> King, Spokane and Yakima counties have demonstrated remarkable success with this approach, that could be replicated across the State by willing counties.

- B. Disallow use of these funds for building new<sup>13</sup> jail cells given the evidence that such cells are the most expensive and least effective interventions to reduce recidivism and rehabilitate those accused of committing crimes. This limitation doesn't preclude new jail cells; it simply requires local jurisdictions who choose this public policy approach to fund it with their own dollars under the presumption that state funding should be prioritized for interventions that the WSSIP has demonstrated are evidence-based and most effective in reducing crime and saving money in the future.
- C. Allow funds to be used to provide electronic tablets for use by appropriately screened incarcerated individuals to facilitate proven behavioral health treatment interventions, education and communication with family and support team members at no cost to the incarcerated person<sup>14</sup>. This is a relatively low-cost investment that is proven to support rehabilitation and reduce recidivism while non-convicted individuals are awaiting trial.

Local Tax Options for Counties to Utilize for Remodeling/Building Jail Facilities and to Provide Increased Jail Services: The legislature has provided counties with two primary options for funding jail construction and operations that must usually be approved by county voters- incremental sales tax increases and property tax levy lid lifts. Historically, the sales tax increases have been used more often than property tax increases.

- A. Targeted sales tax options are set out in the following Revised Code of Washington provisions. Sales taxes are considered regressive because they are based on consumption and thus not adjusted for the wealth or ability to pay, but under current state law are the preferred method of raising local tax revenue. Many counties have implemented some of these measures, but not necessarily to the fullest extent allowed.
  - 1. Jail Sales Tax RCW 82.14.350- This tax requires a majority vote in a county election and can be used for anything related to the building (including design and land acquisition) and operation of a jail or juvenile facility. The statute doesn't appear to contain a maximum rate under this chapter if it is exclusively spent on jails/juvenile facilities. *This statute also authorizes joint ventures between counties to co-locate<sup>15</sup> jails/juvenile facilities.*
  - 2. General County Sales Tax Increase RCW 82.14.450- Any County may increase its sales tax by up to 3/10<sup>th</sup> of one percent by a majority vote during

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<sup>13</sup> "New" is understood to be adding a jail cell to the count of available jail cells operated by the jurisdiction or replacing an existing jail cell in a jurisdiction with a newly constructed cell. This reduces the incentive for jurisdictions to incur the extensive costs of building new facilities rather than utilizing and repurposing existing facilities. Adding beds intended primarily for some type of treatment would not be considered new jail beds and would not be restricted.

<sup>14</sup> Additional guidelines should be developed as part of the funding criteria for tablets to ensure that tablets are used for evidence-based programming that accomplishes treatment and rehabilitation goals.

<sup>15</sup> Co-location of jails between adjacent rural counties is a potential solution for both costs of construction and operation as well as solving for labor shortages, but such a venture would likely still require some type of onsite short-term holding facility for initial arrests and court appearances at or near each county courthouse.

an election if the purpose is described and at least one third of the increase goes to criminal justice. There is required revenue sharing of 40 percent with the cities within the county and doesn't apply to new car sales. Cities can impose this tax at their own elections up to 1/10<sup>th</sup> percent with some revenue sharing with their county.

3. Councilmanic Criminal Justice Sales Tax RCW 82.14.340- Counties may impose a sales tax increase dedicated to general criminal justice purposes (including building and operating jails) without a vote of the people under this law as long as the voters have the option of utilizing the referendum process for a subsequent vote to reject or uphold the tax increase. The limit for counties is 1/10<sup>th</sup> percent, but the funds must be shared proportionately with the cities<sup>16</sup> within the county based on population.
  4. Mental Health Sales Tax RCW 82.14.460- Counties (and some cities) may impose a 1/10<sup>th</sup> percent sales tax increase by majority vote for the purpose of expanding treatment for mental health and substance abuse treatment and therapeutic courts. SB 5696 recently passed the Senate unanimously and would allow these funds to be used for new construction of facilities for these purposes.
  5. Recently enacted ESHB 2015/ESB 5775 Councilmanic Public Safety Sales Tax- The Legislature recently enacted authority for additional local sales tax collections of up to 1/10<sup>th</sup> percent for public safety purposes if that county participates in the proposed local law enforcement hiring grants from the Criminal Justice Training Center. The funds are limited to criminal justice purposes, which is defined broadly and specifically mentions jail diversion and re-entry purposes. Although this fund is largely intended for hiring additional law enforcement officers, it may be spent more broadly, and it could likely serve as a source of local match for this proposal and could be used to support increased compensation for corrections officers. It does not appear to be intended for facility remodeling or construction costs, but the language doesn't appear to expressly preclude that use.
- B. The general property tax increase rate for local jurisdictions is capped at one percent per year unless voters approve a higher increase under the authority of RCW 84.55.050. If a county doesn't raise the full one percent in any year, it may bank that capacity for increasing it in a future year. A majority vote during a general county election can increase the tax rate on assessed real estate value for up to nine years for a specified purpose like jail construction, but the increase must still comply with the limit on overall limits of all property taxes combined not exceeding \$10 of property tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value in a complex formula (beyond the scope of this proposal).

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<sup>16</sup> If such a measure was crafted narrowly towards jail purposes, it is possible that the funds awarded to the cities could be recouped as charges back to the cities for building/remodeling jail and recidivism reduction facilities, especially if accompanied by interlocal agreements.

Conclusion: This proposal outlined above is an opt-in program for counties to solve long neglected local jail infrastructure challenges with the advantage of lower financing and possible granting through loan forgiveness of construction funding. It still holds counties accountable for locally funding a significant portion of the cost of improvements (land, feasibility and design) and incentivizes counties to choose evidence-based programs that will increase safety and reduce crime in their communities while reclaiming the lives of community members who have engaged in criminal behavior<sup>17</sup>. Most importantly, this proposal may bridge the legislative standoff between those who want to increase reliance on jails and those that want to decrease reliance by providing safer and more humane structures paired with proven rehabilitative programming.

Other Complimentary Policy that Supports this Proposal: The following connected proposals aren't required for the above proposal to be implemented but would likely increase its effectiveness and are offered as an addendum.

- A. Require state and federal authorities to pay the actual per day costs for the incarcerated people under their jurisdictions housed in county jails, including a proportional contribution to regular maintenance and long-term capital investment. Currently, federal and state agencies typically pay less than the actual operational cost for utilizing county jail space to incarcerate individuals under their jurisdiction. Enacting a state law that requires full payment would strengthen the bargaining position of counties when they negotiate these contracts, and the Washington Department of Corrections supports this change.
- B. Require local jurisdictions to establish a long-term jail facility capital investment fund and deposit a minimum amount into that fund for each overnight spent in their jail. This would be paid by both the county hosting the jail facility and other in-county or out-of-county jurisdictions that direct individuals to be held in that facility. By requiring all jail facilities to fund their future repairs and replacement proportional to usage, Washington can likely either avoid or minimize the challenge of delayed infrastructure repairs that it currently faces, and jurisdictions would pay the actual costs of the criminal justice policies they implement.
- C. Enact legislation that prohibits charging incarcerated individuals the cost of communicating by phone or approved electronic devices with treatment providers, family members and other support team members for a reasonable amount of time each week.
- D. Adopt either advisory or required state-wide jail standards that will protect the health and welfare of jail employees and those who are detained. Like the proposal above, voluntary compliance could be paired with state funding for early adopters.
- E. Continue to support the adoption and extension of the Medicaid Transformation Waiver for medical, mental/behavioral health and substance

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<sup>17</sup> Any loan/loan forgiveness program assumes that the overseeing agency will hold counties accountable to the programmatic terms of the loan and any forgiveness of loan payments granted.

abuse care in county jails during the first ninety days of incarceration and during re-entry. The implementation of the waiver is ongoing across the state, but it has the potential to provide substantial financial resources for housing, substance abuse treatment, medical care and employment support to go along with robust re-entry planning, which would likely reduce recidivism, and the carousel effect of briefly incarcerating property crime suspects only to have them return to the jail on new charges.

- F. Implement state revenue sharing for counties that choose to rehabilitate locally non-violent felons instead of prison. This Accelerated Rehabilitation and Community Safety (“ARCS<sup>18</sup>”) initiative would provide 50 percent of the cost of housing a convicted person in a state prison to the local jurisdiction that rehabilitates and supervises the person locally in a therapeutic court. This would have a net positive fiscal impact for both the State and the participating county; and it could be utilized as the county’s funding of local recidivism programs that would result in forgiveness of their facility construction loans.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

- Support (10)
- Need Further Discussion (2)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (0)

#### **Proposal 2: Jail Capital Construction and Improvement Fund**

Establish a Washington Jail Capital Construction and Improvement Fund

Objective: To create a dedicated, ongoing appropriated state fund (separate from the General Fund) to support the construction, renovation, and modernization of local jails across Washington State.

Allow funding from:

- Legislative appropriations
- Local county matching funds or contributions
- Fines, fees, or bond proceeds ([modeled after Oregon SB 5506 and ORS 1.188](#))
- Enable counties receiving fund support to implement a nominal fine surcharge (e.g., \$5) to contribute to facility maintenance and debt service. [ORS 137.143 \(All monetary obligations constitute single obligation on part of convicted person\)](#)

Use the funds for:

- Structural upgrades
- Safety, environmental, and accessibility improvements
- Technological modernization (e.g., surveillance, HVAC, booking systems)
- Bond and administrative costs

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<sup>18</sup> ARCS has previously been proposed to the Legislature and is currently being studied by the judiciary but has not yet gathered sufficient momentum to get a vote. Copies of the ARCS proposal are available on request.

### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

- Support (5)
- Need Further Discussion (6)
- Opposed (1)
- Abstain (0)

### **Proposal 3a: Identifying Which Jails to Prioritize and Fund Improvements**

Background: The Task Force was provided with the following documents prepared by WSIPP:

- the WSIPP Report.
- A worksheet titled “250218\_JJFS\_FacilityCondition” (the Worksheet) which contains an extract of survey data from the Study. (see [Appendix F](#))

The WSIPP Report: WSIPP collected and analyzed survey data from individuals in leadership positions at jails and juvenile detention centers (JDC). WSIPP survey questions included the physical condition of facilities. WSIPP collected survey data from 56 jails and JDCs operating 64 facilities, which represented a 100 percent survey response rate.

The survey asked respondents to rate eight features of each facility based on their physical condition and functionality, including structural elements, systems and fixtures, furniture and equipment, and individual assessments for five internal systems. Each question used a 5-point quality scale, and WSIPP assigned numeric values to response options so that higher scores corresponded to higher quality ratings: Terrible (0), Bad (1), Okay (2), Good (3), and Excellent (4).

The Worksheet: The Worksheet identifies those facilities that received a Terrible rating for any rated feature:

- a. Structural elements (three facilities received a Terrible rating)
- b. Systems and fixtures (seven facilities received a Terrible rating)
- c. Furniture and equipment (six facilities received a Terrible rating)
- d. Fire safety system (two facilities received a Terrible rating)
- e. Security system (three facilities received a Terrible rating)
- f. Plumbing system (nine facilities received a Terrible rating)
- g. Electrical system (one facility received a Terrible rating)
- h. Mechanical system (five facilities received a Terrible rating)

The Worksheet also identifies six facilities that received an overall quality rating between Terrible (0) and Bad (1). Based on these two sources of information provided, the Task Force should *initially* identify, for prioritization, those six facilities that received an overall quality rating between Terrible (0) and Bad (1) needing facility upgrades.

- a. Spokane County Detention Services – Downtown Jail (1 of 2): 0.13

- b. Asotin County Jail: 0.50
- c. Spokane County Detention Services – Downtown Jail (2 of 2): 0.88
- d. Grays Harbor County Jail: 0.88
- e. Stevens County Jail: 0.88
- f. Pacific County Jail: 0.88

Those facilities that received overall quality ratings between ‘terrible’ and ‘bad’ should be given immediate scrutiny, including possible corrective action plans and/or potential closure (or possible regionalization), before prioritizing funding plans. Alternatively, the Task Force should identify all facilities that received a Terrible rating in any rated feature needing upgrades.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

- Support (4)
- Need Further Discussion (4)
- Opposed (4)
- Abstain (0)

#### **Important Note:**

There is a high level of concern among the Task Force members, that the survey information is self-reported and therefore not very reliable. As a result, while the above six facilities could be selected as an initial focus for funding, there is significant hesitation around such action. Ultimately, there is little support for this proposal at the current time as more discussion is needed to identify which jails should be prioritized. Many who did vote in support did so under a “something is better than nothing” mentality. Connected to these concerns, many Task Force members worry about whether the representatives on this Task Force are the best people to evaluate which jails should be prioritized. Conversation [3b](#) and [3c](#) give more context to these concerns.

#### **Proposal 3b: Prioritize State Funding for Infrastructure/Safety and Health/Hygiene Needs**

The Task Force proposes the development of a process to allocate state funding to prioritize basic safety and hygiene needs (e.g., plumbing, electrical, fire safety systems) but would leave the specific decisions on ranking each county’s needs to the proposed process of funding county proposals that align with other noted in [proposal 1](#) of this report. The Task Force largely agreed that the age of the facility should not be the sole determining factor when identifying facilities. Many Task Force members advocated that infrastructure needs focus should be based on safety and hygiene and not funding new beds. Other investments in diversion and re-entry, along with in-jail supports around physical and behavioral health assistance should be prioritized before expanding beds. Jails should only be used if community-based options aren’t appropriate.

Regionalization could be considered for rural counties that plan or need to close jails. A regional jail should not create additional beds than what was available prior to building a new facility. Regional jail concepts should carefully consider transportation issues –

dedicated transportation staff (to avoid displacing police, sheriffs or correctional officers on shifts) could be based on similar Department of Corrections models used for prisons, including dropping people off at specific locations upon release. Those with lived carceral experience shared their frustration and trauma with drop-offs at bus stations, with no money – or worse. The state could create regional jail authorities (RCW 70.48.095) to address jail ownership issues (like SCORE in south King County). Finally, regionalization could complicate attendance at court hearings. Virtual court attendance or use of local facilities could be permitted in those smaller communities impacted by regionalization.

Counties that have developed or are developing crime prevention programs could be eligible for additional funding incentives, and/or infrastructure funding prioritization.

The Task Force frankly did not have access to either the technical resources or external subject matter experts and so were unable to directly engage in any process to rank the infrastructure needs by county. The Task Force believes this exercise is valuable, but outside the scope of this group’s capacity.

Based on the diversity of communities around the state where the facilities are located, the Task Force proposes blending the prior proposed funding proposal (proposal 1) with a determination model like the [Ohio Legislative model](#) for fund allocation. The Ohio Legislative model “required the Ohio Department of Taxation to rank counties using a formula that includes property tax values and an estimate of the gross amount of taxable retail sales for the current fiscal year, combined with counties’ need for the project. The legislation also required the selected counties to pay a portion of their total jail construction costs based on those rankings. All funding is administrated through the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction’s Bureau of Adult Detention.”<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, the Task Force proposes that rural jails be given infrastructure funding priority consideration over those located in the Central Puget Sound.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

Support (9)

Need Further Discussion (3)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (0)

#### **Proposal 3c: Standardize Jail Infrastructure Assessments**

Fund a statewide assessment initiative to evaluate the physical condition, safety, compliance, and capacity of all local jail facilities. Develop a grading rubric or jail condition index to prioritize funding. This would augment the WSIPP survey data to help with funding prioritization, oversight and compliance, as well as help jail leadership develop process improvements. The state could provide safe harbor protection for jails with substandard assessment results for a reasonable amount of time – for example, if an assessment is completed once every three years, the state could assume responsibility for deficiencies

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<sup>19</sup> <https://governor.ohio.gov/media/news-and-media/governor-dewine-announces-funding-for-jail-renovation-projects>



until the stated remediation period expires. Safe harbor would not be provided in cases lacking good intent or effort.

The following improvements have been considered or implemented in various jails around the state:

- More program rooms that are specific to the services being offered. For example, a single room is used for a law library, classroom, staff meeting room, telemedicine, video court etc.
- Private area to screen and assess incoming people to the jail.
- Break room for staff that removes them completely from the jail environment, not just removed from the middle of operations, but also has a different feel to the space.
- Specialized training for officers that survives budget shortfall cuts.
- Office space for jail personnel to have private access to a computer to document, stay caught up on emails, review policies, online training etc.

The following possible investments should also be considered, after prioritizing safety and health/hygiene needs:

- Cell: A minimum square footage per individual (e.g. 55 sq. ft/person); private toilet; desk; bed; bedding (sheets/blanket); ADA compliant
- Centralized AC/heater (also health concern)
- Intake area: Including holding unit, law enforcement screening, fingerprinting/picture, behavioral health screening
- Health care: Including physical services offices, behavioral health offices, discharge planning office
- Meeting room: for attorney/client meetings, sober support meetings and religious meetings
- Visiting areas: Including phone, video, in person
- Exercise area / outdoors area
- Kitchen
- Laundry
- Library

Facilities should focus on aesthetics, including bright and light surroundings. Focus on healing rather than institutionalizing. Explore alternatives to traditional infrastructure, including:

- Invest in community-based and non-detention infrastructure, including:
  - Crisis stabilization centers
  - Sobering and detox facilities
  - Mobile behavioral health teams
- Expand telehealth access and virtual courtrooms for smaller or remote jails.

### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

Support (10)

Need Further Discussion (2)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (0)

### ***Important Notes:***

In the remaining time the Task Force has left, the members will work to combine proposals 3a-3c and work towards building a more solidified and supported recommendation. During conversations had on June 13, 2025, it was additionally noted that the WSIPP report and other potential data sources that maybe used are static with jails potentially experiencing new infrastructural challenges and political shifts during the time it takes to collect, report, and utilize data. For example, the WSIPP data was collected in 2023, reported on in 2024, and is now being considered as an evaluative tool in 2025. However, even as these considerations are made, time continues to pass, and any potential proposals are supported by two and a half to three-year-old data. A lot can change in two to three years as currently experienced with federal funding. The Task Force is concerned that using static data like that in the WSIPP Report will result in inequitable decisions. Therefore, the Task Force will continue to explore potential options for making funding decisions that uses data that is more adaptable and less static.

## **Correctional Officer/Staff Needs**

Recruiting and retention rates for correctional officers and jail staff vary across locales. The Task Force heard from few jurisdictions that retention was less of a problem than other areas, as correctional officer work was considered a ‘good job’ locally. More often, the issues around recruiting and retention were far more challenging. Pay and benefits competition between jails and law enforcement, training limitations and other factors are common. Everyone agreed that working in a jail environment is very stressful and difficult work and often leads to staff trauma and serious aftereffects.

There are positive stories about jail leadership attempting to mitigate some of these issues by adapting and modifying behavioral and operational practices – from training correctional officers to develop more positive, respectful and empathetic relationships with those serving time (which result in improved outcomes for those incarcerated), to modifying work schedules to allow for extended weekends and other staggering of duties to increase staff equity. For example, Yakima dedicates shifts to teams composed of varying levels of seniority. New staff do not always receive the weekend or night shifts. Teams work twelve-hour shifts on a two-two-three cycle that changes between day and night shifts every few cycles. Yakima has found this model to be fairer and keeps newer correctional officers motivated.

Many correctional officers don’t see corrections as a career path. Police and sheriff’s offices often pay more, signing bonuses and have more lucrative retirement benefits.

Recruits often start their careers in jails and quickly leave after a short time to move into police and deputy roles.

#### Proposal 4: Correctional Officer Retirement

Correctional employees face unique health risks, especially when retiring at age 65, due to years of exposure to high-stress environments that can lead to chronic conditions like hypertension, heart disease, and musculoskeletal issues. Shift work and irregular schedules may contribute to sleep disorders and metabolic problems. Prolonged exposure to trauma and high stress can increase the risk of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Studies suggest that correctional officers may experience “accelerated aging” due to the cumulative effects of stress, poor diet, and limited access to healthcare during their career. Earlier retirement can reduce exposure to the physical and mental health toll of correctional work, allowing retirees to prioritize their health and well-being. Addressing these factors can help incentivize employees to remain in the profession and help sustain the jail workforce.

Correctional officers in Washington State jails are part of the Public Safety Employee’s Retirement System (PSERS), which is specifically designed for public safety employees. Employees contribute 6.73 percent of their salary, which calculates an employee's monthly pension at 2 percent x years of service x Average Final Compensation (AFC). Full retirement benefits are available at age 65 with five years of service or at age 53 with twenty years of service. In comparison, Washington State police officers are part of the Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters’ Retirement System (LEOFF). This is a lifetime pension plan funded by contributions from employees, employers, and the state. Employees contribute 8.53 percent of their salary, which is calculated at 2 percent x years of service – Final Average Salary (FAS). FAS is the average of the highest 60 consecutive months of service. Full benefits are eligible at age 53 with at least five years of service or at any age with twenty years of service.

Legislative support to transition correctional officers to the LEOFF retirement system would benefit officers retiring earlier after completing twenty years of service. Consider allowing corrections officers to join the same retirement system as law enforcement so that there is less incentive to jump from working at a jail to a local police force or sheriff’s department.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

- Support (11)
- Need Further Discussion (0)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (2)

#### Proposal 5: Staffing Model, Recruitment, and Retention for Correctional Staff

##### *Staffing Model Proposal*

The Task Force could propose conducting a comprehensive staffing analysis to determine an optimal staffing model, including accounting for staff on leave or training. The current

standard of using staff-to-incarcerated ratios is based on the current facility population and does not account for population increase or the need for specialized resources. Ideally, staffing models should be based on operational capacity and account for relief staffing to accommodate vacations, sick leave, and training. The establishment of this model could include appropriate staffing to meet medical and behavioral health treatment and counseling. Staffing should be sufficient to ensure 24/7 care in a 365-day operation.

#### *Recruitment and Retention Committee*

A robust recruitment and retention committee in each jail is key to improving staff shortages. Membership could be a diverse representation of the workforce, including representatives from human resources, management, and staff to consider varied perspectives and expertise, as well as developing metrics and feedback to identify areas for improvement and measure initiative success. Providing competitive salaries and benefits to retain staff is an obvious and recurring need, as well as consideration of bonuses for long-term service or exceptional performance.

While the corrections field has limited professional development opportunities, creating opportunities for training, certifications, and career development are key retention tools. Addressing issues like overcrowding and outdated facilities are important workplace factors, as well as enhancing safety measures and providing modern equipment and technology. Support of employees could include implementation of programs to recognize and reward contributions.

Exploring programs to support staff with mental health services and stress management increases the overall health of employees and validates their value. Incorporating a flexible schedule for employees or shift options to accommodate personal needs fosters a sense of belonging. Peer supports, mental health days, and telehealth options could help build a better support structure to retain staff. Identifying team-building activities and open communication demonstrates value and comradery. These strategies require commitment from leadership and collaboration with staff to ensure needs are met. All of these and the following proposed trainings, supports and relational improvements between staff and those incarcerated will help reach the goal of reducing recidivism, as well as the need for jails over the longer-term. SMART health supports whole person well-being including stress management, resiliency and adapting to change.

Other strategies that have been considered, or may be in process in some counties, and worth further exploration statewide:

#### *Retention strategies*

- Use funds slated for vacant FTEs to provide raises for existing personnel.
- Allow different work shifts, including 12-hour shifts, 4-10s, 9-8's or rotating shifts.
- Allow staff to trade shifts as needed.
- Provide a break room for staff outside of the jail. Break time needs to remove employees from jail duties.
- Create incident debriefing, Critical Incident Stress Management teams, offering administrative time off following a critical incident, and routine staff check ins.

- Provide a complete fitness facility, shooting range, or gym membership to a local fitness club.
- Start a wellness program.
- Offer continual training to enhance professional development.
- Conduct cultural audits in jails.
- Create a clear facility Vision, Mission and Values.

#### *Recruitment Strategies*

- Offer hiring bonuses, or bonuses based on milestones. (3 months, one year, or 5 years). Several facilities are currently paying \$3000 to \$5000.
- Provide hiring bonuses to specialty trained staff, or mental health staff.
- Award staff bonuses for referrals.
- Allow different work shifts, including 12-hour shifts, 4-10s, 9-8's or rotating shifts.
- Create positions within existing personnel that include a part time focus on hiring and onboarding to communicate hiring practices and position descriptions.
- Identify ways to reduce the retirement age for correctional officers

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

Support (10)  
Need Further Discussion (0)  
Opposed (0)  
Abstain (3)

#### **Proposal 6: Legislative Support for Expanding Opportunities for Formally Incarcerated Individuals**

This is primarily a local problem and could require counties to increase pay and benefits proportional to the degree that they adopt policies that emphasize rehabilitation over incarceration. The State could support counties by considering the benefits of hiring previously incarcerated people – for correctional officer duties, other staff and for peer supports.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

Support (4)  
Need Further Discussion (5)  
Opposed (1)  
Abstain (3)

#### **Proposal 7: Training - Create a State-to-County Correctional Officer Bridge Certification Program**

The objective of this proposal is to eliminate barriers between state and county/city correctional officer certification systems, thereby improving workforce mobility and recruitment.

The Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) does not train its corrections officers at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC) and are not certified under the state. City and county correctional officers became certified under the state in July

2021. The WSCJTC has an equivalency training program to allow lateral transfers of correctional officers; however, after the adoption of certification in 2021, DOC officers are often no longer eligible if their hire date was after July 1, 2021.

The WSCJTC reviews all lateral candidate training for both in-state and out-of-state applicants. Those eligible for certification under the equivalency academy training program attend a 2-week academy at the WSCJTC to receive certification status.

To help bridge the gap between the state and local correctional agencies, the Department of Corrections should:

- Work with the WSCJTC to develop a curriculum that is equivalent to programs offered at the WSCJTC.
- Adopt WSCJTC requirements for certification, allowing a more direct transfer of officers to local agencies.
- Pursue bringing the Department of Corrections training academy back to the WSCJTC
- Offer incentives or stipends to counties that adopt the bridge program to address workforce shortages.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

Support (7)

Need Further Discussion (3)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (3)

#### **Proposal 8: Public University Collaboration**

Partnerships between public universities and correctional facilities have been established to address recruitment needs and enhance educational opportunities. Universities partner with jails to offer internships for criminal justice or social work students. These internships provide hands-on experience in correctional settings, which can lead to recruitment opportunities for the facility<sup>20</sup>. Public universities and jails collaborate on research projects to improve correctional practices and policies. These programs can create recruitment pipelines by working with jails to encourage graduates to consider careers in corrections through job fairs, workshops, and informal sessions. Partnerships with higher education could help to bring educated young people back into their smaller communities.

Some correctional facilities and law enforcement agencies offer student loan forgiveness or assistance programs to attract and retain staff. Public Service Loan Forgiveness identifies employees working in government-run correctional facilities; if qualified, federal student loans may be forgiven after 120 qualifying payments while working in public service<sup>21</sup>. Some states have loan repayment assistance programs for law enforcement personnel, which may include correctional staff, while some agencies provide direct

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<sup>20</sup> Rand Corporation – What corrections officials need to know to partner with colleges to implement college programs in prison.

<sup>21</sup> Student loan planner – 4 Law Enforcement student loan forgiveness programs to know about

student loan repayment assistance as part of their benefits package. This was viewed by the Task Force as an additional means of increasing correctional officer retention.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

- Support (7)
- Need Further Discussion (2)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (4)

#### **Proposal 9: Collaboration - Establish a Jail Innovation and Best Practices Hub**

Creation of a statewide technical assistance center would help spread evidence-based practices; provide training and consulting to jail administrators; pilot new technologies and facility designs, and partner with universities/colleges and criminal justice organizations. The Task Force recognized this as a means of getting to statewide standards that could be implemented.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

- Support (8)
- Need Further Discussion (4)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (1)

## **Physical and Behavioral Health**

Physical, mental health and substance use disorder needs continue to be a substantive issue impacting jail incarceration. Most people interviewed during the situation assessments and engaged in Task Force meetings understand that jails and their staff were never meant to be specialized health care providers, but it's clear that these needs have become increasingly prevalent in carceral settings regardless.

Jails now spend substantive amounts of time and energy on health issues. Some leaders explain that jails have become clinical settings that were never designed to function this way. Correctional staff need up-to-date training for crisis identification, and they need to get that training often. Different drugs over time have shifted the need for more specialized training and knowledge.

Availability of health and social services to support diversion and pre-trial programs, in-jail services, and post-incarceration services vary tremendously between locales, counties and regions. Some jails have long-standing contractual relationships with community providers and specialists, as those services are available. No one area seems to have a proportionally satisfactory number of qualified providers and practitioners. If community supports and pre-trial diversion programs are unavailable to keep those who "don't belong in jails" out, then jails become default spaces to send individuals who need services, leading to the continual need for jails to adapt and innovate to intervene, detox, stabilize and treat. These services often feel like unfunded mandates. While the WSIPP Report indicates that jail populations continue to have increased physical and behavioral health

needs, jails often lack appropriate resources to deal with Fentanyl and other addictions needs. Mental health and other co-morbidities create challenging and intensive response and support needs. No jails or their respective communities are the same, but all jails find themselves dealing with endemic physical and behavioral health issues.

Some jails have 24/7 medical support services (staffed or contracted). That support is generally only provided by nurses after hours. Some have mental health teams that operate from Monday through Friday. Smaller and/or remote jails find themselves in middle-of-the-night situations with inadequate staffing. Other remote jails have no medical or behavioral health support and need to transfer people to hospitals or other community health centers.

Jails' physical design and layout is one factor that significantly impacts the success or failure of health outcomes even when services are available. One panelist presenter noted that legislators often misunderstand what it takes to actually fund and implement the jail programs they ask for. For example, one central Washington jail spends \$4 million on their medical contract each year, with 30 percent increases since their last negotiation period. Sicker individuals in jails make it difficult to efficiently complete other operations, such as bookings. In addition, jail commanders worry about litigation and liability. It's difficult to find companies that will insure jails against liability claims.

#### [Proposal 10: Expanding/Leveraging Medicaid Waiver Programs](#)

The Task Force supports rapid adoption of the Medicaid Transformation Waiver and proposes additional technical assistance be provided with more proactive outreach to counties along with more incentives for early adopters. Shifting physical and behavioral health costs to Medicaid will mitigate counties' costs at a relatively low cost to the state's budget, given the federal subsidies. Providing these services will support continuity of care upon release and should substantially decrease future crime and related costs based on the best evidence to date, which will reduce the need for future state and local spending on jails.

The Task Force could propose early discharge planning, beginning with standardized physical and behavioral health assessments, to be completed within 72 hours of booking (Note: subsequent [Re-Entry](#) conversation section). Urgent behavioral issues should be assessed within 24 hours of booking. In other words, discharge planning should be part of very early protocols, to help plan for needs within jail, as well as for transfer to prison or community release. A unified records system would help provide continuity between navigators, providers, community partners and peer-led services. The HUB concept (health related social needs) is worth exploring.

#### [Task Force Voting Results:](#)

Out of 12 Votes

Support (10)

Need Further Discussion (1)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (1)



### Proposal 11: Uphold Medicaid Standards Regardless of Residency

Washington State should focus on providing full access to a Medicaid standard of care for all residents, including those in jails and prisons. The Medicaid Transformation Waiver can help pay for part of this but won't cover all people in jail. Many people in jail are at a low point in their lives and are in crises, including drug withdrawal, mental and physical health crises. A jail stay could be an opportunity to access quality healthcare, but instead the people with the greatest need get the least access to care.

Lack of access to behavioral health and medical care are substantial complaints of incarcerated people. Appropriate medications and management, physical health services (including dental, vision, durable medical equipment) are often lacking.

Counties bear the burden of paying for this care, and many of them opt to provide almost no care. Access to health care also can prevent re-arrest/incarceration. If the state shifts the cost of care to Medicaid, the counties could apply the savings to invest in infrastructure needs. Providing health care is a more palatable legislative option compared to funding new jails.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

- Support (8)
- Need Further Discussion (1)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (3)

### Proposal 12: Make Medicaid Services under the Medicaid Transformation Waiver Permanent

This proposal would keep intact the Medicaid pre-release services coverage that individuals receive while incarcerated. These pre-release services include case management, SUD treatment, recovery support, and treatment for targeted infectious diseases.

In addition to pre-release services, Medicaid could continue funding physical and behavioral healthcare during incarceration and up to the 90-day provision that is laid out in the existing waiver, with the potential to expand to entire lengths of stay. Active Medicaid enrollment while incarcerated will also allow people to remain on permanent supportive housing waitlists, apply for vouchers and other services (where non-active Medicaid coverage would be a disqualifier). Funding these sources would allow for investment in other areas such as staffing, upgrades, maintenance, or other initiatives.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

- Support (7)
- Need Further Discussion (3)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (2)

### **Important Note:**

One June 13, 2025, the Task Force discussed concerns related to the 1115 Waiver as the current federal landscape is likely to result in the waiver not being renewed in the upcoming years. With this recognized, the Task Force maintained their varied levels of support for proposal related to the 1115 Waiver in hopes that sometime in the future the program will be taken back up or similar federal structures will be implemented.

### **Proposal 13: Expand Telehealth in Jails**

Expand telehealth to increase provider access for physical and behavioral health needs (including evidence-based mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatments), to augment in-person services with clinicians, physicians, peer support specialists, legal counselors and others. Telehealth can help address space constraints and outside providers who lack jail clearance. In addition, telehealth can expand the number of services that can be provided simultaneously -this may be especially important for Medicaid billing purposes, as all providers may not be able to provide services in person. The goal is to expand access to licensed community-based providers, mitigate provider shortages, reduce in-jail behavioral incidents, and improve post-release outcomes.

#### **Background and Need:**

- Over 60% of people in jail have a mental health disorder, and 65%+ meet criteria for a substance use disorder.<sup>22</sup>
- Most jails face severe shortages of on-site behavioral health providers, particularly in rural or high-turnover regions.
- Lack of timely treatment leads to higher rates of suicide, violence, and recidivism.

#### **Proposal Overview:**

Implement a hybrid virtual treatment model that includes:

- Live telehealth sessions with community-based providers
- Self-directed therapeutic modules accessible via tablets
- Private telehealth spaces for sensitive sessions (where tablets are not feasible)
- Post-release continuity of care planning with provider handoff

#### **Proposals:**

- a. Partner with Community-Based Treatment Providers<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2017). *Indicators of mental health problems reported by prisoners and jail inmates, 2011–12* (NCJ 250612). U.S. Department of Justice. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/indicators-mental-health-problems-reported-prisoners-and-jail-inmates-2011-12>

<sup>23</sup> Tele-behavioral health is as effective as in-person treatment in jails and improves access to culturally competent care

Zhong, S., Senior, M., Yu, R., Perry, A. E., Hawton, K., & Fazel, S. (2021). Psychological therapies for preventing self-harm in adults in correctional settings: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Medicine*, 51(14), 2321–2330. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S003329172000179>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). *Telebehavioral health care in correctional settings*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/telebehavioral-health-correctional-settings.pdf>

- Establish contracts with local licensed therapists, substance use disorder counselors, and Medication Assisted Treatment prescribers.
  - Schedule live video sessions via secure platforms integrated with jail-approved technology.
  - Ensure clinical coverage across all housing units through rotation and on-call models.
- b. Use Validated Screening for Targeted Care<sup>24</sup>
- Screen all individuals at intake using evidence-based tools (e.g., BJMHS, TCU Drug Screen).
  - Prioritize high-need individuals for telehealth engagement within first week of booking.
- c. Deploy Tablet-Based Therapy for Self-Directed Support<sup>25</sup>
- Upload on-demand community-based treatment, relapse prevention, and mindfulness programs.
  - Include secure messaging and scheduling for video sessions with providers.
  - Track engagement metrics through the tablet's learning management system.
- d. Create Post-Release Continuity Plans<sup>26</sup>
- Link participants with community providers prior to release for uninterrupted care.
  - Share clinical summaries and consented contact information to reduce care gaps.
  - Incorporate virtual aftercare meetings in reentry planning.

Anticipated outcomes include increased access to behavioral health, reduction in number of suicide attempts, less violence and disciplinary incidents, and lower recidivism and post-release overdoses.

Next steps could include:

- Stakeholder Review & Approval

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<sup>24</sup> Early identification leads to fewer suicide attempts and in-custody incidents.

Steadman, H. J., Osher, F. C., Robbins, P. C., Case, B., & Samuels, S. (2009). Prevalence of serious mental illness among jail inmates. *Psychiatric Services*, 60(6), 761–765. <https://doi.org/10.1176/ps.2009.60.6.761>

<sup>25</sup> Tablet use increases treatment engagement and helps build coping skills, especially among first-time and young inmates.

Miller, J., Renn, T., & Barnes, A. (2022). The potential of tablet-based programming to support mental health and rehabilitation in U.S. jails. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 28(1), 21–32. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jchc.2021.0017>

<sup>26</sup> Jail-based MAT programs with coordinated handoff post-release reduce opioid-related deaths by over 60 percent.

Green, T. C., Clarke, J., Brinkley-Rubinstein, L., Marshall, B. D. L., Alexander-Scott, N., Boss, R., & Rich, J. D. (2018). Postincarceration fatal overdoses after implementing medications for addiction treatment in a statewide correctional system. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 75(4), 405–407. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2017.4614>

RAND Corporation. (2018). *Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults*. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR266.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html)

- Technology Assessment & Vendor Selection
- Pilot Program Rollout (1–2 housing units in a few jails)
- Training for Jail Staff and Community Providers
- Evaluation and Outcome Tracking

Providing virtual behavioral health care through jail-based telehealth and tablets is a strategic, scalable solution to a longstanding care gap. It improves public health, enhances safety, and offers meaningful support to individuals with complex behavioral needs—while reducing reliance on punitive, ineffective responses.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

Support (6)

Need Further Discussion (4)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (2)

#### *Additional Discussion:*

Some Task Force members have expressed concerns about prioritizing telehealth over in-person services. This resulted in the suggestion that telehealth be one option available to jail populations along with in-person options (especially for rural communities with limited access to service providers) and allow individuals to choose what treatment works best for them. However, these are early conversations that will be explored further in the coming months.

#### **Proposal 14: Modernize Behavioral Health Treatment by Expanding Peer Support Services**

Background: Jails across Washington face a critical shortage of licensed behavioral health providers, leaving many incarcerated individuals without adequate access to mental health and/or substance use treatment. This proposal advocates to expand the peer support specialist model—leveraging individuals with a lived experience of incarceration, recovery, and/or successfully managing their mental health—to address the lack of adequate mental health and substance use treatment inside facilities. According to the evidence, this proposal will likely improve engagement and provide culturally responsive support during and after incarceration.

Recent Washington State legislation allows certified peer support specialists (CPSS) to be recognized as behavioral health providers and reimbursed through Medicaid for eligible services. Utilizing trained peers is an evidence-based, cost-effective, and scalable solution for jails looking to provide better, more effective behavioral health support.

Need:

- More than 60% of incarcerated people in jails have a mental illness, and 65%+ have an SUD.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> ibdm BJS, 2017

- Washington jails face a shortage of licensed behavioral health professionals, especially in rural and high-capacity facilities.
- Traditional provider models alone are insufficient to meet the behavioral health needs of the jail population.

#### Washington Legal Framework:

- Under Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1547 (2023), Washington law expanded the scope of practice for peer support specialists, recognizing them as behavioral health professionals.
- As of July 1, 2024, certified peer specialists may bill Medicaid under the supervision of licensed clinicians for a range of behavioral health services (RCW 71.24).
- The Washington Health Care Authority now maintains a registry of peer-certified providers qualified to deliver services in a variety of settings, including correctional environments.

#### Potential Proposals:

- Expand Current Behavioral health services to Include Certified Peer Support Specialists<sup>28</sup>  
Recruit CPSS professionals to work alongside existing mental health and SUD staff or contract with peer service providers in the community. In settings where licensed professionals are limited or unavailable, peers can:
  - Deliver individual and group support
  - Facilitate psychoeducation and relapse prevention groups
  - Provide motivational interviewing and recovery planning
- Take Steps to Ensure Successful Implementation and Fidelity  
Develop partnerships with peer certification programs (e.g., through community colleges or HCA-endorsed trainers) to recruit peers, including formerly incarcerated individuals who meet eligibility criteria.  
Ensure supervisors understand how to:
  - Integrate peers into treatment planning teams
  - Provide support so peers can successfully carry out their role
  - Maintain fidelity to evidence-based, rehabilitative models
- Use Peers to Support Crisis Intervention, Re-Entry and Continuity of Care<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Peer support is associated with higher engagement, lower rates of recidivism, and improved mental health outcomes in justice-involved populations.

Bassuk, E. L., Hanson, J., Greene, R. N., Richard, M., & Laudet, A. (2016). Peer-delivered recovery support services for addictions in the United States: A systematic review. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 63, 1–9.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2016.01.003>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). *Value of peers*.  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers>

<sup>29</sup> Peer-delivered reentry services reduce recidivism and support smoother transitions into community-based care. Peters, R. H., Wexler, H. K., & Lurigio, A. J. (2017). Co-occurring substance use and mental disorders in the criminal justice system: A new frontier of clinical practice and research. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 40(1), 3–8.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/prj0000255>

Washington State Health Care Authority. (2024). *Peer support program*. <https://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-supports/behavioral-health-recovery/peer-support>

Peers can:

- Help de-escalate behavioral health crises before they require use of force or solitary confinement (this is now being done inside DCYF facilities and in other states like Pennsylvania)
- Serve as reentry navigators, connecting individuals to housing, treatment, and employment supports
- Provide warm handoffs to community providers and peer networks post-release

d. Monitor Outcomes and Establish Metrics for Success<sup>30</sup>

Track measurable outcomes such as:

- Reduction in behavioral incidents and grievances
- Increased participation in SUD and mental health treatment
- Successful transitions to community care with reduced re-arrest rates

Conduct quarterly reviews and incorporate peer feedback to improve program design.

Anticipated outcomes include increased use of SUD/mental health services; fewer suicides; reduced violence and behavioral issues; better re-entry outcomes; reduced use of solitary confinement and restraints; smoother community transitions; reduced numbers of post-release overdoses, and lower recidivism.

Expanding the use of certified peer support specialists in jails offers a powerful and practical response to the behavioral health crisis facing incarcerated populations. With legislative and financial support in place, jails can now provide and expand effective, empathetic services and improve outcomes for individuals and communities in Washington.

*Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

Support (9)

Need Further Discussion (1)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (2)

## Diversion and Therapeutic Court

Diversion concepts are meant to keep the people who truly don't belong in jail out. Diversion can be interpreted in several ways, based on different system perspectives. Judges, prosecutors, and defenders can work together to divert people from jails who are deemed unsuited for incarceration. Additionally, [pre-trial release](#) (next section) and therapeutic courts (including drug courts, mental health courts) can be considered

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<sup>30</sup> Jail programs using peers report increased trust in staff, higher program completion rates, and decreased disciplinary infractions.

Reingle Gonzalez, J. M., & Boppre, B. L. (2020). The role of peer support in the treatment of incarcerated individuals with mental illness. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 59(6), 375–392.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2020.1772555>

another form of diversion. In this vein, the Task Force’s membership includes a treatment court judge in Thurston County, who shared their experience of building a layered program to help people avoid jail and reduce recidivism rates. Therapeutic courts are not the same as community courts. Programs in Thurston County and other jurisdictions have ‘boot-strapped’ programs and offer learned lessons and better practices – including nuance around supervised release program pros and cons, prosecutor/defense counsel partnerships and other important shared experience.

Other diversion programs rely on social and health service capacity in different communities and typically involve training for law enforcement and other first responders, social workers and non-profit organizations that coordinate to keep people out of jails. Communities often lack the resources and capacity to enact viable diversion programs, which may result in better support and outcomes, far less trauma and less expense than is the case with the current over reliance on jails as the point of first contact.

From a fiscal perspective, full funding of programs that include housing, physical/mental health and substance use disorder treatment, vocational training, education and other wrap-around services is less expensive than incarceration and resulting recidivism rates.

One panelist presenter noted that they would like to see a diversion hospital in the design for future facilities, as jails are often treated as ‘clinical’ facilities. Kitsap County has a crisis triage center for diversion, but people must be medically cleared prior to acceptance, forcing deputies to stay in the hospital until clearance is received – taking up valuable time, as hospitals become overwhelmed. He noted it is counterintuitive that diversion typically starts in a jail. This view aligns with a desire to see more robust state funding around needed community services to help assist in diversion practices that include diversion navigators and increased use of peer counselors. This can result in fewer incarcerated people, which will decrease the need for additional jail capacity and positively impact jail specialists and contracts, staffing complexities, and improved community safety.

#### Proposal 15: Expand Diversion and Therapeutic Court Programs

Expand diversion programs across Washington state to offer more options regionally, as well as offering varied levels of services.

- Our existing criminal justice system does not result in satisfactory outcomes that benefit the individual and the community. Expanding evidence-based diversion and therapeutic court programs across the state would create fiscal savings using community-based programs to alleviate trauma and costs associated with incarceration and reentry.
- Diversion agreements should be reached pre-filing, to allow defendants minimal interaction with the court system.
- Increasing these options and connecting people to social determinants of health services will reduce recidivism and give people better chances to reintegrate into their communities in meaningful and productive ways.
- Expanding these programs can lead to a reduction in future arrests or re-arrests by aligning people with appropriate community services and supports.

- Building a diversion infrastructure and therapeutic courts across Washington will provide more robust wrap-around services and varied levels of service needs.
- The counties and state should create periodic reviews of programs, including evaluation of disparities and outcomes.
- Local or regional programs should begin and grow based on their ‘fit’ with their jurisdictions’ capacity and measured results.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

Support (7)

Need Further Discussion (1)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (4)

#### **Proposal 16: Expand Prosecutorial Diversion Programs**

DSHS/Behavioral Health Administration/Office of Forensic Mental Health Services have three existing Prosecutorial Diversion Programs ([PDPs](#)) that provide a model for diversion program expansion. A DSHS analysis substantiates the effectiveness of these programs: [The Impact of Prosecutorial Diversion Programs on Behavioral Health Service Use and Criminal Justice System Involvement](#). Existing contracts for these programs in [King](#), [Spokane](#), and the [Tri-Cities](#) regions illustrate the cost-effectiveness of these programs, which all operate under a cost of \$1.5 million (far less than incarceration). These three existing programs serve ~200 people annually - removing them from more costly inpatient and other outpatient programs. Program expansion would generate further reduction in the strain on existing competency services while creating further cost savings. Such expansion could be tied to DSHS or include funding similar efforts with other related organizations

Currently, Pierce County and the Southwest region (Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat County) have expressed interest in standing up a prosecutorial diversion program through the Behavioral Health-Administrative Services Organizations. These two other programs, with one-time standup costs, will operate for less than \$2 million annually. The return on investment appears to be high, and hard to measure community outcomes now seem possible.

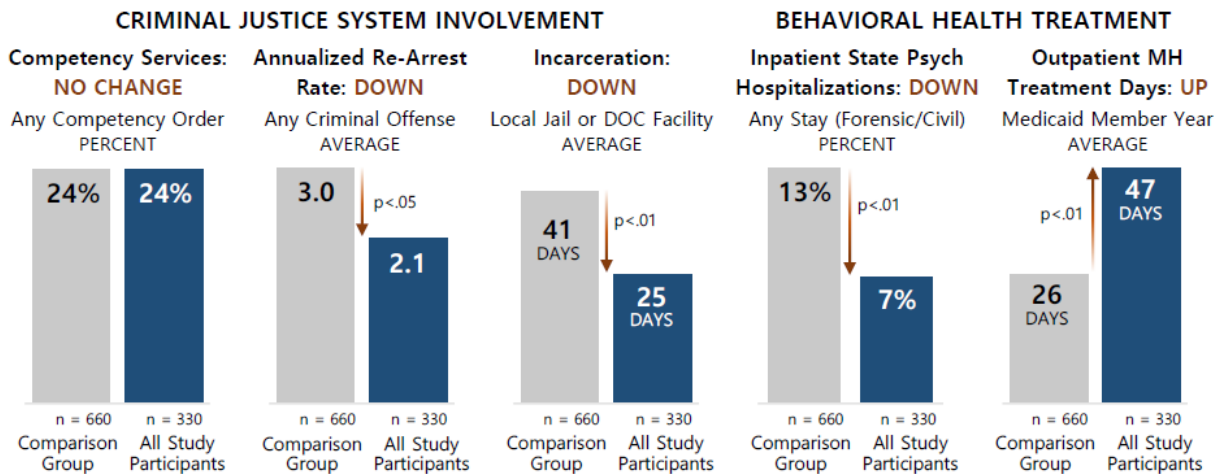
527 individuals served in the PDPs through FY 2021, 2022 and 2023. In FY 2024, 193 people were served by the 3 programs.

Excerpt from the study of the PDPs:



## Key Findings

Overall, prosecutorial diversion program study participants had significantly lower annualized re-arrest rates, fewer days of incarceration, fewer state psychiatric hospital stays, and more outpatient behavioral health treatment days than their matched comparison group peers. There was no measureable impact on the percentage of study participants receiving competency orders or the average number of orders for study participants. Among those with a history of competency orders, we found similar positive program impacts on behavioral health treatment, but not on criminal justice outcomes.



Colorado has addressed removing misdemeanor evaluation and restoration services and has created a new service model with the court at the center of their program. Colorado has implemented a [Competency Diversion Program](#) and [Bridges Wraparound Care Program](#), which eventually became its own state office. This has been successful due to legislative support, under a statewide initiative. This program is similar to [diversion navigators](#), with both statewide expansion, and engagement from court and community partners. Additionally, everyone is on a single docket, and there is a representative from each support facility in the court room.

Thurston County has a “First Look” program ([First Look Program](#)) that creates pathways for lower-level charges to be diverted through the prosecutor’s office after review ([Thurston County Diversion Program](#)). Every case is reviewed individually rather than a blanket set of criteria, and pre-trial services are offered.

In addition, diversion navigators connect those who are at risk of further engagement with the competency system with community services. This program also provides peer support services for up to 90 days post-release to provide additional support.

### Task Force Voting Results:

Out of 12 Votes

- Support (4)
- Need Further Discussion (4)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (4)

### Proposal 17: Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Participation Determination by Judicial Officer

Drug and mental health court participation of post filing of charges could be determined by the elected judicial officer, not the individual attorneys in a case. Current state law gives the deputy prosecutor veto power over participation which is leading to an under-utilization of existing therapeutic felony court slots and thus increased jail and prison costs. Recidivism for people coming out of prison is 70 percent, while people graduating from drug court is less than 20 percent. The unfilled slots caused by vetoes increase future crime rates. Pre-charging diversion is solely within the purview of prosecutors and other than encouraging them to consider it in appropriate cases.<sup>31</sup>

Prosecutors possess broad discretion on whether to allow a person to enter a diversion program and can veto a judge's decision to offer diversion or treatment court. Incentives could be developed to encourage prosecutors to offer more diversion programs, while maintaining the important principle of checks and balances. Increasing prosecutor accountability would help make these changes more transparent, as well as demonstrate the benefits of evidence-based outcomes and reduced costs.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

Support (7)

Need Further Discussion (2)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (3)

### Pre-trial Release

Pre-trial release allows the legal system the discretion to encourage out-of-custody services in lieu of jail time. These programs help ensure that some people accused of crimes can be released from custody before trial, while still meeting their legal obligations and minimizing community safety risk. These programs play a crucial role in the legal system, to ensure fairness and efficiency. The Task Force discussed the need for more alternatives to jail. Diversion programs include a range of options but are often dependent on community services capacity and sustainable funding.

Pre-trial release is dependent on release decisions, that are generally based on prosecutorial influence, and are made considering factors like the defendant's likelihood of appearing in court, as well as their potential risk to the community. Risk assessments are meant to evaluate these risks, including the likelihood of a defendant committing new offenses. Cash bail, electronic monitoring and other forms of supervision are some tools that may be employed to help reduce jail populations and address fairness. However, the Task Force was adamant that cash bail creates immense inequities in the system and showed very little support for such practices. Additionally, members highlighted inequity concerns in any system that puts a financial burden on the detained individual. Many

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<sup>31</sup> Further discussion is needed to address if and how laws would need to be changed to implement this proposal.

individuals cannot afford the costs without becoming financially unstable and having their own personal ‘public safety’ challenged. Washington state has specific legislation that can include work release, day monitoring, electronic monitoring and participation in sobriety programs – but those programs must be run by a county or city, or a private or public entity that agrees to supervise. In many communities, the infrastructure to support such programming is lacking. Each of these tools have positive potential and negative challenges that can be dependent on community capacity or may be criticized for creating discriminatory outcomes (e.g., income and the inability to post bail or pay for electronic monitoring).

Many pre-trial release options require consent from the detained individual under current case law because they have not yet been convicted, but if they are being held under bond that they cannot meet, these programs incentivize the detained individual to consent to the court’s conditions. The courts can provide alternatives to jail for pre-trial defendants, who would otherwise be held in incarceration. Pre-trial release options are currently the standard in our state – prosecutors must explain why a person should instead be held in jail.

Unfortunately, many locales don’t have the funded capacity to allow judges to offer effective pre-trial release programs. Pre-trial navigators could help connect defendants to existing community services and mitigate barriers to access.

#### Proposal 18: Pre-Trial Immunity Disclosure

The task force has generally acknowledged the significant and growing role of mental health and substance use disorders in the criminal legal system, particularly in jails, which often serve as the first point of contact. Many individuals enter jail during a period of acute instability—whether experiencing a mental health crisis, coming down from a high, or undergoing withdrawal. Any proposals adopted should address the barriers that prevent timely and effective treatment.

Recognizing the need for treatment, a pretrial defendant may offer to undergo voluntary treatment as a condition of release. Voluntary treatment may give a court some assurance that a defendant will address the underlying problem that led to an arrest, but under current law, courts have limited authority to order treatment at the pretrial stage. As recognized in *Butler v. Kato*, 137 Wn. App. 515 (2007), ordering an individual to undergo treatment may implicate the privilege against self-incrimination, since disclosures made during evaluation or treatment could relate to criminal liability. This would violate the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article I, Section 9, of the Washington Constitution.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> This proposal is specific to voluntary treatment. Involuntary treatment of a presumptively innocent defendant would violate due process. See *Butler* 137 Wn. Ap at 529. Such involuntary treatment is properly addressed through Washington’s Involuntary Treatment Act, RCW 71.05.230 et seq. As proposed here, the treatment would be included in a condition of release when proposed by a defendant, voluntarily. A court considering that voluntary treatment may then impose lower bail or no bail. But because the voluntary treatment would be a factor in ordering lower bail or no bail, a defendant’s failure to follow through would trigger a possible amendment of the conditions, either by adding bail or revoking release altogether, as provided in Criminal Rule 3.2(k).

To address this issue, the Task Force proposes a legislative fix that grants immunity for statements made during treatment. This immunity should be broad—covering both use and derivative use, and civil as well as criminal proceedings—to ensure that individuals face no legal repercussions from seeking help. Treatment providers would be authorized to share compliance and attendance only.<sup>33</sup> Failure to follow through with voluntary treatment could still be considered in evaluating or modifying release conditions.

Although such immunity may limit the ability of law enforcement and prosecutors to pursue certain offenses, it would not leave them worse off than if no treatment occurred at all. More importantly, it would enhance public safety by addressing the root causes of dangerous behavior. That some of the offenses potentially disclosed in treatment may be serious or even violent only underscores the urgency of intervention.

The legislature has already adopted similar immunity in other contexts in the interest of public safety. For example, under RCW 9A.41.801(9), when someone voluntarily surrenders a firearm, the act of surrender and any accompanying statements cannot be used against them. The logic is clear: securing the weapon is more important than pursuing a criminal case, no matter how compelling the evidence might be. That same logic applies here.

By facilitating voluntary treatment, we provide another pathway to enhance public safety—whether by supporting release conditions in lieu of bail or by improving in-custody treatment through existing programs like the Medicaid Transformation Waiver or any structural changes we propose. In either case, granting immunity helps build a healthier, safer system.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

Support (8)

Need Further Discussion (3)

Opposed (1)

Abstain (1)

#### **Proposal 19: Legislative Intervention for Pre-Trial Accountability**

The Legislature should either incentivize or require increased options for accountability programs that are less restrictive than incarceration for people who are in jail pre-trial and presumed innocent. Judges are willing to utilize day reporting, electronic home monitoring and other programs, but if counties don't operate them, or only provide to the few defendants who can afford to pay for them, they aren't utilized. People can be held accountable outside of jails pre-trial and maintain public safety, but only if evidence-based programs are funded and offered to people.

Unfortunately, the number one general indicator of future crime is the number of days someone is incarcerated. By safely allowing people to stay in their homes with their families and continue their employment/schooling/healthcare/counseling, future crime is reduced. This is likely a local issue, and the locality gets the benefit of reduced crime and

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<sup>33</sup> While these recommendations address treatment in the context of pretrial conditions only, further exploration may be necessary to explore broader immunity in other contexts of treatment.

lower jail costs, but the state could lead with incentives or requirements – by requiring counties to robustly fund services – for example, to provide pre-trial peer navigators to connect people to appropriate supports and to listen to program barriers that might be problematic and fixable.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

Support (8)

Need Further Discussion (3)

Opposed (0)

Abstain (2)

### Re-entry

The Task Force had substantive discussions about the need to improve re-entry processes for individuals approaching release into their communities. Done properly, the Task Force believes this could make the difference between unacceptably high rates of recidivism and genuinely successful and productive rehabilitation back into a person's community.

Successful re-entry includes preparation and education during incarceration, warm hand-offs to community-based services and transitional supports during and after jail discharge.

Re-entry programs help those who are incarcerated connect to the health and social services in the community upon release from jail. Successful re-entry reduces recidivism rates and helps people get back on their feet to become productive and self-supportive.

One panelist presenter expressed frustration that jails tend to be a revolving door in the criminal justice system as individuals frequently enter the system, are only housed in the jails, and do not get their needs met upon exiting. To address this challenge, Kitsap County Corrections implemented a re-entry program eight years ago and invited providers from the community to help provide services. There are now around twenty service providers cooperating in this re-entry program. Since implementation, the panelist reported that recidivism is down from 85 to 50 percent, suggesting that individuals being connected to services are less likely to return. Others are experimenting with opioid medication re-entry programs. This has also reduced recidivism; those who do return to jail are usually failing to appear in court, as opposed to committing new crimes.

#### Proposal 20: Intake Assessment and personalized 72-Hour Evaluation with Medicaid Transformation Waiver

This can best be addressed by implementation of the Medicaid Transformation Waiver described in previous proposals (proposal 4 and 5). If all pre-trial release options are exhausted, every person admitted to the jail for longer than 72 hours would get a 'pre-plan re-entry' – a full evaluation of their needs to avoid future criminal behavior and a plan would be created for their eventual re-entry and rehabilitation- including housing, employment, education, behavioral health treatment, and medical treatment.

In addition, generic re-entry plan options could be applied based on set criteria (not person-specific). These generic plan options, coupled with the personalized assessment

after 72 hours, could be combined to develop a longer plan to make pre-trial release more likely. People with short-term releases will get connected to services more effectively. This program is being implemented as of July 1, 2025, by the Health Care Authority. Counties and jails need to be educated and aware of this program's 'opt-in' status to participate.

For those still in jail after 90 days, their participation could be suspended and can resume once they get a firm release date or are released. For individuals who are likely to serve a prison sentence, their re-entry program could be re-instated when they are within 90 days of their presumptive release. Literally thousands of troubled community members would get comprehensive re-assessments, success planning and ongoing services that would reduce their likelihood of committing new crimes.

Re-assessments could also be done at specific intervals, but certainly again within two weeks of release. No person should be released from jail based on an original assessment. Many with lived experience relayed their conditions when entering jail, which can include confusion, intoxication, trauma and other circumstances that impact their assessment at that early stage.

Finally, formerly incarcerated peers should be included at every state of re-entry – planning and navigation during jail stays and post-incarceration. Peers can use assessments to help navigate and connect people to services and resources – and can bill Medicaid for some services. People in jail are not always comfortable disclosing the barriers to their needs. Peers have demonstrated success in communicating more effectively, based on their experience and credibility. Peer services are often low-cost investments that lead to large program cost savings.

The Medicaid Transformation Waiver/renewal could present these options to federal CMS for approval and funding: Re-Entry pre-planning, case management functions, release planning and expediting, managed care organization support and requirements, peer supports and other services and their related cost reimbursement.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 13 Votes

- Support (9)
- Need Further Discussion (1)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (3)

## Other Task Force

### Proposal 21: Future Work

Members propose sustaining this Task Force's momentum and capacity for recommendation refinement, long-term planning and reform development. Members propose:

- Allocation of resources for:
  - Additional policy research
  - Community and stakeholder engagement
  - Tribal government collaboration

- Production of statewide jail condition assessments and recommendations
- Regular reporting to the legislature and Governor’s office on progress and recommendations

In addition, Task Force members acknowledged the lack of standardized jail data, which impedes the development of evidence-based policy. Members propose improving jail data collection and transparency, including mandating uniform data reporting standards for all local jails, including at least:

- Population trends
- Staffing levels
- Facility capacity
- Medical and behavioral health service usage

The Task Force proposes the development of a statewide jail data dashboard to improve transparency and planning functions.

#### *Task Force Voting Results:*

Out of 12 Votes

Support (10)

Need Further Discussion (0)

Opposed (1)

Abstain (1)

## Conclusion

This progress report provides an update of the Jail Modernization Task Force’s work from April 2024 through June 2025. Although the voting indicates where there is some significant support for various proposals brought forth by individual Task Force members, further discussion is needed across the board before action can be taken. In the coming months, the Task Force will continue to meet monthly to further refine these proposals in hopes of moving some to more solidified recommendations for the forthcoming December 2025 Final Report. As funding for the Task Force continues beyond the final report (through June 2026), the Facilitation Team will actively use this time to disseminate the Task Force’s recommendations.



## Appendix A: Jail Modernization Task Force Members

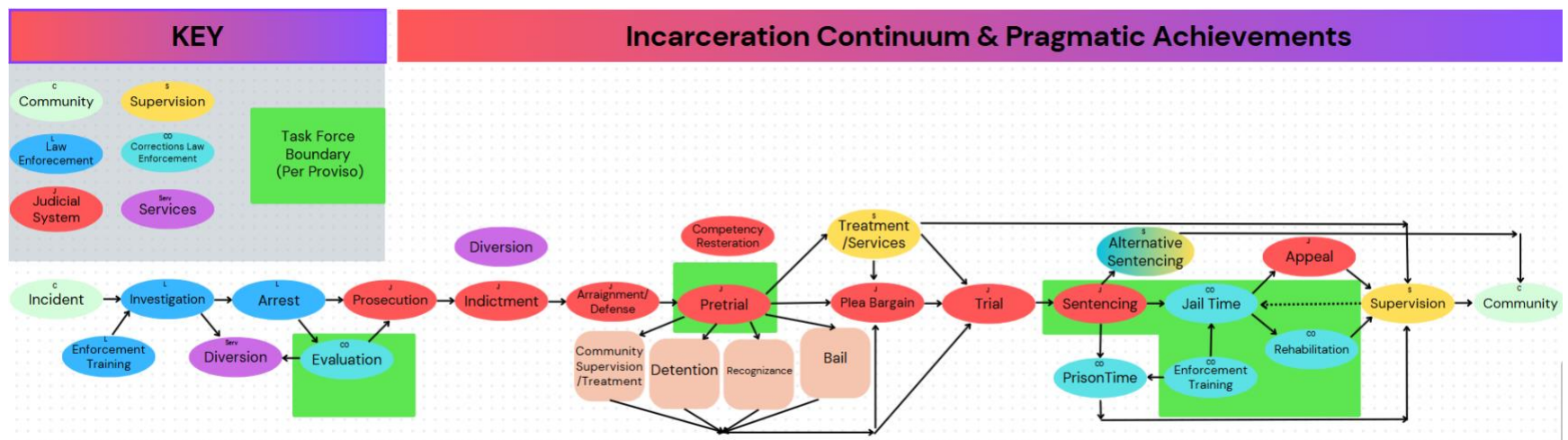
First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization
Amber	Leaders	Senior Policy Advisor, Behavior Health, Aging and Disability	Governor's Office
Barbara	Serrano	Senior Policy Advisor, Public Safety	Governor's Office
Dan	Griffey	Representative, 35th Legislative District	Washington State House of Representatives (R)
Lauren	Davis	Representative, 32nd Legislative District	Washington State House of Representatives (D)
Matt	Boehnke	Senator, 8th Legislative District	Senate (R)
			Senate (D)
Bob	Long	Director of Security & Emergency Management	Department of Corrections
Esther	Matthews	Assistant Professor - Academic Member of Commission	Sentencing Guidelines Commission
Samantha (Sam)	Anderson	Deputy Director - Office of Forensic Mental Health	Department of Social and Health Services
Tyron	Nixon	Program Manager	The Healthcare Authority
Christine	Rickert	Assistant Commander of Corrections and Basic Training Division Administration	Criminal Justice Training Commission
Breean	Beggs	Spokane County Superior Court Judge	The Superior Court Judges Association
Pamella	Nogueira	Olympia Municipal Court Judge	District and Municipal Court Judges Association
Paula	Olsen	Attorney	Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers/Washington Defender Association
Jon	Beltran	Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor, Grays Harbor County Prosecuting Attorney's Office	Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
André	Peñalver	Superior Court Judge, Department 23	Washington State Minority and Justice Commission
Heather	McKimmie	Attorney, Director of AVID Program	Disability Rights Washington
JanRose	Ottaway Martin	Executive Director	North Sound BH-ASO
Cathy	Mulhall	Chelan County Administrator	Washington State Association of Counties East
Wayne	Fournier	Thurston County Commissioner	Washington State Association of Counties West
Eric	Peter	Sheriff - San Juan County	Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs West
Jeff	Barnsley	Sheriff - Kittitas County	Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs East
			Case Load Forecasting Council
Norrie	Gregoire	Director of Corrections and Juvenile Court Administrator	WA Association of Juvenile Court Administrators
David	Lund	Criminal Justice Specialist, Civic Engagement Program, Office of the Secretary of State	An individual with lived experience



## Appendix B: Task Force Meetings and Attendance

Task Force Members		10/29/24	11/22/24	12/20/24	1/10/25	2/7/25	3/21/25	4/18/25	5/2/25	5/16/25	6/6/25	6/13/25
First Name	Last Name											
Samantha (Sam)	Anderson	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jeff	Barnsley	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		
Breean	Beggs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jon	Beltran	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Matt	Boehnke											
Lauren	Davis	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Wayne	Fournier	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X
Norrie	Gregoire		X									
Dan	Griffey	X										
Amber	Leaders	X	X									
Bob	Long	X	X			X	X	X				
David	Lund		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Esther	Matthews	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Heather	McKimmie	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Cathy	Mulhall	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Tyron	Nixon	X		X	X			X		X	X	
Pamella	Nogueira	X			X	X	X	X		X		X
Paula	Olsen	X	X			X	X		X	X		X
JanRose	Ottaway Martin	X	X	X	X	X	X					X
André	Peñalver	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Eric	Peter			X								
Christine	Rickert	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Barbara	Serrano	X	X									

## Appendix C: Incarceration Continuum



## Appendix D: Situation Assessment Questions

### **Washington Jail Modernization Interview Questions**

1. What does the term 'jail modernization' mean to you?
  - a. What are your biggest concerns related to new investment in the county jail system?
  - b. What would key characteristics of a 'successful' modern county jail look like?
  - c. What are some of your short-term and longer-term priorities, including investment?
2. What does the term 'jail modernization' mean to you when addressing juvenile justice facilities?
  - a. What are your biggest concerns related to new investment in the county juvenile justice system?
  - b. What would key characteristics of a 'successful' modern juvenile justice center look like?
  - c. What are some of your short-term and longer-term priorities, including investment?
3. What outcomes do you hope to achieve by collaborating on this Jail Modernization Task Force?
4. In discussions around jail modernization, what is often overlooked or left out of the conversation?
5. Are there key participants/organizations missing from the proviso language that need to engage to achieve diverse perspectives?
6. Are there questions we should have asked you that we didn't?
7. Which of the documented proviso issue areas would you like to focus on in our next individual interview with you (between July and September 2024)?

# Appendix E: 2024 Proviso

## ESSB 587. SL

### Sec. 915.

- (1) The jail modernization task force is established, to be composed of the following members:
  - (a) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate;
  - (b) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;
  - (c) A representative from the caseload forecast council, as an advisory member;
  - (d) One member appointed by and representing each of the following:
    - (i) The governor;
    - (ii) The department of corrections;
    - (iii) The sentencing guidelines commission;
    - (iv) The department of social and health services, representing the behavioral health administration's state hospitals;
    - (v) The health care authority;
    - (vi) The criminal justice training commission;
    - (vii) The superior court judges association;
    - (viii) The district and municipal court judges association;
    - (ix) The Washington association of criminal defense attorneys or the Washington defender association;
    - (x) The Washington association of prosecuting attorneys;
    - (xi) The Washington state minority and justice commission;
    - (xii) Disability rights Washington;
    - (xiii) A behavioral health administrative service organization; and
    - (xiv) An individual with lived experience; and
  - (e) Two members appointed by and representing each of the following:
    - (i) The Washington state association of counties, with one representative from east of the crest of the Cascades and one representative from west of the crest of the Cascades; and
    - (ii) The Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, with one representative from east of the crest of the Cascades and one representative from west of the crest of the Cascades.
- (2) Any additions or modifications to the membership provided in subsection (1) of this section will be informed by the analysis performed by the Washington state institute for public policy and the convening assessment performed by the William D. Ruckelshaus center.
- (3) The initial meeting of the task force must be no later than December 1, 2024.
- (4) The task force shall review the Washington state institute for public policy's report on jail characteristics, any resulting legislation from the criminal sentencing task force,

and any resulting legislation from the Washington state joint legislative task force on jail standards. At a minimum, the task force shall also discuss the following:

- (a) Employee retention issues and potential solutions;
  - (b) The impact of overtime, jail atmosphere, emergency response time, and inexperienced corrections officers, and how to overcome these challenges;
  - (c) The type of facility needed to house those with behavioral health needs and associated costs of these facilities;
  - (d) Available diversion programs and their costs;
  - (e) Types of existing behavioral health facilities for those involved in the criminal justice system, the costs of building and running these facilities, how these facilities vary by location, the viability of offering facilities in every county, and potential system improvements to the types of services and supports offered and delivered to those with behavioral health needs;
  - (f) The types of services and supports provided to those exiting the jail system; and
  - (g) What reforms are necessary to create and enhance a seamless transition back to the community following jail confinement.
- (5) The task force shall develop a set of statewide jail modernization recommendations to include, at a minimum, identifying existing facilities in need of upgrades or remodel and any need for building new facilities, and potential funding sources or mechanisms to make the recommendations feasible.
- (6) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.
- (7) The task force shall submit an initial report, including findings and recommendations, to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by July 1, 2025. The task force shall submit a final report by December 31, 2025.

## ESSB 5950.PL

- (33) \$95,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$215,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for the William D. Ruckelshaus center to support the jail modernization task force created in section 915, chapter 475, Laws of 2023.
- (a) Of the amounts provided in this subsection, \$95,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 is provided solely for the center to conduct a jail modernization task force convening assessment and design a facilitated collaborative process and work plan for the jail modernization task force created in section 915, chapter 475, Laws of 2023.
  - (b) Of the amounts provided in this subsection, \$215,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 is provided solely for the center to provide staff support, facilitation, and development of the task force's initial report of findings and recommendations described in section 915, chapter 475, Laws of 2023.

- (c) The convening assessment shall include, but not be limited to:
- (i) Gathering and reviewing additional background information relevant to the project;
  - (ii) Meeting and consulting with the Washington state association of counties to gather background on issues, confirm the list of members to interview, and provide updates throughout the duration of the work; and meeting and consulting with the Washington state institute for public policy to coordinate, inform, and share information and findings gathered; and
  - (iii) Setting up individual conversations with task force members, and others as needed, to assess their goals, expectations, interests, and desired outcomes for the task force. The purpose of these conversations will also be to gather insights and perspectives from members about, but not limited to, the following:
    - (A) What key components and issues should be included in a statewide jail modernization plan, what existing facilities are in need of upgrades or remodel, and any need for building new facilities;
    - (B) Identifying any additional key stakeholders;
    - (C) Employee retention issues and potential solutions;
    - (D) The impact of overtime, jail atmosphere, emergency response time, inexperienced corrections officers, and how to overcome these challenges;
    - (E) The type of and design of facilities needed to house those with behavioral health needs and associated costs of these facilities;(E) The type of and design of facilities needed to house those with behavioral health needs and associated costs of these facilities;
    - (F) Available diversion programs and their costs;
    - (G) Types of existing behavioral health facilities for those involved in the criminal justice system, the costs of building and running these facilities, how these facilities vary by location, the viability of offering facilities in every county, and potential system improvements to the types of services and supports offered and delivered to those with behavioral health needs;
    - (H) The types of services and supports provided to those exiting the jail system; and
    - (I) Reforms necessary to create and enhance a seamless transition back to the community following jail confinement.
- (d) Center staff will provide a convening assessment report that will include the overall process design and work plan for the task force by June 30, 2024.

## Appendix F: WSSIP Survey Data

Institution Name	Year Facility Opened	Facility Age (At time of Survey)	Overall Quality Score	Quality Rating: Structural elements	Quality Rating: Systems and Fixtures	Quality Rating: Furniture and Equipment	Age of Fire Safety System	Quality Rating: Fire Safety System	Age of Security System	Quality Rating: Security System	Age of Plumbing System	Quality Rating: Plumbing System	Age of Electrical System	Quality Rating: Electrical System	Age of Mechanical System	Quality Rating: Mechanical System
Pierce County Jail	1984	39	2	2. Okay	2. Okay	2. Okay	39	3. Good	39	2. Okay	39	1. Bad	39	2. Okay	39	2. Okay
Pierce County Jail	2003	20	2.63	2. Okay	2. Okay	2. Okay	20	3. Good	20	3. Good	20	3. Good	20	3. Good	20	3. Good
Spokane County Detention Services - Downtown Jail	1952	71	0.13	0. Terrible	0. Terrible	0. Terrible	44	0. Terrible	44	1. Bad	71	0. Terrible	71	0. Terrible	71	0. Terrible
Spokane County Detention Services - Downtown Jail	1986	37	0.88	1. Bad	1. Bad	0. Terrible	17	1. Bad	17	2. Okay	37	0. Terrible	37	2. Okay	37	0. Terrible
Adult Secure - King County Dept of Adult and Juvenile Detention	1997	26	2.38	3. Good	2. Okay	2. Okay	26	3. Good	26	3. Good	26	2. Okay	26	2. Okay	26	2. Okay
Adult Secure - King County Dept of Adult and	1986	37	1.88	2. Okay	1. Bad	2. Okay	2	3. Good	17	3. Good	3	2. Okay	37	1. Bad	4	1. Bad

Institution Name	Year Facility Opened	Facility Age (At time of Survey)	Overall Quality Score	Quality Rating: Structural elements	Quality Rating: Systems and Fixtures	Quality Rating: Furniture and Equipment	Age of Fire Safety System	Quality Rating: Fire Safety System	Age of Security System	Quality Rating: Security System	Age of Plumbing System	Quality Rating: Plumbing System	Age of Electrical System	Quality Rating: Electrical System	Age of Mechanical System	Quality Rating: Mechanical System
Juvenile Detention																
Snohomish County Jail	2005	18	3	4. Excellent	4. Excellent	2. Okay	18	3. Good	18	1. Bad	18	2. Okay	18	4. Excellent	6	4. Excellent
Snohomish County Jail	1985	38	2.63	3. Good	2. Okay	3. Good	38	2. Okay	9	3. Good	18	1. Bad	6	3. Good	6	4. Excellent
Clark County Department of Jail Services	1984	39	1.38	2. Okay	0. Terrible	1. Bad	23	4. Excellent	39	2. Okay	39	0. Terrible	39	1. Bad	39	1. Bad
Clark County Department of Jail Services	2000	23	3.63	3. Good	4. Excellent	3. Good	23	4. Excellent	23	3. Good	23	4. Excellent	23	4. Excellent	23	4. Excellent
Kittitas County Jail	2012	11	2.63	3. Good	3. Good	3. Good	11	2. Okay	11	3. Good	11	2. Okay	11	3. Good	11	2. Okay
Kittitas County Jail	1980	43	2	1. Bad	2. Okay	3. Good	43	2. Okay	43	2. Okay	13	1. Bad	43	3. Good	13	2. Okay
Whatcom County Jail	1984	39	1.13	1. Bad	0. Terrible	0. Terrible	9	2. Okay	5	2. Okay	3	1. Bad	5	1. Bad	5	2. Okay
Whatcom County Jail	2006	17	2.75	3. Good	2. Okay	2. Okay	17	4. Excellent	4	3. Good	17	3. Good	3	2. Okay	17	3. Good
Kitsap County Sheriff's Office Jail	2004	19	3	3. Good	2. Okay	3. Good	0	4. Excellent	19	3. Good	19	3. Good	19	3. Good	19	3. Good



Institution Name	Year Facility Opened	Facility Age (At time of Survey)	Overall Quality Score	Quality Rating: Structural elements	Quality Rating: Systems and Fixtures	Quality Rating: Furniture and Equipment	Age of Fire Safety System	Quality Rating: Fire Safety System	Age of Security System	Quality Rating: Security System	Age of Plumbing System	Quality Rating: Plumbing System	Age of Electrical System	Quality Rating: Electrical System	Age of Mechanical System	Quality Rating: Mechanical System
Kitsap County Sheriff's Office Jail	1986	37	2.75	2. Okay	2. Okay	3. Good	0	4. Excellent	37	3. Good	37	3. Good	37	3. Good	37	2. Okay
Ferry County Jail	1939	84	1.63	1. Bad	0. Terrible	2. Okay	32	4. Excellent	23	2. Okay	84	0. Terrible	32	2. Okay	84	2. Okay
Island County Jail	1983	40	1.38	1. Bad	1. Bad	2. Okay	40	2. Okay	1	2. Okay	40	1. Bad	40	1. Bad	40	1. Bad
Jefferson County Jail	1986	37	2.75	2. Okay	2. Okay	2. Okay	7	4. Excellent	4	3. Good	37	3. Good	37	3. Good	37	3. Good
Whitman County Jail	1984	39	2.75	2. Okay	3. Good	2. Okay	39	4. Excellent	15	2. Okay	1	3. Good	1	3. Good	3	3. Good
Clallam County Correction Facility	1980	43	2	0. Terrible	2. Okay	2. Okay	5	3. Good	7	3. Good	43	2. Okay	43	2. Okay	43	2. Okay
Cowlitz County Corrections	2006	17	3	3. Good	2. Okay	3. Good	17	4. Excellent	3	3. Good	17	2. Okay	17	4. Excellent	17	3. Good
Pend Oreille County Corrections	1979	44	1.88	2. Okay	1. Bad	2. Okay	44	3. Good	44	2. Okay	44	1. Bad	44	3. Good	44	1. Bad
Grays Harbor County Jail	1972	51	0.88	2. Okay	1. Bad	2. Okay	51	0. Terrible	51	0. Terrible	51	1. Bad	51	1. Bad	51	0. Terrible
Yakima County DOC	1983	40	1.5	2. Okay	0. Terrible	2. Okay	40	2. Okay	8	2. Okay	40	0. Terrible	40	2. Okay	40	2. Okay
Asotin County Jail	1984	39	0.5	0. Terrible	0. Terrible	0. Terrible	39	1. Bad	39	0. Terrible	39	0. Terrible	39	1. Bad	0	2. Okay

Institution Name	Year Facility Opened	Facility Age (At time of Survey)	Overall Quality Score	Quality Rating: Structural elements	Quality Rating: Systems and Fixtures	Quality Rating: Furniture and Equipment	Age of Fire Safety System	Quality Rating: Fire Safety System	Age of Security System	Quality Rating: Security System	Age of Plumbing System	Quality Rating: Plumbing System	Age of Electrical System	Quality Rating: Electrical System	Age of Mechanical System	Quality Rating: Mechanical System
Adam's County Sheriff's Office Jail	1941	82	1.38	1. Bad	0. Terrible	2. Okay	82	3. Good	82	2. Okay	82	1. Bad	82	2. Okay	82	0. Terrible
Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Jail	1988	35	2	2. Okay	2. Okay	2. Okay	35	2. Okay	35	2. Okay	35	2. Okay	35	2. Okay	35	2. Okay
Walla Walla County Corrections	1982	41	1.75	2. Okay	1. Bad	2. Okay	41	2. Okay	13	1. Bad	41	2. Okay	41	2. Okay	41	2. Okay
Skamania County Jail	2001	22	3.38	3. Good	3. Good	3. Good	22	4. Excellent	22	4. Excellent	22	3. Good	22	4. Excellent	22	3. Good
Benton County Corrections Department	1979	44	3.25	3. Good	3. Good	3. Good	44	4. Excellent	20	4. Excellent	4	3. Good	44	3. Good	44	3. Good
Thurston County Jail	2015	8	2.63	3. Good	3. Good	3. Good	8	4. Excellent	8	0. Terrible	8	2. Okay	8	3. Good	8	3. Good
Chelan County Regional Justice Center	1984	39	1.88	2. Okay	1. Bad	3. Good	8	3. Good	4	3. Good	39	0. Terrible	39	2. Okay	13	1. Bad
Wahkiakum County Jail	1994	29	2.13	2. Okay	2. Okay	2. Okay	29	2. Okay	9	3. Good	29	2. Okay	29	2. Okay	29	2. Okay
Stevens County Jail	1972	51	0.88	1. Bad	0. Terrible	0. Terrible	51	1. Bad	51	1. Bad	51	0. Terrible	51	2. Okay	51	2. Okay

Institution Name	Year Facility Opened	Facility Age (At time of Survey)	Overall Quality Score	Quality Rating: Structural elements	Quality Rating: Systems and Fixtures	Quality Rating: Furniture and Equipment	Age of Fire Safety System	Quality Rating: Fire Safety System	Age of Security System	Quality Rating: Security System	Age of Plumbing System	Quality Rating: Plumbing System	Age of Electrical System	Quality Rating: Electrical System	Age of Mechanical System	Quality Rating: Mechanical System
Lewis County Jail	1985	38	3.38	2. Okay	3. Good	2. Okay	0	4. Excellent	0	4. Excellent	38	4. Excellent	38	4. Excellent	0	4. Excellent
Skagit County Community Justice Center	2017	6	3.63	4. Excellent	3. Good	3. Good	6	4. Excellent	6	3. Good	6	4. Excellent	6	4. Excellent	6	4. Excellent
Grant County Jail	1986	37	2.13	2. Okay	2. Okay	3. Good	7	2. Okay	21	2. Okay	37	2. Okay	37	2. Okay	37	2. Okay
Pacific County Jail	1985	38	0.88	1. Bad	1. Bad	1. Bad	38	2. Okay	38	1. Bad	38	0. Terrible	38	1. Bad	38	0. Terrible
Klickitat County Jail	1981	42	2.13	2. Okay	1. Bad	1. Bad	42	4. Excellent	2	3. Good	42	1. Bad	42	3. Good	42	2. Okay
Franklin County Corrections Center	1986	37	2.5	2. Okay	2. Okay	2. Okay	8	3. Good	8	3. Good	8	2. Okay	8	3. Good	8	3. Good
Okanogan County Jail	1983	40	1.13	1. Bad	1. Bad	0. Terrible	40	2. Okay	17	1. Bad	40	1. Bad	40	2. Okay	40	1. Bad
Mason County Jail	1985	38	2.25	2. Okay	2. Okay	3. Good	38	3. Good	8	1. Bad	38	2. Okay	38	3. Good	11	2. Okay