



## Memorandum

**TO:** SATPAL SIDHU

**FROM:** Kelsey Shafer-Peronto, Program Specialist, Response Systems Division, Health & Community Services Department

**DATE:**

**RE:** SFY 2026 CRIMINAL JUSTICE TREATMENT ACCOUNT (CJTA) PLAN

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**MESSAGE:** The Whatcom County CJTA Panel is submitting the following plan for review and approval by the County Council. Pursuant to state law, the county legislative authority must approve the CJTA Plan.

Washington State adopted RCW 71.24.580 in 2002, establishing the Criminal Justice Treatment Account (CJTA). This law created an account to fund alternatives for treating nonviolent offenders with substance use disorders (SUDs) via savings in the Department of Corrections from reducing prison sentences. Key provisions of the CJTA law include allocation of funding to counties for treatment and recovery support services for people with criminal charges who have SUDs, and the development of a local CJTA Panel to submit a plan for the disposition of funds.

The Whatcom County CJTA Panel has met each biennium since its establishment in 2018 to provide recommendations to the Council in the CJTA Plan. These recommendations align with RCW 71.24.580 and local efforts of the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Taskforce. On August 12, 2025, the CJTA Panel voted to submit the enclosed plan for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026, which includes the following changes:

- Adjusting the budget from a biennial basis to annual for SFY 2026, in line with a mid-biennium update to the State funding formulation
- Increasing allocations to Recovery Court, SUD Assessments, and Rental Assistance in line with service utilization and capacity patterns
- Decreasing allocations to Residential Treatment in line with utilization patterns

While this distribution of funds is changed, the total CJTA allocation to Whatcom County in SFY 2026 is the same as the year prior.

Council Action Requested:

The County Council is asked to approve the enclosed SFY 2026 CJTA Plan for submission to the State.

