

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TREATMENT ACCOUNT (CJTA)

Panel Meeting—History & Plan Update

August 20, 2020



Whatcom County
HEALTH
Department



Introduction

Whatcom County will receive \$326,081 in Criminal Justice Treatment Account Funds (CJTA) from the Washington State Healthcare Authority for the 2020-2021 fiscal year which includes an additional \$152,100 in proviso funding. CJTA funding is subject to a planning process, a local Panel's past and current recommendations and various restrictions as described below. The plan update is concluded with the Panel's recommendations for the new award which was based on the robust success of the 1st award. In addition, the Panel makes new recommendations for 30% of the funds to be dedicated to a required best/innovative strategy.

RCW and History

In 2002, the Washington State Legislature passed laws to reduce prison sentencing for non-violent drug offenses. The Washington State Legislature determined that there would be savings from these prison reduction acts which they formalized into law (RCW 71.24.580). The Legislature further theorized that funding from the Criminal Justice Treatment Account (CJTA) could be placed into substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and support services to prevent recidivism in the prison system. In subsequent updates of the law, the legislature has allowed funds to be used for recovery support services as well as treatment.

In addition, CJTA funding is distributed to counties by funding formula with a requirement that a minimum of 30% of the funds be used for best, evidence based, or innovative practices.

2019-2020 Panel Recommendations and Expenditures

The Whatcom County CJTA Panel last met on September 20, 2019 and made recommendations for the following services; substance use disorder assessments for people in the jail, residential treatment for CJTA non-Medicaid services and rental assistance. The proposed services were seen as gaps in the substance use disorder continuum of care currently available for Drug Court participants and other non-violent drug offenders.

Whatcom County received a total of \$174,881 in State CJTA funds for 2019-20 which was allocated to the gaps described above. Even after the onset of COVID-19, much of our CJTA funding continued to be utilized with the exception of decreased jail assessment funding. However, funds which were unexpended when the pandemic began were utilized largely on behalf of Drug Court participants to ensure that they remained housed during the COVID-19 pandemic. A small amount of unexpended funds, of approximately \$21,000 will be utilized by the county jail for Medications Assisted Treatment (MAT) during this fiscal cycle for people with opioid use disorders.

2020 Additional Proviso Funding

In 2020, the state passed a proviso which discontinued the transfer of CJTA funds to the Home Security Fund. The new state law brought an additional \$151,200 dollars to Whatcom County's existing funding of \$174,881 for a total of \$326,081

2020 Proposal & Rationale:

Whatcom County Behavioral Health Sequential Intercept Model



The Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF) which is comprised of 30 city and county officials, providers, and citizens has labored since 2016 to divert or prevent incarceration when and where possible. If incarceration is necessary, the IPRTF has supported a fully functioning behavioral health team to ensure appropriate services in the jail

and during the transition period from the jail to ensure ongoing stabilization and recovery. The IPRTF continues to support additional services at intercepts (also known as points at which an intervention may occur) 3 and 4, so an expansion to Drug Court and to Re-entry services is in line with the IPRTF's missions and goals. Panel members are aware of the IPRTF and several of the members' departments are represented on the IPRTF.

The local CJTA Panel met on August 20, 2020 to discuss how the plan for the original allocation had materialized, and recommendations by County Health for the 2nd allocation. The Panel elected to continue with the same basic plan as 2019-2020 CJTA Funding Allocation #1 (\$174,881) with a few exceptions. The Panel wished to see a higher contribution of funds to MAT Medications in the Jail, an issue which has recently gained much favor in the community. MAT medications in the jail will help opioid-addicted individuals stabilize as they enter into community behavioral health programs and into recovery. In addition, the Panel considered that since there will be a new Recovery House facility opening in December 2020, the program will likely reduce rental assistance needs since certain therapeutic court participants will be admitted directly from inpatient treatment to the Recovery House in lieu of going into housing on their own.

The services and expenditures under CJTA Funding Allocation #1 appeared to serve the intended purpose well last year by providing Drug Court participants, as well as other non-violent qualifying offenders with a full continuum of care, particularly those people who had no insurance.

CJTA Funding Allocation #1

Service Type	Amount	% of Funding
County Administration	\$ 17,488	10%
Jail Assessments	\$ 60,000	34%
Residential	\$ 17,550	10%
Rental Assistance	\$ 69,843	40%
Jail MAT Meds	\$ 10,000	6%
TOTAL	\$ 174,881	100%

- Plans were already in place to build a continuum of care for people with substance use disorders (SUDs) and the Panel wanted to ensure fewer gaps for priority populations, such as Drug Court and Mental Health Court participants.
- A needs assessment determined that the greatest deficits in the continuum were for jail assessments, inpatient treatment, and housing. Most people participating in our therapeutic courts had Medicaid which pays for treatment, so there was less need to fund traditional treatment services with CJTA.
- Housing was considered a huge gap and is considered a best practice by the state. Rental assistance served as the 30% required innovative/best practice strategy for our county.

Now that we have successfully built the relevant continuum of care, we need positions in place that can fully utilize the services. Many of our clientele have serious co-occurring disorders and require a level of engagement into services that goes beyond making referrals. Two positions are proposed below which will enhance our utilization of the funding in all areas of the continuum.

Through CJTA Funding Allocation #2 (\$152,100), Whatcom County will add:

- Drug Court Case Manager, a new position to the Whatcom County Drug Court Program.
- A half time re-entry position in the Jail Behavioral Health Team. This move would allow the program to provide more re-entry work on behalf of people suffering from SUDs. We are hopeful to provide the remaining half of the funding for a re-entry position

with funds from the Managed Care Organizations. The Jail Re-entry position will be part of an existing team, the Jail/Juvenile Behavioral Health Team.

If the two programs have unexpended funds from delayed start-ups, the initial unused funding may be used to support previously approved services.

CJTA FUNDING ALLOCATION #2

Service Type	Amount	% of Funding
County Administration	\$ 15,120	10%
Drug Court Case Manager	\$ 85,500	57%
Jail Re-entry (Part time)	\$ 50,580	34%
Total	\$ 151,200	100%

- Drug Court Case Manager, 1 FTE
- Jail Re-entry, hopefully combined with .5FTE paid by the MCOs to make a 1FTE on the Jail Behavioral Health Team.

Finally, the State requires a mention in the plan update of the local match for CJTA funding. Since the Whatcom County Drug Court will receive a direct benefit of funding in the amount of \$85,500, the County will demonstrate a match of at least that amount (dollar for dollar) in every Revenue and Expenditure Report through our local Behavioral Health Sales Tax Funds.

Conclusion:

A total of \$326,081 of CJTA funding will be administered by the County for at least the next fiscal year. Whatcom County is attempting to fill gaps in the continuum of care for adult Therapeutic Court participants with a substance use disorder who require treatment and recovery. The addition of a Drug Court Case Manager and a jail re-entry staff person will benefit the entire community. Participants will benefit from either a nationally recognized best practice program or assisted with community engagement through re-entry services.

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