

# Whatcom County Criminal Justice Treatment Account Plan

In 2002, Washington State adopted RCW 70.96A.350 which established the Criminal Justice Treatment Account (CJTA). This law was designed to reduce sentencing guidelines and create alternatives to treat nonviolent offenders with substance use disorders (SUD). A CJTA panel convened in June of 2018 and approved the following plan for service priorities and general allocations.

## **I. Overview:**

Legislative Action - RCW 71.24.580, created a Criminal Justice Treatment Account in the state treasury. Moneys in the account may be expended solely for:

- (a) Substance use disorder treatment and treatment support services for offenders with a substance use disorder that, if not treated, would result in addiction, against whom charges are filed by a prosecuting attorney in Washington state;
- (b) the provision of substance use disorder treatment services and treatment support services for nonviolent offenders within a drug court program; and
- (c) the administrative and overhead costs associated with the operation of a drug court.

RCW 71.24.580 also directs the development of a County level CJTA panel for plan development and fund expenditure. County CJTA plans are submitted to the Washington State CJTA panel for review and distribution of funds.

## **II. CJTA Panel Development:**

As per RCW 71.24.580, a Whatcom County CJTA panel was created consisting of:

Alcohol and drug coordinator, county prosecutor, county sheriff, county superior court, a substance abuse treatment provider appointed by the county legislative authority, a member of the criminal defense bar appointed by the county legislative authority, and, in counties with a drug court, a representative of the drug court.

Panel Members included:

- Sheriff represented by the Chief of Corrections, Wendy Jones
- Superior Court Administrator, Dave Reynolds
- Chief Prosecuting Attorney, Dave McEachran represented by Kathy Walker
- Drug Court representative, Chris Furman (Drug Court Coordinator)
- County Coordinator represented by Jackie Mitchell
- Treatment Provider, Chris Watras of SeaMar
- Public Defender's Office, Starck Follis represented by Mamie Lackie

## **III. Plan Outline & Recommendations:**

After reviewing the written plan materials, panel members expressed a strong preference for a clear pathway out of the Whatcom County Jail for Therapeutic Court members and other inmates with substance use disorders. The plan developed included assuring the availability of SUD assessments at the jail, followed by residential treatment as medically necessary and rental assistance for people needing housing. Stable housing for individuals transitioning from jail was viewed as crucial after a course of inpatient treatment.

In addition, the panel recommended reserving a small amount of CJTA funds for outpatient treatment services for individuals that met outpatient placement criteria and lacked insurance. Finally, the panel initially recommended funding for housing case management services to ensure CJTA recipients could receive assistance with landlord communications, budgeting, leases, and housing applications.

**IV. Plan Execution:**

RCW 71.24.580 directs the CJTA panel to submit a plan, approved by the county legislative authority or authorities, to the Washington State CJTA committee panel established in subsection (5)(b) of this section, for disposition of all the funds provided from the criminal justice treatment account within that county.

**V. Final Plan:**

The final CJTA plan includes all services outlined above except housing case management. In practice, people coming out of jail with SUD who are participating in one of the Therapeutic Courts already have case management services available in the community. Additionally, funding housing case management would unnecessarily deplete the available resources for rental assistance. Total CJTA funding for 2018-2019 is \$174,881 with 10% of this total allocated to support County administration of the monies.

Ninety per cent (90%) of people released from the jail to the community are Medicaid recipients and can access behavioral health services. Therefore, it is recommended that Whatcom County utilize CJTA funds for approximately 10% of people who do not qualify for Medicaid. People receiving assistance from CJTA will be prioritized to include Therapeutic Court and GRACE members followed by all other CJTA eligible individuals. The plan for expenditures resulted in the following table.

Admin @ 10%	10%
Jail Assessment	18%
Outpatient Agencies	11%
Residential	17%
Housing Support/ Rent and Deposit	44%
Total	100%

In conclusion, CJTA funds will provide a continuum of care for eligible individuals involved in Therapeutic Court programs or GRACE who are in need of SUD services. This plan was approved by the Whatcom County CJTA Panel and submitted to the state for approval.