

# **Whatcom County Criminal Justice Treatment Account Plan 2019-2020**

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 for:

- (a) Substance use disorder (SUD) 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 SUD 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.
- (d) The provision of recovery services

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 Health Care Authority 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.

Current Panel members include:

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

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

After reviewing the written plan materials, Panel members continued to express strong preferences for a clear pathway out of the Whatcom County Jail for Therapeutic Court members and other inmates with substance use disorders (SUDs) with case management supports. The Plan includes:

- Assuring the availability of SUD assessments at the jail
- Support for residential treatment
- Ensuring rental assistance for people needing housing after treatment

Stable housing for certain people transitioning from jail was viewed as crucial after a course of inpatient treatment.

Rental assistance is a recovery services and will function as our 30% innovative project as required by law. The law requires that 30% of CJTA funds be placed in an innovative, evidence based program, or fidelity program. In addition, we would expect to serve a minimum of 22 people, mostly referred by our Drug Court to clean and sober housing. Drug Court requires that certain individuals, on a case by case basis, enter into clean and sober housing in order to ensure a pathway to recovery.

In addition, the Panel indicated a desire to meet again next spring to review any necessary changes, related to the development of a local recovery house. The Panel wanted to remain mindful of the enhanced co-occurring disorder recovery house level of care, scheduled to open in May of 2020, and the number of CJTA participant, coming out of inpatient treatment, who will have no insurance to pay for their stay.

Finally, the Panel wanted to acknowledge and support the Whatcom County Jail's work on the newly organized Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, and recommended placing unused funds towards the Jail's MAT program, whenever possible.

#### **IV. Final Plan:**

The final CJTA Plan includes services and priority populations as outlined above. Total CJTA funding for 2019-2020 is \$174,881 with 10% of this total allocated to support County administration.

Ninety per cent (90%) of people released from the jail to the community are Medicaid recipients and can access behavioral health treatment services. Therefore, it is recommended that Whatcom County utilize CJTA funds for approximately 10% of people who do not qualify for Medicaid as re-imbursement for treatment, and for rental assistance for both Medicaid and non-Medicaid populations.

The Panel approved spending plan is shown in the table below.

### **Services Options for Consideration of CJTA Funds 2019-2020**

#### **OPTION 1**

	Services Amount
<b>Whatcom Award</b>	<b>174,881</b>
County Admin @ 10%	10%
Jail (SUD) Assessment	34%
Residential Treatment	15%
Housing Support/Rent/Deposit	41%

- Remaining funds for Jail MAT medications on a quarterly or semi-annual basis

Lastly, the law requires a local match to CJTA funding. The County will continue to contribute \$174,881 per year from local funding to the Whatcom County Drug Court for operations to meet this requirement. Lastly, the Panel recommended that the County be allowed up to 15% administrative leeway to make funding changes as necessary to ensure full expenditures of CJTA funding.

**V. Execution by County Authority:**

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.

The Council is asked to approve the Plan which will be forwarded to the State's Healthcare Authority.