

**Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Legal and Justice Systems Committee**

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., October 12, 2021, Remote-only virtual meeting

If you require special assistance to participate, please contact the County Council Office at least 96 hours in advance.

[Link to join Zoom Webinar](#)

Attendees will join the Zoom Webinar without audio or video controls. Webinar Host will invite attendees to speak at the appropriate time during the meeting

- Call in phone number: (253) 215-8782
- Webinar ID: 849 0593 6035
- Password: 17783

AMENDED AGENDA

Land Acknowledgement Statement: Before we begin, we acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional and unceded territory of the Lummi, Nooksack, Samish and Semiahmoo People who have cared for and tended this land since time immemorial. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We pay respect to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events.

Packet Pages

1. Call to Order

2. Next Steps for Domestic Violence Offender Treatment 1
Identify next steps/referred from September Joint Committee meeting

3. Recommendations for amendments to State legislation on police reforms N/A
Discussion/ Richey, Hammill, Vanyo, King, and Chadwick

4. Task Force Communications 2 – 4

- Action: Identify 3-5 targeted public relations and communication key messages regarding past, current, or future Task Force initiatives

5. Topics for Year-End report to County Council 2 – 4

- Action: Identify topics to include regarding committee activity since June 2021 and what's next for 2022

6. Other Business

7. Public Comment

1. If you would like to speak, virtually “raise your hand.”
 - a. Online: select the Raise Hand icon
 - b. Phone: Press *9
2. *When called upon to speak, unmute your microphone. Inform the Webinar Host if you would like to enable your video during your comments.*
3. Please state your full name for the record.
4. Staff will disable your microphone when you are done speaking.

8. Adjourn

Meeting summary of the previous meeting is included at the end of the packet for information only. Committee members may suggest changes and/or corrections to the draft summary to jnixon@co.whatcom.wa.us. Audio recordings are the official meeting record and can be found on the IPRTF and committee [website](#).

Upcoming Meetings

Visit the [Task Force website meeting calendar](#) for the most up-to-date meeting schedule

At this time, all meetings are held via remote-only Zoom Webinar

IPR TASK FORCE	BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMITTEE	LEGAL & JUSTICE SYSTEMS COMMITTEE	CRISIS STABILIZATION FACILITY COMMITTEE	INDEX COMMITTEE	STEERING COMMITTEE
Monthly on various Mondays 9-11 AM	Monthly, 3rd Tuesday 9:00-10:30 AM	Monthly, 2 nd Tuesday 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Bi-monthly, 3 rd Thursday 9:30-11:00 AM	Bi-monthly, 1 st Thursday 1:30-3:00 PM	Various Thursdays 11:00 AM-12:30 PM
October 18 November 15 December 13	October 19 November 16 December 14 (Joint)	October 12 November 9 December 14 (Joint)	(None)	(None)	November 4 December 2

2. Next Steps for Domestic Violence Offender Treatment

Identify next steps/referred from September Joint Committee meeting

From the Joint meeting summary:

Next steps could include:

- Reaching out to counseling students in the area;
- Developing incentives for counselors to become domestic violence treatment providers;
- Get local students at Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College and also existing behavioral health providers to work on this type of treatment, through financial incentives;
- Ask the State representatives to redefine the allowable triggers for pursuit;
- Support the MCOT;
- Move forward with the alternate response team;
- Strategic and targeted housing resources that are paired with programs like LEAD and GRACE;
- Accessing funding for assisted housing through the Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization.

Also:

- Provide simple steps to access services and assistance, so that anyone can use them.
- Use clear, simple everyday language. Avoid professional jargon.

I. Background

Whatcom County Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force is a County Council-appointed body of local elected officials, law enforcement and criminal justice officers, courts, citizens, public health professionals, and social service agencies to reduce incarceration through enhanced services along the entire continuum of care, from prevention to post-incarceration.

People with mental illness and chemical dependency have a significant impact on the criminal justice system, jail population, and emergency medical system. Many people return to jail or the emergency room repeatedly as a result of behavioral health struggles. These individuals, and the community as a whole, are better served through robust prevention, treatment, and diversion programs.

Since the Task Force was founded in 2015, it has achieved a number of major accomplishments in the community. However, those efforts have largely gone unnoticed by our residents. Therefore, the Task Force will engage a communications strategist individual or team to assist us with improving our public communication efforts.

II. Statement of Work

1. Phase 1 - Develop and implement communications campaign

Goal: Work with the IPRTF and its Steering Committee to create a public communication campaign for 3 or 4 Task Force initiatives, projects, key focus areas, activities, or messages to communicate to the target audience(s). The goal of the campaign is to significantly raise awareness of and educate the community about recent achievements and current and future activities. A successful campaign will use public communication best practices that will enhance and optimize the IPRTF's current efforts with:

- Public information and outreach
- Consultation that requests feedback from the public
- Public participation that engages the public in informed dialog with the Task Force

Tasks:

Meet (in-person or remotely) with Steering Committee to:

1. Review overall goals, expectations, and outcomes of the contract
2. Review and refine a core message for 3 or 4 Task Force initiatives and projects
3. Discuss potential target audience groups for each core message
4. Review the Task Force's current communications efforts and capabilities and discuss potential improvements

Draft Scope of Work for Consultant on IPRTF Communications Strategy

Analyze and recommend (via written and/or phone consultation) a campaign strategy that can be implemented immediately. The recommendation will include, for each initiative or project:

1. Final, refined message
2. Target audience group, including local media
3. A toolkit of messaging materials
4. Content distribution channel(s) and/or strategy

Coordinate and conduct campaign for each initiative, once approved by the full Task Force.

All content and messaging must use plain language, using the federal plain language guidelines.

See: <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/>

Develop a process for evaluating the success of the communication campaign.

2. Phase 2 - Develop communications framework for future achievements and initiatives

Goal: Develop a communications framework that the Task Force, Steering Committee, and staff can implement when future achievements and initiatives arise. A successful communications framework will:

- Create a standardized process and design for a variety of different topics and key messages
- Define best practices and guidance for creating engaging content and messaging
- Include a toolkit of communication materials that can be used as templates for future communications
- Determine the most effective content distribution channels for each target audience group

Tasks:

Educate and provide written tips and guidance to the IPRTF members and/or staff on how to create an effective message and content that is tailored to a specific audience, using best practices for public communication of local government information. Task Force members should be able to create a targeted message on a topic and direct staff to develop and deliver related content.

Create templates for content and outreach materials that can be used in future campaigns, such as brochures, infographics, community presentations, press releases and other media announcements, newsletters, social media content, and other marketing materials

Identify all potential target audience groups, such as policy-makers, Tribes, BIPOC community, low-income communities, individuals with lived experience in the criminal justice system, service providers, partner agencies, business owners and employees, local media, community influencers, etc.

Analyze and identify where the target audience groups get their news and how they prefer to engage with local government.

Determine the most strategic communication methods for each target audience group, including: content attributes (for example, the effectiveness of personal stories vs. data), outreach materials, and distribution channels, such as optimizing the use of the County website, direct outreach, social media, speaking at events, public forums, infographics, newsletters, traditional media, and other materials, etc..

Evaluate the current communication efforts to determine what is working, what is not working, and what is missing.

Create a final report to the Task Force that includes:

1. An Excel spreadsheet that lists all target audience groups and the appropriate content type and distribution channel(s) for each group
2. Templates for future marketing and outreach materials
3. Recommendations for improvements to existing communications efforts

III. Qualifications

The individual consultant and/or team should have:

- Minimum of **4** years' experience in a marketing communications field
- Minimum of **2** years' experience with web-based marketing campaigns
- Demonstrated experience in public relations and communications from a government agency
- Excellent writing/editing and verbal communication skills
- Graphical design and layout experience
- Knowledge of social media strategies highly desired

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force Joint Behavioral Health Committee and Legal and Justice Systems Committee

Meeting Summary for September 14, 2021

Agenda item links to YouTube video are functional at the time this meeting summary was created, however, YouTube links may change. Links in this document will not be updated. Please refer to the time notation on each agenda item.

1. Call to Order

Raylene King called the meeting to order at 11:33 a.m. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar.

Behavioral Health Committee Members Present: Nathan Bajema, Doug Chadwick, Chris Cochran, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Stephen Gockley, Dan Hammill, Mike Hilley, Byron Manering, Perry Mowery, Mike Parker, Brien Thane

Members Absent: Seth Fleetwood, Michael G. Smith

Legal & Justice Committee Members Present: Bill Elfo, Arlene Feld, David Freeman, Stephen Gockley, Raylene King, Jackie Mitchell, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson, Eric Richey, Donnell Tanksley, Bruce Van Glubt, Maia Vanyo, Kristin Hanna (proxy for Deborah Hawley)

Members Absent: Deborah Hawley, Flo Simon

2. [Domestic Violence Offender Treatment \(00:01:32\)](#)

King introduced Amie Roberts, State Dept. of Social and Health Services, and reported on the Legal and Justice System Committee's work so far on this issue and potential solutions. Concerns about treatment include:

- Programs offered to those unable to afford the state-mandated treatment services
- Lack of state certified domestic violence treatment providers
- Lack of funding for mandated treatment
- Inequity in treatment for those who are unable to afford treatment
- Cultural and ethnic barriers to treatment, including language access
- Victim assistance concerns, including in civil cases
- Temporary housing and financial assistance for offenders and victims
- Recent police reform laws

Potential solutions from the Task Force include:

- Change the WAC to require insurance to cover treatment
- Can they provide scholarships to those going into the treatment field
- Can they incentivize providers to locate in this area
- Make treatment accessible to those who can afford it
- Financial burdens on defendants and their family, who depend on them for support

Roberts presented information on the possibility of requiring insurance companies to cover domestic violence treatment and on working with District Court on a domestic violence treatment provider who may relocate to this area or offer remote treatment in the community.

The committee members discussed:

- Potential new treatment providers
- Recruiting treatment providers and interns to provide experience
- Other jurisdictions that have funding for domestic violence offender treatment programs
- The shortage of treatment providers nationwide
- Incentivize current treatment providers in other areas to set up shop here locally

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- Build the pipeline by investing in a long-term strategy to invest in students who specialize in this type of treatment
- Whether the State standards are successful for effective treatment
- Higher education programs at Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College
- Domestic violence trends locally and nationally
- Impact of losing providers on civil cases, such as protection orders and dissolutions
- Data on the effectiveness of perpetrator treatment
- Impacts from recent police reform laws that may not be protective of victims
- Funding for adequate legal assistance for victims who are going through the civil process
- Ask State representatives to redesign allowable triggers for pursuit
- Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) is reconsidering their work as it has changed due to the recent police reform laws
- The alternate response team non-emergent response model covering the gap between police response and MCOT behavioral health response for calls such as welfare checks, for example
- Plans for expanding the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program
- Connect people to helpful resources that includes housing
- Using ARPA to increase housing opportunities

Next steps could include reaching out to counseling students in the area; developing incentives for counselors to become domestic violence treatment providers; get local students at Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College and also existing behavioral health providers to work on this type of treatment, through financial incentives; ask the State representatives to redefine the allowable triggers for pursuit; supporting the MCOT; moving forward the alternate response team; strategic and targeted housing resources that are paired with programs like LEAD and GRACE and; accessing funding for assisted housing through the Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization.

Richey, Hammill, Vanyo, King, and Chadwick will meet to draft recommendations from the Task Force to State legislators on necessary changes to the State's police reform legislation.

3. [Juvenile Substance Use Disorder \(SUD\) Treatment \(00:52:51\)](#)

Cochran gave a presentation on the role of schools in upstream incarceration prevention, including school priorities, evolution of and changes to school discipline policies and attendance, the use of restorative practices compared with traditional discipline, changes in attendance policies, multi-tiered system of support, the District's resource officer program with the Bellingham Police Department, trauma informed practices, community collaboration to provide services to kids and families, and systemic factors.

The committee members discussed:

- Statistics on the results of the changes, including an increase in students asking for mental health care
- Professional development options for educators in behavioral health and trauma-informed care
- Social and emotional curriculum and educating kids on the impacts to brain function and decision-making, due to the choices they make

4. [Recommendations for American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) funding \(01:17:15\)](#)

Flaherty reported on the draft letter and using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investment opportunities.

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The committee members discussed:

- Using the Dispute Resolution Center to support the various conversations and prevention efforts they are trying to achieve
- Significant impacts in the coming years on the workforce and the need to invest in partner infrastructure
- Adding nonprofit support as an additional need in the letter
- A gap crisis response and the need for the alternative response team

Parker moved to forward to the full Task Force. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously with the following members present from both committees: Nathan Bajema, Byron Manering, Heather Flaherty, Dan Hammill, Mike Hilley, Doug Chadwick, Chris Cochran, Mike Parker, Brien Thane, Arlene Feld, Stephen Gockley, Bill Elfo, Kristin Hanna, Raylene King, Jackie Mitchell, Moonwater, Perry Mowery, Darlene Peterson, Eric Richey, Donnell Tanksley, Bruce Van Glubt, Maia Vanyo

5. [Behavioral Health Provider Ride-Along with Law Enforcement \(01:29:08\)](#)

Chadwick reported on discussions in the Behavioral Health Committee about alternative responses and the difference in response needs between Bellingham versus rural areas of Whatcom County:

- The County uses MCOT and GRACE to get clinicians out in the field
- They are discussing having a behavioral health clinician ride along with the behavioral health deputies
- Funding may be available
- Safety of all responders is an issue and concern
- Skagit County's Impact Program is a model they are considering
- A ride-along model would work better in the more rural areas
- Legislative changes don't say that law enforcement can't respond, but they have a duty of reasonable care and must use alternatives, and officers must leave the scene if there is no crime or immediate threat

Committee members discussed requesting funding from the Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization.

This item will be held for a presentation at the next Behavioral Health Committee in October.

6. Task Force Communications

This item was held to the next meetings for each committee.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.