

Alternatives to Incarceration in Whatcom County

June 26, 2024

Below is a summary of some Implementation Plan Projects discussed today. For full details, please follow the link to [Implementation Plan 2023](https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/76742/Implementation-Plan-for-the-Whatcom-County-Justice-Project-June-2023-formatted?bidId=):

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/76742/Implementation-Plan-for-the-Whatcom-County-Justice-Project-June-2023-formatted?bidId=>

Project 4: Address workforce shortages in behavioral health services.

Description	Workforce shortages in the behavioral health field are a problem across the United States. The work can be extremely stressful, and the pay is often inadequate to retain quality staff. Training and support are essential. Linking more behavioral health services to peer support and mentorship networks can help create a larger network of care.	
Lead Organization	Whatcom County Health and Community Services (WCHCS)	
Cost Estimate / Sources of Funding	Total: \$150,000/yr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ĩ State funding through North Sound BH-ASO ĩ Behavioral Health Fund (BH Fund) ĩ Washington State Health Care Authority

Project 7: Build a 23-hour Crisis Relief Center.

Description	<p>Build a 23-hour Crisis Relief Center (a Behavioral Health Urgent Care open all hours, seven days per week; individuals can stay for up to 23 hours and 59 minutes) to enable prompt and appropriate intervention when a person is having a behavioral health crisis. This Center will divert people from the Emergency Department and prevent unnecessary incarceration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ĩ \$9 million in State funding has been secured toward capital expenses. ĩ A Special Projects Manager has been hired. 	
Lead Organization	Whatcom County Health and Community Services	
Cost Estimate / Sources of Funding	Total: \$12 million capital expense plus \$500,000 - \$1 million/yr. estimated local share of operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ĩ State (\$9 million received) ĩ BH Fund ĩ Proposed new sales tax

Project 2: Establish a Justice Project Finance Advisory Board to oversee financial performance of the Public Health, Safety, and Justice Tax fund and associated programs.

Description	<p>The Finance Advisory Board shall monitor the spending of the Public Health, Safety, and Justice Tax and provide a written and oral report no less than annually to the IPRTF/LJC and Whatcom County Council on the financial performance of the fund and associated programs. This report shall detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ï Fund revenue; ï Expenditures by project; ï Resources beyond the sales and use tax invested in Implementation Plan projects; ï Additional resources needed to further meet goals; and ï Recommendations for any updates to the Implementation Plan and/or Spending Plan. 	
Lead Organization	County Executive’s Office	
Cost Estimate / Sources of Funding	Total: In-kind	General Fund

Project 3: Collect data to measure progress toward desired outcomes and develop a data dashboard.

Description	<p>Data are essential to measuring progress, improving coordination, and ensuring that systems, services, and facilities can adapt to changing circumstances and needs. To make the data accessible, a “data dashboard” will help providers and the public be well-informed.</p>	
Lead Organizations	County Executive’s Office	
Cost Estimate / Sources of Funding	Total: \$340,000/yr.	General Fund (in process)