

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Meeting Summary for September 19, 2022

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1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Stephen Gockley called the meeting to order at 9:03 A.M. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar.

Members Present: Bill Elfo, Caleb Erickson, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Seth Fleetwood, Stephen Gockley, Deborah Hawley, Mike Hilley, Jack Hovenier, Raylene King, Scott Korthuis, Jason McGill, Rebecca Mertzig, Perry Mowery, Darlene Peterson, Donnell Tanksley, Louise Trapp (for Eric Richey), Bruce Van Glubt, Maialisa Vanyo

Members Absent: Barry Buchanan, David Freeman, Dan Hammill, Jenn Lockwood, Eric Petersen, Dave Reynolds, Tyler Schroeder, Greg Winter

2. [IPRTF Public Communications with Pyramid Communications \(01:40\)](#)

Emily Goetz of Pyramid Communications and Sakara Remmu of Temple Water Consulting gave an overview of the work they are doing for the Task Force. Main points of the presentation included:

- Success relies on building awareness and understanding with county residents;
- Pyramid's objectives: they will create two to four sets of key messages;
- Their overall work plan and timeline;
- The approach to narrative and messaging they will be taking. They will utilize a narrative based structure that leads with an overarching values-based framework which consistently points back to the "Why";
- The narrative structure they will build and how it will act to introduce the public to the IPRTF and its work;
- The message testing process and what the goals, target audience, and assets are.

3. [Justice Project Needs Assessment \(16:20\)](#)

Hovenier summarized what was covered in the latest meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). There are three more scheduled meeting and there will be at least one additional special meeting. He gave an overview of the results of a recent poll of SAC members and Gockley added that a poll of inmates at the jail had recently been completed as well. Hovenier thanked corrections staff for helping to coordinate the recent video tour and for facilitating easy access to needed data.

4. [Options for obtaining additional jail bed space \(24:05\)](#)

Wendy Jones, Chief of Corrections, reported that they are trying to find additional bed space. She has reached out to South Correctional Entity (SCORE) in Burien but hasn't received a response yet. She is hopeful that they will be able to obtain space there, though that location would not be as convenient as Snohomish County would have been. She stated that a lot of the bed space she has found is on the East side of the state, which is problematic for pre-trial offenders. Mertzig said that she had spoken to Snohomish County and they had encouraged her and the County to reach back out in January after budget negotiations have taken place.

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Elfo stated that conditions in the jail are declining and they are losing staff. Out of county contracts for bed space are not a long-term solution and are also unreliable. He emphasized the urgency of moving forward with a new jail facility. Gockley assured Elfo and committee members that the Task Force and the SAC is aware of those issues and are looking for ways to move as quickly as possible.

Jones and Erickson gave more information on SCORE, how it functions, and where it's located.

Peterson said that the City of Bellingham is using SCORE and that the biggest challenge they've encountered is giving defendants access to their attorneys. King added that there is a shortage of attorneys statewide and this could be exasperated by moving a defendant out of the county. Vanyo agreed that traveling to SCORE would be extremely challenging.

Vanyo, Elfo, and Jones discussed the length of stay of current inmates and the cause of delays.

Jones added that they are going into the time of the year in which population tends to go down. Because of this, they may not need to use SCORE at all or may only need it for a short period of time until they can renegotiate with Snohomish after the first of the year.

5. [Racial Equity Implementation Strategy for the IPRTF \(41:55\)](#)

Gockley reported that they are in the middle of a recruitment effort for more diverse membership for the planning team involved in implementing the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) toolkit. He thanked Vanyo for circulating information on an event hosted by the State Bar in which a panel will discuss a film focused on racial equity. He encouraged committee members to attend the event.

6. [Competency Restoration Workgroup \(48:02\)](#)

Buchanan was not in attendance to summarize the progress being made with the workgroup. Mowery said that they are exploring pathways to address competency restoration and they are in the processes of setting up further meetings.

7. [Committee Updates \(49:06\)](#)

The Behavioral Health Committee chairs were not in attendance to summarize the latest meeting.

Hovenier reported on the recent Steering Committee meeting. They talked mainly about the end of year report and GARE implementation.

8. [Other Business \(50:35\)](#)

Mowery reported that he has been working with Mardi Solomon to identify action steps related to the Sequential Intercept Model and the needs and recommendations that the Behavioral Health Gap Analysis Team (BHGAT) identified. He said he will have a further report to give at the next Steering Committee.

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Hovenier asked Tanksley or King to speak to work they are doing with the Washington Courts Alternatives to Incarceration group. King said that they have very similar goals to the Task Force and are looking at ways to find alternatives to incarceration within the court system statewide. Tanksley added that the program is sponsored by the Washington Courts Board of Judicial Administration. Their goal is to develop a strategic initiative for pre-trial and post-sentencing incarceration alternatives that are uniform throughout the state and various court systems. He went over what the makeup of the group's membership is and said that they would continue to update members as the work continues.

King reminded committee members of the upcoming joint meeting of the Behavioral Health Committee and the Legal and Justice Systems Committee. She gave an overview of what they will cover and invited any Task Force members to join. Mowery reported that he has been working with Mardi Solomon to identify action steps related to the Sequential Intercept Model and the needs and recommendations that the Behavioral Health Gap Analysis Team (BHGAT) identified. He said he will have a further report to give at the next Steering Committee.

9. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M.