

**Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force**  
**Behavioral Health Subcommittee**  
**Meeting Summary for June 15, 2021**

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

**1. Call to Order**

Committee Co-Chair Dan Hammill called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar.

Members Present: Megan Ballew, Chris Cochran, Doug Chadwick, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Stephen Gockley, Dan Hammill, Mike Hilley, Byron Manering, Perry Mowery, Mike Parker, Michael G. Smith, Donnell Tanksley, Brien Thane, Jackie Mitchell (proxy for Perry Mowery)

Members Absent: Nathan Bajema, Seth Fleetwood, Perry Mowery

**2. [2021 Committee Priorities \(00:01:08\)](#)**

The committee discussed the results of the priority ranking survey as shown in the meeting packet, including:

- Item O – Workforce Needs. The Health Department is working with the Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (BH-ASO) and Health Care Authority on the lack of a workforce being a statewide issue that needs a statewide response. Health Department staff can let this committee know how it can support this effort.
- Is there a local county response in parallel with a statewide effort?
- How they can locally recruit and retain a workforce?
- The need for them to advocate at the State level
- Workforce shortages in law enforcement and nonprofit agencies
- Training people locally to do the work. Explore training that would allow tech level people to do that work, and then let the people with social work degrees run the programs
- Salaries for those in the behavioral health workforce are too low
- Specialized training to help people with severe behavioral health issues is necessary
- Item N – GARE Toolkit. A question is how to apply the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) toolkit to the issues of housing and pay gaps in the community
- There is a need for data to know who is being affected
- The Task Force can join GARE, which will provide more tools for the committees and Task Force and their members
- Probation and parole offices need to be at the table, when talking about data and recidivism
- The need to define who is using and who needs to use services and engage the underserved population

This item will be continued to the next meeting.

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**3. [America Rescue Plan Act funding: How can ARPA dollars support public health programs and public health data systems with a criminal justice aspect \(00:39:00\)](#)**

Parker reported for the IPR Task Force and its discussion on the ARPA funds. The County administration is asking the committee to recommended uses for the funding, which can be applied to behavioral health programs.

The committee members discussed prioritizing the items ranked in the previous discussion and focusing the request to something more specific; using the funding to help with their data needs, and; a group of committee members, less than a quorum, will meet in a workgroup to identify and refine suggestions for ARPA expenditures.

**4. [New funding streams and recommendations based on the strategic plan \(00:54:31\)](#)**

Hammill referenced and reported on State House Bill 1590 (2019-2020), which will bring in a total of \$2 million for the County and \$3 million for the City of Bellingham. In addition, State House Bill 1406 (2019-2020) will bring in another \$700,000 for housing funds also. They are looking for committee recommendations on how to spend those dollars, to recommend to the broader Task Force and then the County Council.

The committee members discussed how critical supportive housing is for people with behavioral health challenges; define what targeted housing would look like for individuals coming from the criminal justice system; the Executive plans for putting 60 percent of the funds into capital projects; State funding is also coming forward through the Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for rental assistance, if the housing capacity is available; the County Housing Advisory Committee approval of the Executive's plan for these expenditures; whether it's feasible to build new housing within the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) timeline; finding a site to develop housing vs. acquisition and rehabilitation of existing sites; leverage capacity of the funds; focus on people who traditionally have not been getting housing, and; look at who they are frequently arresting because they are not housed.

**5. [External communication and public engagement: Identify local agencies and community groups that may be interested in receiving information on the work of the IPRTF \(00:00:00\)](#)**

Jill Nixon, Council Office, reported on the Steering Committee's effort to develop a communication strategy for the Task Force, and asked committee members to brainstorm groups that may benefit from IPR Task Force outreach. The committee members listed a number of organizations and community groups to include on roster for receiving information and content from the Task Force.

**6. [Other Business](#)**

There was no other business.

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**7. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.