LEAD SUPPORT BUREAU
Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion
Let Everyone Advance with Dignity

Where Pre-booking Diversion Fits in the Landscape of Response to Behavioral Health Challenges

December 1, 2025 · SURSAC Education Series

Lisa Daugaard · Brandi McNeil · Vanessa Martin · Jason Schwarz
Undersheriff Chris Chapman · Officer John Morbeck · Sgt. Pete Navarro

Objectives:

- Understanding the case for continued pre-booking diversion investment
- Align on how pre-booking diversion eases public defender caseloads and court demand
- Understand how Whatcom County operationalized pre-charging diversion
- Surface law enforcement perspectives on the impact of diversion on public safety
- Identify case management supports for Medicaid enrollment and employment certification

Source: LEAD Support Bureau

Impact of Public Defender Caseload Standards Revision

Jason Schwarz
Snohomish County

Prior Caseload Limits

Per year, a full-time, fully-supported attorney should be assigned no more than:

- 150 Felonies or
- 400 Misdemeanors (300 if Case-Weighted) or
- 250 Juvenile Offender Cases

Caseloads = Measurements of Time

At 1650 case-related hours per year:

150 Felonies = 11 Hours/Case

400 Gross/Misdemeanors = 4 Hours/Case

250 Juvenile Offender Cases = 6 Hours/Case

Current Caseload Limits

Per year, a full-time, fully-supported attorney should be assigned no more than:

- 47 Felonies or
- 120 Misdemeanors

NPDWS
case types and associated hours

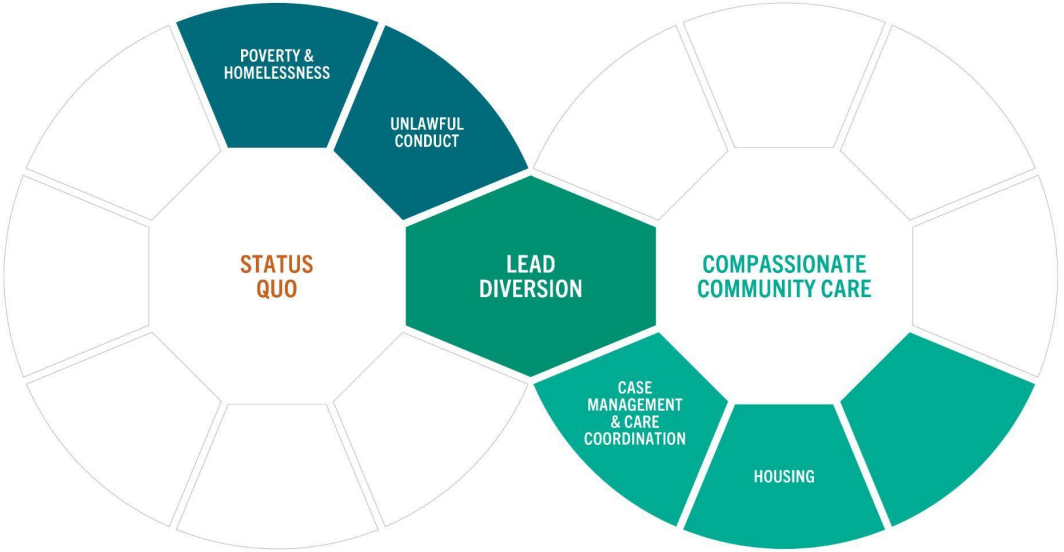
CASE TYPE	HOURS/CASE
Felony High – LWOP	286
Felony High – Murder	248
Felony High – Sex	167
Felony High – Other	99
Felony – Mid	57
Felony – Low	35
High Level DUI	33
Low Level DUI	19
High Level Misdemeanor	22.3
Low Level Misdemeanor	13.8
Probation Violations	13.52

how pre-booking diversion (& pre-filing) can help

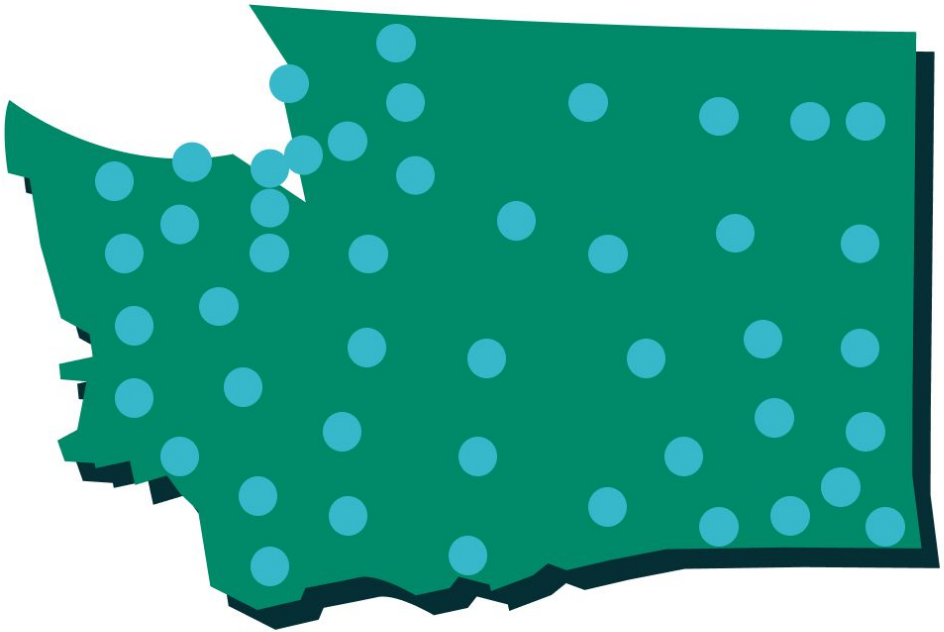
Lisa Daugaard & Brandi McNeil
Purpose Dignity Action

Why pre-booking (or pre-filing)?

- Pre-booking diversion avoids attorney assignment, costly case processing, and jail days
- LEAD/RNP/AJA focus on high utilizers to lessen overall system burden
- Reduces number of lawyers needed for low-level offenses
- Reduces clerical, prosecutorial, interpreter, and courtroom demands
- Frees capacity for more serious cases that must be in court



How it works: pre-booking diversion flow



- In all 39 Counties
- Warm handoff: immediate contact to LEAD/RNP/AJA case manager
- Stabilization: basic needs, safety plan, treatment linkage, self guided plan
- Feedback loop: real-time updates to referral source & other partners; track outcomes; coordinate care, including potential non-diverted cases

diversion intercept points

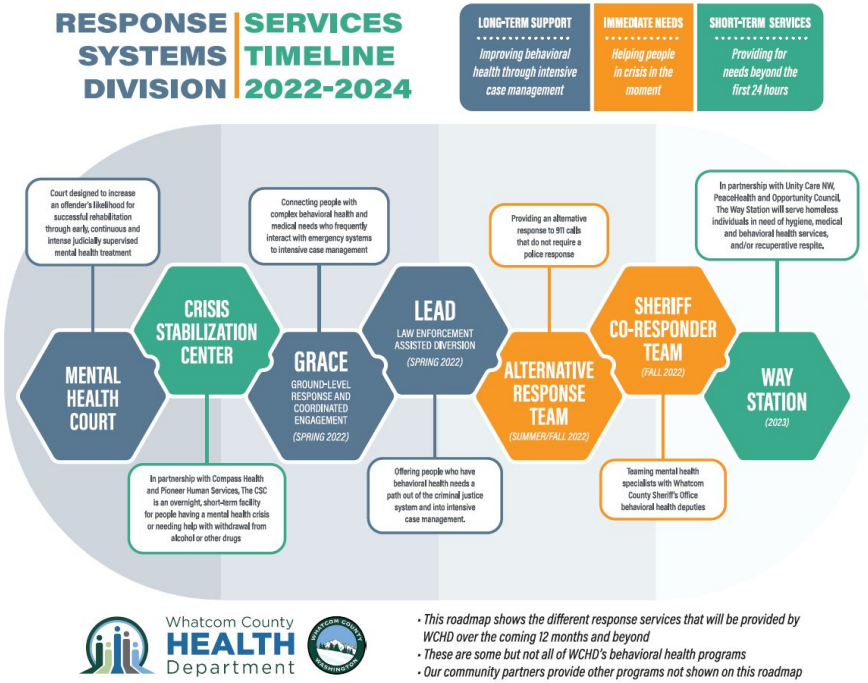
Source: LEAD Support Bureau

- Pre-arrest vs pre-booking vs pre-filing vs pre-trial
- Pre-booking involves warm hand-off & avoids jail; pre-booking & pre-filing avoid court hearings, assignment of counsel
- Faster engagement in services; quicker stabilization
- Net effect: lower court volume, fewer public defender assignments reducing impact of lower caseload limits, safer communities

Whatcom County pre-filing case study

Vanessa Martin
Whatcom County LEAD/LEAD Bureau site advisor

Whatcom County case study: alternative response in action



LEAD responds by advancing health and public safety through systems coordination & community-based solutions.

So

Law Enforcement perspectives on LEAD/RNP/AJA model

Undersheriff Chris Chapman · Officer John Morbeck · Sgt. Pete Navarro

Law enforcement panel: Impact of diversion on public safety

Undersheriff Chris Chapman

Whitman Co Sheriff Department

Officer John Morbeck

Clarkston Police Department

Sgt. Pete Navarro

Tumwater Police Department

Long-term LEAD-aligned case management as solution for Medicaid churn

Lisa Daugaard
Purpose Dignity Action

Case manager support with Medicaid enrollment, certification & work requirements

- By December 31, 2026, states are required to institute work requirements as condition of Medicaid eligibility for those aged 19-65
- Makes coverage contingent on working, training, or community engagement 80 hours per month, unless disability precludes this
- More than 620,000 adults would be at risk to lose or delay coverage due to administrative churn
- Case managers can certify waiver of

What we need from partners

- Concentrate effort on pre-booking diversion & share logic with courts
- Advocate for pre-booking diversion as a core strategy to meet new public defender caseload caps
- Standardize referral pathways
- Identify law enforcement champions (sheriffs/chiefs) to speak to impact and current burden

We're here to help.

Lisa Daugaard
Co-Executive Director
Purpose. Dignity. Action.

Patricia Sully
Deputy Director
Purpose. Dignity. Action.

Malika Lamont, Director
WA State Technical Support Team
LEAD Support Bureau

Chelle Wilder, Project Manager
WA State Technical Support Team
LEAD Support Bureau

Expert Practitioners:

Rebecca Brown · Consulting Expert
Scott Brandon · Site Advisor
Everett Maroon · Site Advisor
Vanessa Martin · Site Advisor
Paige Killinger · Case Management
Chad Winfrey · Policing Strategies

LEAD SUPPORT BUREAU
Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion
Let Everyone Advance with Dignity

Questions?

leadbureau.org/toolkit