

American Rescue Plan Project Proposal for Mental Health Challenges in Yakima

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Updated Program discussion on Sept. 7th, 2021

Specific Problems

- “Dumping” of a homeless man who already had trespass orders and outstanding warrants
- Death of Tiffany Eubanks and other incidents with impaired and/or intoxicated individuals
- Persistent Camping and problem behavior on Naches Parkway
- The new requirement that individuals in possession of a controlled substance must be offered diversion to substance use disorder assessment and treatment services at least twice will require increased longitudinal record keeping

Background Problems which often result in cross-over of criminal justice and mental health issues

- ACEs, dysfunctional parenting, trauma, PTSD
- Criminal behavior, eg domestic violence, theft, assault, driving while intoxicated
- Possession, sale, and use of illegal intoxicants (stimulants cause more problems)
- Addiction/Substance Use Disorder w/ legal substances, eg alcohol, MJ, prescription drugs, computer games
- Cognitive disability eg developmental delay, encephalopathy, brain injury
- Mental health detention criteria (danger to self or others, grave disability) with inadequate resources for detention
- Incompetence for self-care (eg dementia) which does not meet criteria for detention

Program

1. Financially support a contract with Comprehensive Mental Health for additional Crisis Response Mental Health Professionals (CRPs) to provide needed 24/7 coverage and additional YPD patrol coverage. Currently, there is not enough trained staffing available, and there are frequent long wait times.
2. Inventory the availability of paraprofessional behavioral health workers for EMT calls. Work in partnership with affected agencies (eg: 911 Suncomm, Lower Valley dispatch, YPD, and YFD) to standardize credentialing, protocols, and risk-management.
3. Explore Yakima Fire Department purchase and staffing of 2 paramedic-led emergency response vehicles. This is an option which would work entirely within the Fire Department.

Funding Opportunities/References

American Rescue Plan Provides More Relief to Local Governments. Eric Lowell. Municipal Research News. Spring 2021.

<https://mrsc.org/Home/Stay-Informed/MRSC-Insight/March-2021/American-Rescue-Plan-Provides-Relief.aspx>

“ARPA funds can be used by local governments:

- *To respond to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19...*

The ARPA legislation is over six hundred pages long, and this article only covers areas most pertinent to local governments. Also included in ARPA are several other potential grant opportunities for local governments. Your agency may want to pursue funding available in these areas, such as:

- *Block grants for community mental health services (Section 2701)*
- *Block grants for prevention and treatment of substance abuse (Section 2702)* •
- Grants for local substance use disorder services (Section 2706)*
- *Grants for local behavioral health needs (Section 2707)*
- *Homelessness assistance and supportive services (Section 3205)”*

Legislature agrees on approach to address Blake

<https://wacities.org/advocacy/News/advocacy-news/2021/04/26/legislature-agrees-on-approach-to-address-em-blake-em>

“The legislation requires law enforcement officers who encounter an individual in possession of a controlled substance to offer a diversion to seek substance use disorder assessment and treatment services. The first two interactions by law enforcement must result in such a diversion. Further contacts allow the officer to offer diversion but does not mandate that the officer do so. If an officer arrests and pursues a misdemeanor charge, the prosecutor is not required to prosecute. The prosecutor may offer diversion or move forward with a charge.

The Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) is charged with establishing a recovery services advisory committee to create a substance use recovery services plan. The purpose of the plan is to implement measures to assist those with a substance use disorder in accessing outreach, treatment, and recovery support services that are low-barrier, person-centered, informed by people with lived experience, and culturally and linguistically appropriate. Additionally, the committee must make recommendations regarding the appropriate criminal legal system response, if any, to possession of controlled substances. It must also make recommendations regarding the collection and reporting of data that identifies the number of people law enforcement officers and prosecutors engage with regarding drug possession, and the design of a mechanism for referring people with a substance use disorder, or who display problematic behaviors resulting from substance use, to supportive services. A final plan is due to the Legislature by December 1, 2022.

The HCA will also establish several other plans and programs, including:

- A comprehensive statewide substance misuse prevention plan. As a part of this plan, the HCA must administer a competitive grant process for existing local community efforts to prevent substance misuse. The plan must be completed by January 1, 2024.
- A grant program to provide treatment for low-income individuals with substance use disorder who are not eligible for Medicaid. Grant distribution must begin by March 1, 2022.
- A grant-based homeless outreach stabilization transition program. Grant distribution must begin by March 1, 2022.
- Funding for behavioral health administration services organizations to establish recovery navigator programs. These programs will provide community-based outreach, intake, assessment, connection to services, and, as needed, long-term intensive case management and recovery coaching services to individuals with substance use disorders.
- An expanded recovery support services program that increases regional access to recovery services for substance use disorder such as housing, employment training, recovery coaching, and legal support.

By July 1, 2022, the Criminal Justice Training Commission must develop new training for law enforcement officers on how to manage interactions with people they encounter with substance use disorders, including referral to treatment and recovery services. The training will be incorporated into the curriculum at the Basic Law Enforcement Academy.

In addition to the \$83.5 million in the state's budget to help the state and counties manage the legal impacts of the Blake decision, **SB 5476** includes another \$88.4 million to help establish the new programs outlined above. Of that \$88.4 million, \$4.5 million will go to the Administrative Office of the Courts to help enhance municipal and district therapeutic courts. There are no direct appropriations to cities to offset the costs of diversion and prosecution."