

# Criminal Justice Task Force Work Groups

The Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF), in its report of September 10, 2008, recommended that Pierce County “should aggressively pursue every viable means of limiting the need for additional jail bed space before planning to construct additional jail capacity or to staff currently unoccupied jail beds” by pursuing cost-effective means of managing the size of the jail population.

To this end, the CJTF recommended formation of work groups to:

1. Restructure the pretrial release decision-making and supervision process (Pretrial Release Work Group).
2. Develop more effective non-jail interventions for chronic minor offenders who are heavy users of county and private sector resources (Frequent Flier Work Group).
3. Establish a jail population management monitoring system that synthesizes data from the criminal justice agencies (Dashboard Report Work Group).

The proposed work group members are listed below. Starting in October (first meeting is October 23), the groups are to meet regularly, develop a written work plan with a timeline for deliverables, and begin tasks. Each group will provide monthly progress reports and make presentations at the February 2009 Criminal Justice Task Force meeting. Final reports will be due by September 1, 2009. Responsibilities of each group are outlined below. Consultant Teri Martin will work with each group.

## **Pretrial Release Work Group**

Dick Muri, County Council, Chair  
Michael Kawamura, DAC, Vice Chair  
Dawn Farina, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney  
Judge Jim Heller, District Court  
Mark Langford, Tacoma Police Dept  
Judge Tom Larkin, Superior Court  
Rob Masko, Corrections Bureau  
Jeanie Peterson, Citizen  
Matt Temmel, Performance Audit  
Ken Witkoe, Citizen

---

## **Dashboard Report Work Group**

Rollie Herman, Citizen, Chair  
Doug Johnson, Corrections Bureau  
Matt Temmel, Performance Audit  
Bill Vetter, Performance Audit

## **Frequent Fliers Work Group**

Connie Brown, Citizen, Chair  
Tim Farrell, County Council, Vice Chair  
Terri Card, Greater Lakes Mental Health  
Troy Christiansen, Human Services  
Greg Hopkins, Tacoma Police Dept  
Martha Karr, Corrections Bureau  
Nick Leider, Nativity House  
Penni Newman, Human Services  
Diane Powers, Tacoma, Housing  
Judy Snow, Human Services  
Gay Springer, Citizen  
Harry Steinmetz, Defense Attorney  
Bill Vetter, Performance Audit  
Dick Whitehead, DAC

## Pretrial Release Work Group

According to the CJTF report, an improved pretrial release system is one of the most effective ways to manage the size of the jail population. Currently, the authority to release pretrial defendants is spread across the courts, Corrections Bureau, and law enforcement. Current record-keeping practices do not collect data on those released from jail to adequately document the characteristics of inmates released by various means, or their rates of failure to appear (FTA) at court proceedings or re-arrest while awaiting resolution of their case(s). The task force recommends that current stakeholders collaborate to review the present pretrial release system and restructure it from the ground up.

Creating a comprehensive system of pretrial release will require more than simply reassigning current responsibilities or expanding the authority of any one agency, group, or individual. The central charge of the Pretrial Release Work Group is to recommend how to reorganize the County's approach to pretrial release in ways that will enhance the system's objectivity, consistency, and effectiveness. Reorganization objectives include:

1. Gather and analyze data on the methods currently used for pretrial release, including FTA and re-arrest rates for the various release methods.
2. Analyze current organizational structures and assignment of pretrial release responsibilities.
3. Consult the literature and national experts on the experiences of other counties with successful pretrial release and supervision systems.
4. Examine actuarial risk assessment tools used by other jurisdictions to inform pretrial release decisions, and recommend one for adoption or adaptation.
5. Propose a range of supervision and notification options for pretrial-release defendants.
6. Specify performance or outcome objectives relevant to pretrial release that may be incorporated in the County's criminal justice dashboard report.
7. Propose a coordinated pretrial release system with a range of supervision and notification options.

### Work Group Deliverables

The objectives listed above are tied to the following deliverables:

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Member(s)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Work plan		
Report on current release methods		
Report on current FTA and re-arrest rates		
Report on proposed supervision and notification options		
Report on actuarial tool		
Report on population monitoring strategy		
Report on performance/outcome objectives for pretrial release system		
Final report on restructured pretrial release system		Sept. 1, 2009

## Frequent Fliers Work Group

Analyses conducted for the CJTF found that a large number of offenders (or “frequent fliers”) are repeatedly arrested and jailed for relatively minor offenses. This pattern is not an efficient use of public resources and does not appear effective in changing the behavior of arrestees. The CJTF concluded that Pierce County should explore other options to help these individuals maintain themselves outside of the criminal justice system, if not break their cycle of dysfunction. Either of these outcomes would reduce their jail stays and represent a more cost-effective investment of tax dollars.

This “frequent flier” work also links to the related CJTF recommendation to develop a system of jail discharge planning, which will include referrals to community-based agencies and plans for successful reentry into the community. Jail discharge planning could initially begin with frequent fliers and later expand to all jail releases. The objectives for this work group include:

1. Adopt a working definition of “frequent flier” in terms of use of public resources, particular service needs, and any other relevant characteristics.
2. Identify frequent fliers who will be the focus of work group analysis or interest.
3. Assess the availability in the public and nonprofit sector of services for frequent fliers.
4. Explore how other jurisdictions have addressed frequent flier issues.
5. Develop ways to identify frequent flier individuals at different points in the justice system, and as early as possible in their “careers,” to do effective jail release planning, and to match them with appropriate intervention strategies.
6. Propose a system that coordinates law enforcement and jail assessment efforts and provides for diversion or discharge planning that matches frequent fliers to appropriate county and external agency services.
7. Develop specific proposals for jail discharge planning for frequent fliers that may be expanded to a wider population of jail releasees.
8. Identify what other jurisdictions have done on jail discharge planning, and identify what elements or approaches offer most promise in Pierce County.
9. Develop a measurement system to assess the effectiveness of proposed interventions.

## Frequent Fliers Work Group Deliverables

The objectives listed above are tied to the following deliverables:

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Member(s)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Work plan		
Report on frequent flier definition and criteria		
Report on available services		
Report on other jurisdictions' approaches to assessment and jail release planning for frequent fliers		
Report on effective systems of services and ways to connect frequent fliers to them		
Report on discharge planning in other jurisdictions for general jail population		
Report on measurement/monitoring system		
Final report on proposed coordinated system for assessment, intervention and continued monitoring of frequent flier population and its impact on jail population		Sept. 1, 2009

## Dashboard Report Work Group

The CJTF recommended that Pierce County establish a jail population monitoring system that features a “Dashboard Report.” The objectives of this work group include:

1. Improve the quality of available data.
2. Make the reporting process more efficient by eliminating ad hoc, duplicative, or overlapping requests for data or reports.
3. With other stakeholders and task force work groups, establish performance benchmarks as standards against which to measure progress.
4. Create a dashboard report.
5. Identify areas where improvement or fine-tuning – of the criminal justice system and/or the dashboard report -- may be necessary to keep jail population management initiatives on track.

Data for the dashboard report will come from:

- Corrections Bureau: bookings, releases, jail population, jail length-of-stay, and program participation.
- Courts: case filings, pending cases, case age, time to disposition, and sentences.
- Police: arrest and living status.

Dashboard Report Working Group members will be Matt Temmel and Bill Vetter from the Performance Audit Office, Tacoma citizen Rollie Herman, and Sergeant Doug Johnson of the Corrections Bureau.

### Work Group Deliverables

The objectives listed above are tied to the following deliverables:

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Member(s)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Work plan		
Identify data elements		
Identify data sources		
Report on data access procedure		
First dashboard report		February 2009
Quarterly Review of dashboard report; recommendations		May 2009
Quarterly Review of dashboard report; recommendations		August 2009