



Public Defender Caseload Standards

March 30, 2026
PSCH





Agenda

- New caseload standards
- Current filings
- Immediate Steps
- Long-term planning



Caseload Standards

- Beginning in 2012: Public Defenders could carry **400 cases/year**
- In 2025, Supreme Court issued new standards:
 - Informed by national workload study
 - Intended to address concerns regarding caseloads and quality legal representation
- By 2036 City public defenders can only carry up to **120 cases/year**
 - Must achieve **10% reduction each year** for the next 10 years until new standards met

Note: Cities receive about 10% of state funding for public defense (carry 65% of misdemeanor cases per AWC)



Case Filings

- **Number of misdemeanor filings are up**
 - Jan 1, 2026 – March 26, 2026: 2,283
 - Jan 1, 2025 – March 26, 2025: 2,110
- **Increased charges under safe & accessible ordinance**
- **Timeliness**
 - Out of custody defendants have a right to trial within 90 days of Arraignment
 - In custody defendants (unless held on other charges) have a right to trial within 60 days of Arraignment



Immediate Steps

○ Proactive Outreach

- Add two additional Catholic Charity Outreach Specialists
 - Downtown, Monday-Sunday, 7am-7pm

○ Public Defender Recruitment

- Currently Public Defender I and II, consolidating into one class spec.

○ Public Defender Capacity

- Actively recruiting 1 vacant FTE
- Adding 4 student interns with vacancy savings
- Propose one additional Public Defender FTE

○ SPD: Resource Refresh

- Roll-call video outlining new and existing resources for officers



Long-term Strategies

- **Deflection**

- Pursue a 'no wrong door' model with robust opportunities for deflection, including medical clearance, 24/7 MAT, and other treatment

- **SPD Coordination**

- Hand-off to peers

- **Increase Day Navigation Capacity**

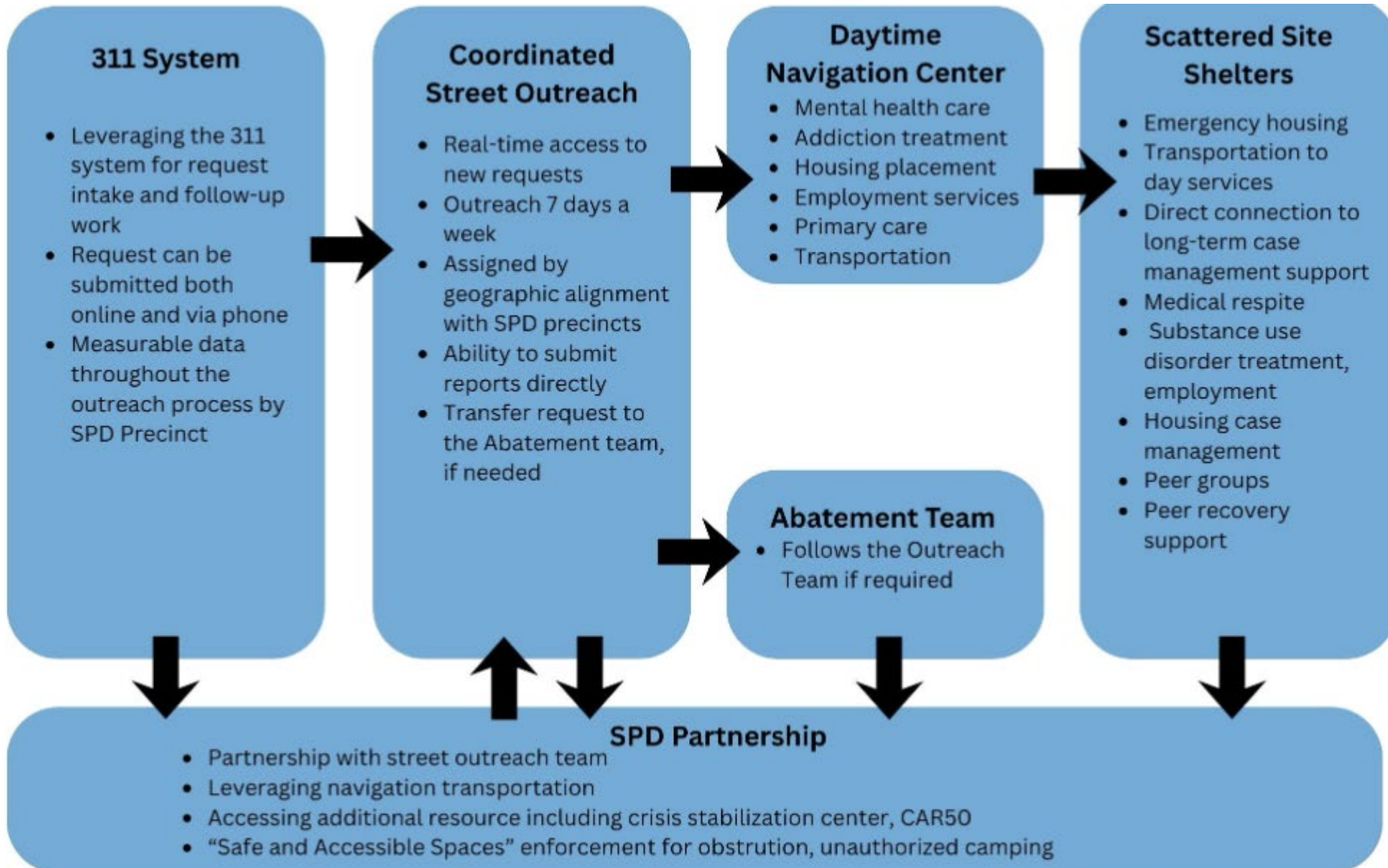
- Exploring a second location

- **Direct File vs. Prosecutorial Review**

- Ensures proper cases are assigned PDs



Current Coordinated Outreach





Future State: Coordinated Outreach & Deflection

