

SAFE & HEALTHY SPOKANE

MARCH 2026 UPDATE



Why create a Task Force?

- Our public health and public safety systems are not working effectively.
- People suffering from behavioral health issues, mental illness, and substance use disorders, are not receiving the comprehensive or coordinated care they need.
- Spokane's jail is overcrowded and understaffed, creating an unsafe facility for people incarcerated and staff.
- Inadequate justice and treatment facilities, and an overburdened criminal justice system, exacerbates the challenges facing Spokane.

Task Force Purpose

The Safe and Healthy Spokane Task Force is a community-led initiative committed to developing actionable strategies to Spokane County.



Enhance public
safety



Support behavioral
health



Strengthen system
coordination

Task Force Vision

In Spokane County, individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders will have access to a comprehensive, effective, humane, equitable, and data-driven system of care—one that improves public safety, strengthens behavioral health, and ensures coordinated services, adequate and effective correctional facilities and crisis stabilization capacity.

Task Force Members Represent

- Advocacy
- Business
- Courts
- First responders
- Government
- Healthcare and public health
- Housing
- Judges and the justice system
- Labor
- Law enforcement
- Marginalized communities
- Nonprofit organizations
- People with lived experience in the system
- Philanthropy
- Victim advocacy & support groups

Community Representatives

- Alicia Barbieri, Goodale & Barbieri
- Ana Trusty, Mujeres in Action
- Angel Tomeo Sam, Yoyot Sp'q'n'i
- Chud Wendle, Hutton Settlement
- Dr. Dean Martz, Waters Meet Foundation
- Dr. Melissa Mace, NAACP Spokane
- Erin Carden, Lutheran Community Services Northwest
- Jack Heath, Washington Trust Bank
- Jermal Joe, Community Advocate
- Kitara Johnson, Gabriel's Challenge
- Pam Parr, Spokane Housing Authority
- Roshelle Cleland, Washington State Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence
- Silas Eroaldi, Spectrum Center
- Sky Pagaling, Camas Foundation / Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Stacey Cowles, Cowles Company
- Stanley Harewood, Justice Not Jails
- Toni Lodge, The NATIVE Project
- Virla Spencer, The Way to Justice

Emergency Response & Health Representatives

- Alex Jackson, MultiCare
- Jan Downing, Frontier Behavioral Health
- John Browne, CHAS Health
- Matt Albright, Providence
- Dr. Francisco Velázquez, Spokane Regional Health District
- Justin Lundgren, Spokane County Sheriff's Office
- Justin Johnson, Spokane County - Behavioral Health
- Matthew Cowles, Spokane Police Department
- Matthew Vinci, Spokane County Fire District 9

Government, Justice & Correctional Representatives

- Albert Tripp, City of Airway Heights
- Erik Lamb, City of Spokane Valley
- Maggie Yates, City of Spokane
- Karl Otterstrom, Spokane Transit Authority
- Dr. Adam Swinyard, Spokane Public Schools
- Mike Sparber, Spokane County Regional Law and Justice Department
- Chris Bowles, 492 Corrections Officers Labor Union
- Jim Murphy, Spokane County Superior Court (Retired)
- Judge Tony Hazel, Spokane County Superior Court
- Judge Jeffrey Smith, Spokane County District Court
- Judge Kristin O'Sullivan, Spokane Municipal Court
- Misty Griffith, Spokane County District Court
- Katie McNulty, Spokane County Prosecutor
- Colin Charbonneau, Spokane County Public Defender
- Justin Bingham, City of Spokane Prosecutor
- Nick Antush, City of Spokane Public Defender

Who's Involved



- Conveners (Avista, Downtown Spokane Partnership, Greater Spokane Inc, Greater Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce, Waters Meet Foundation)
Funding, strategy, leadership
- Consultants (DH, MIG, The Leifman Group)
Project management, facilitation, technical expertise, communication strategy, public engagement
- Planning Team (Conveners + Local Jurisdictions)
Inform strategy, align jurisdictions
- Task Force
Co-create recommendations, champion priorities
- Advisory Committees
Inform recommendations, champion priorities
- Public
Inform recommendations, clarify needs and priorities

Task Force Progress

Press Conference
launches the Task Force
on Sept. 30

Task Force meets monthly,
View online:
SafeandHealthySpokane.org

Asset Convening brings
100+ together to discuss
challenges, assets and
opportunities

Advisory Committees
evaluation of existing data,
reports and Asset Assessment
Report for feedback from
multiple perspectives

The Leifman Group Asset Assessment Report

- Developed following a 2-day convening where 100+ attended
- Builds on recent justice and behavioral health mapping efforts and areas for scaling successful programs
- Establishes a shared understanding of how Spokane's public safety and health systems currently function and intersect at key points such as crisis response, diversion, treatment, housing, and reentry
- Identifies:
 - Existing programs and resources
 - Strengths, gaps and opportunities
 - Short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations

Source Material – Asset Assessment

- A Blueprint for Reform – Spokane Criminal Justice System
- Asset Assessment Convening (2025)
- BH-ASO Overview (2024)
- Bennett Consulting Report
- Best Practices for Behavioral Health Services in Jail Settings
- City of Spokane SIM
- Corrections Community Newsletter
- CSD Annual Report (2024)
- CSD Programs Project (2024)
- Faith-Based Committee of Spokane Proposal Booklet
- Gabriel’s Challenge No Wrong Door Summit Report
- Geiger Community Corrections Offender Programs (2024)
- GSI "The Pulse" Polling Reports
- Jail Modernization Task Force Final Report (2025)
- Pioneer Human Services Spokane Regional Stabilization Center Reporting Metrics (2024)
- SCDS Community Corrections Newsletter
- Spokane Community Health Needs Assessment (2024–25)
- Spokane County & City Budget Overview and Local Sales Tax (2024)
- Spokane County & City of Spokane Fiscal Conditions & Local Option Taxes
- Spokane County Corrections Needs Assessment Master Plan – Draft
- Spokane County Crisis Relief and Sobering Center Project
- Spokane County Detentions Programs Summary (2024)
- Spokane County SIM
- Spokane County Sobering, Triage and Transition (STaT) Program
- Spokane County–Spokane City Fire Co-Response Project
- Spokane County Voter Sentiment on Public Safety, Homelessness, Housing, Education, and Economic Development
- Spokane Regional Service Area Crisis System Overview Training
- Spokane Superior Court Calendaring and Court Efficiency Study
- SRHD Substance Use Disorder Resources; Fentanyl Roundtable; Spokane Public Health and Safety Meeting Dialogues
- SRLJC Jail Discussion
- Stabilization Center Metrics
- Substance Use Disorder Community Resources Assessment
- Whatcom County Justice Project Needs Assessment; 15-Point Implementation Plan; Site Criteria Selection

The Leifman Group Asset Assessment Report:

Key Findings

- The Spokane region has significant assets across sectors, including committed leadership, experienced providers, and strong community partnerships that can be better aligned through coordination and shared infrastructure.
- Crisis response systems would benefit from improved integration of first responders, and behavioral health providers, as well as expanded stabilization options. These improvements would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of necessary corrections responses and interventions.

The Leifman Group Asset Assessment Report:

Key Findings

- Lack of sufficient housing availability, particularly supportive and transitional housing, is a foundational factor influencing outcomes across behavioral health, homelessness, and the justice system.
- Workforce capacity challenges affect crisis response, treatment access, in custody remediation, and reentry services across the system.
- Improved data sharing and common performance measures are essential to support coordination, transparency, and decision-making.

Task Force Advisory Committees



Advisory Committee Focus Areas

Prevention & Crisis Response

(SIM Intercepts 0-1)

*Co-Leads: Angel Tomeo Sam, Jan
Downing, Justin Johnson*

Custody Strategies & Courts

(SIM Intercepts 2-3)

*Co-Leads: Dr. Melissa Mace,
Judge Tony Hazel, Mike Sparber*

Reentry, Discharge & Community Corrections

(SIM Intercepts 4-5)

*Co-Leads: Erik Lamb, Maggie Yates,
Matt Albright*

Correctional & Diversion Facilities, Infrastructure & System Coordination

*Co-Leads: Chud Wendle, Virla
Spencer, John Browne*

Advisory Committees Process to Assess & Prioritize Recommendations



Community & Stakeholder Engagement



Community & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Tier 1: Awareness Building

- Create awareness
- Build support
- Website feedback

Tier 2: Outreach

- Expand access & participation
- Face-to-face connection
- Toolkit utilization

Tier 3: Deep Engagement

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Community listening sessions

Tier 4: Co-Creation w/ Task Force & Advisory Committees

- In person meetings
- Presentations

Groups That Task Force Members Will Engage

- 492 Corrections Officers Labor Union Executive Board
- Bar Association
- Boards Task Force members serve on
- Building Owners & Managers Association
- Business community
- City of Spokane Valley email newsletter
- Council District 2 representatives
- County Medical Society
- County Sheriff command staff
- District Court
- Downtown Spokane Partnership
- Dr. Velázquez's Facebook Livestream
- Emergency Department directors
- Experience Matters
- Emergency Department directors
- Experience Matters
- Fentanyl Roundtable
- Frontier Behavioral Health Executive Board
- Homeless advocacy organizations
- Housing Coalition
- ILA board
- Justice reform advocacy groups
- Law schools
- Low-Income Housing Consortium
- Mental health diversion coordinators
- Municipal Court
- NAACP conference committee
- Peer Spokane
- Recovery Café
- Rotary
- School families
- Special education community
- Spokane Justice Council
- Task Force Members' staff/leadership
- State agency contacts
- Superior Court
- Survivors and survivor councils
- Systems-impacted families
- Therapeutic/treatment court meetings
- Treatment court managers
- Tribal community organizations
- Union representatives
- Victims and survivors

Next Steps



Building Momentum

Targeted Strategies

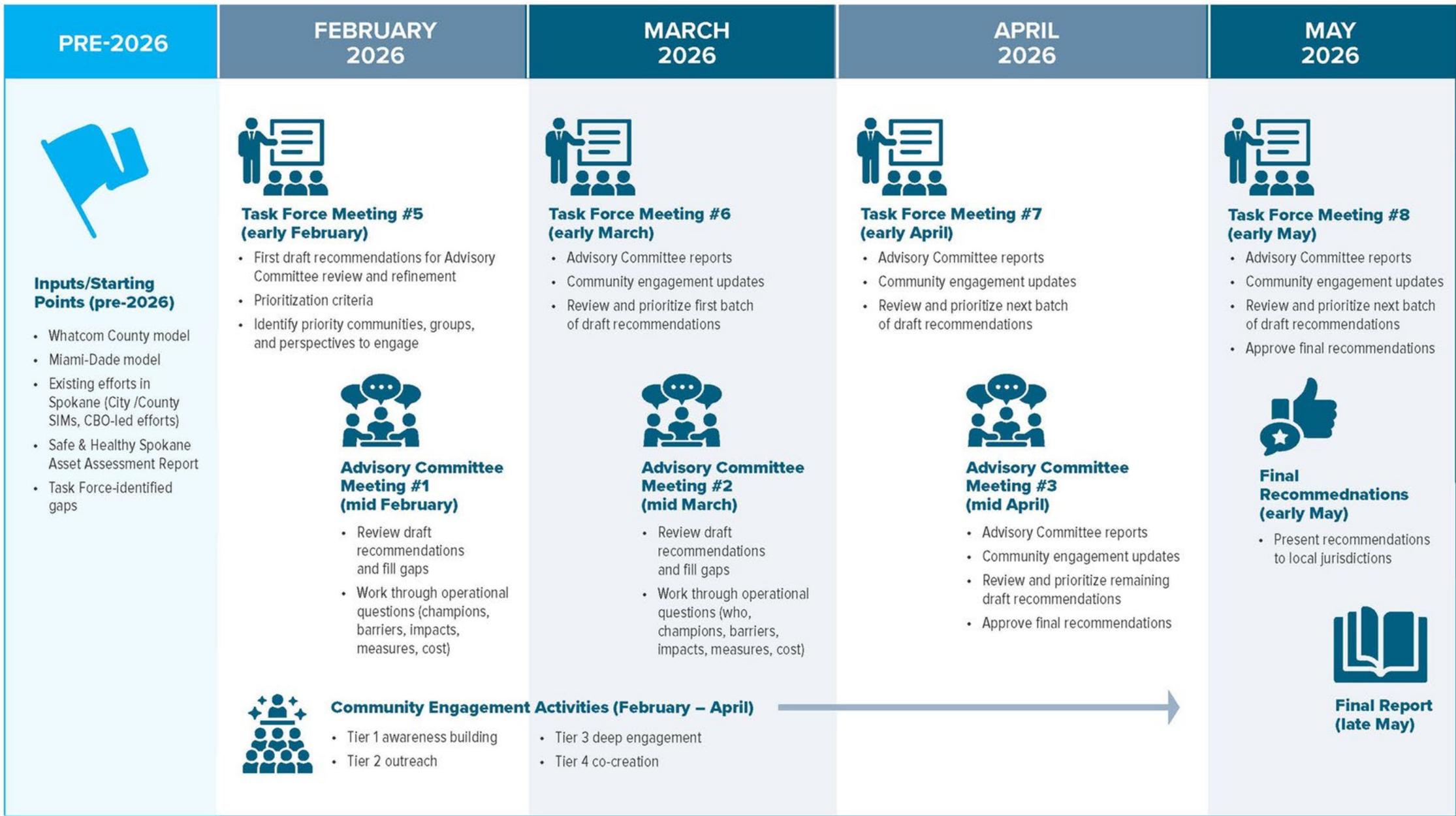
- Hot-spotter and high-utilizer initiatives
- Joint City–County opioid investments

Learning & Innovation

- New daytime navigation model

System Improvements

- Greater system efficiencies (e.g., more effective release decisions)
- Renewed collaboration (family jail visitation, monthly provider coordination)
- Strong cross-agency dialogue and problem-solving
- Alignment to protect Medicaid resources



Task Force Member Impressions



Stay Informed & Share Feedback



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