

## Recovery Navigator Program

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### Overview

The Recovery Navigator program (RNP), enacted through [Engrossed Senate Bill 5476](#) - Drug Possession and State v. Blake, and codified in RCW [71.24.115](#), is a criminal legal system diversion program that provides behavioral health and other supportive services to individuals who intersect with law enforcement because of simple drug possession or other alleged criminal activity. This includes individuals who have frequent criminal legal system contact, social contact referrals from first responders, and others who are referred from community sources.

The program serves individuals who are at risk of arrest due to alleged criminal activity, or who have already been involved in the criminal legal system, due to unmet behavioral health needs. While RNP has historically been a pre-arrest diversion program, [Second Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5536](#) (5536) added a new section to the Uniform Controlled Substances Act, codified as RCW [69.50.4017](#), which included RNP as a potential referral source for pretrial diversion.

RNP is a statewide effort, in partnership with Behavioral Health Administrative Organizations (BH-ASOs), to provide community-based outreach, intake, assessment, and connection to services for individuals referred through pre-arrest/pre-booking diversion and community referral. This program addresses safety risks associated with drug use by providing services to individuals whose drugs, with substance use disorder (SUD), and individuals with co-occurring substance use disorders and mental health conditions.

### Program framework

The RNP framework is modeled upon core components of Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and incorporates peer support, harm reduction, and trauma-informed care principles to support the individual throughout their recovery journey. Coordination and communication between regional RNP staff, law enforcement, court system partners (e.g. prosecutors), medical

providers, and community partners is essential to the success of program participants. RNP staff facilitate and coordinate connections to a broad range of community resources for youth and adults, including treatment and recovery support services.

### Uniform program standards

From June to the end of August 2021, the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) convened an ad-hoc committee to develop uniform program standards modeled after (LEAD) core principles. Consideration of the nature of referrals into the RNP are outlined in the Standards. Individuals can engage in a referral to appropriate supportive services or case management on a continuum of light to intensive, if they choose to participate in the RNP. The Health Care Authority has revised the Uniform Program Standards, as directed in 5536, passed during the 2023 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session.

### Strategic plan

Each BH-ASO submitted a regional recovery navigator program plan that demonstrated the ability to implement statewide program standards prior to program implementation. With dedicated funding, the BH-ASOs hired a regional Recovery Navigator Program Administrator and collaborated with the LEAD Support Bureau to ensure adherence to the Standards in regional program plan development. Plans are subsequently updated in response to revisions of the UPS.

Each recovery navigator strategic plan addresses requirements to provide intake and referral services. Recovery navigator teams specialize in conducting assessments and delivering light to intensive case management. Recovery navigator staff provide warm handoffs to treatment and recovery support services along the continuum of care. HCA arranges for technical assistance to be provided by the LEAD Support Bureau to all BH-ASOs, contracted providers, and independent stakeholders and partners.

### Eligibility requirements

The intent of the Recovery Navigator program is to assist in the provision of social services to individuals who intersect with police because of simple drug possession and/or people who have

frequent criminal legal system contact because of unmet behavioral healthcare needs.

The program is primarily focused on serving people who are at risk of arrest, or already have been involved in the criminal legal system, though it can also accept referrals made through social contact or outreach efforts.

## People served

- 11,112 total estimated individuals referred or contacted during outreach in SFY 24
- 7,002 total estimated unique clients enrolled in case management in SFY 24 (includes new enrollees in 2024 as well as continuing enrollees)
- 17% referrals from law enforcement

## Budget for SFY 25

- \$22 million General Fund-State (SFY24)
- \$24.5 million General Fund-State (SFY25), with 2.5 million of the total dedicated to expand services in regions where SFY25 projected expenditures will exceed base revenues.

## Partners

- Beacon Health Options- Pierce
- Beacon Health Options- Southwest
- Beacon Health Options- North Central
- King
- Salish
- Thurston-Mason
- Great Rivers
- Spokane
- Greater Columbia
- North Sound
- [LEAD Support Bureau/Purpose.Dignity.Action](#)

## For more information

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