Washington Association of
SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS

3060 Willamette Drive NE
Lacey, WA 98516
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www.waspc.org

President
Chief Rafael Padilla
City of Kent

President-Elect
Sheriff Joe Kriete
Grant County

Vice President
Chief Rebecca Mertzig
City of Bellingham

Past President
Sheriff John Nowels
Spokane County

Treasurer
Chief Damon Simmons
City of Liberty Lake

Executive Board

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Chief Matt Brown
City of Port Orchard

Sheriff Brian King
Clallam County

Chief Rick Johnson
East Wenatchee Police Department

Sheriff Summer Scheyer
Skamania County

Sheriff Mike Morrison
Chelan County

Chief Sam White
Lower Elwha Klallam Police Department

Chief John Batiste
Washington State Patrol

Mike Herrington, SAC
FBI—Seattle

Steven D. Strachan
Executive Director

WASPC GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING
November 11, 2026 | 8:00 AM
Three Rivers Convention Center

CALL TO ORDER

- Presidential Remarks – President Rafael Padilla
- Approval of Minutes from May 2025 Meeting – President Rafael Padilla **(Approval Needed)**

REPORTS

- Finance and Personnel Committee Report – Treasurer Damon Simmons
- Executive Director Report – Steve Strachan

NEW BUSINESS

- Strategic Intention Changes – Steve Strachan **(Approval Needed)**
- 2027 Legislative Agenda – James McMahan **(Approval Needed)**

UPDATES

- Liability/Risk issues and Jail Medical Update - Derek Young
- Traffic Safety Collision Report Form Manual Revision – Chief Shawn Boyle

ADJOURN

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Chief Rebecca Mertzig
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Sheriff Clay Myers
Kittitas County

Chief Rick Johnson
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Sheriff Summer Scheyer
Skamania County

Sheriff Mike Morrison
Chelan County

Chief Sam White
Lower Elwha Klallam Police Department

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WASPC GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
MAY 14, 2026 | 8:00 AM
SPOKANE CONVENTION CENTER |SPOKANE, WA

CALL TO ORDER:
President John Nowels opened the meeting at 8:09 AM. President Nowels welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized conference sponsors.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Approval of Minutes from the November 12, 2025 Meeting. **Motion to approve minutes as presented made by Sheriff Kriete. Second by Sheriff Manke. Motion approved.**

EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS
The following positions were open for election on WASPC's Executive Board

- Vice President (Chief Position) – Chief Rebecca Mertzig, Bellingham Police Department was nominated following the Chiefs' meeting.
- Sheriff at-large – Sheriff Brian King, Clallam County Sheriff's Office was nominated following the Sheriffs' meeting.
- Chief at-large – two nominations. The following candidates were nominated for Chief at large following the Chiefs' meeting. Both nominees shared a few words on why they should be elected:
  - Chief Jeff Beazizo, Lake Stevens Police Department
  - Chief Matt Brown, Port Orchard Police Department

COMMITTEE REPORTS:
During the meeting, committee chairs gave brief updates regarding recent activities. Written committee reports are posted on the WASPC website committee pages (www.waspc.org/committees).

List of WASPC Committees that made reports:

- Boating Safety – Chief Dave Floyd
- Corrections – Sheriff Joe Kriete
- Homeland Security/Intelligence – Sheriff John Nowels
- Indian Country LE – Chief Mark Williams
- Independent Investigation (IIT) Ad hoc – Chief Christman
- Membership – Sheriff Ray Maycumber t
- Professional Services – Chief Matt Brown
- Public Trust – Sheriff Summer Scheyer
- Small Agency – Chief Matt Brown
- Technology – Sheriff Brian King
- Traffic Safety – Chief Shawn Boyle

- University Policing – Chief Katy Potts
- WADEPS Ad-hoc – Chief Chris Guerrero
- Wellness & Resilience – Sheriff Patti Cole-Tindall

Motion to approve committee reports as presented made by Sheriff Myers. Second by Sheriff Kriete. Motion approved.

LIAISON REPORTS:

- LEIRA update provided in writing prior to the meeting.
- Sex Offender Notification & Registration Committee provided by Sheriff Brad Manke.
- Blue Bridge Alliance Update provided by Brian Spracklen.

BUSINESS:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE:

Executive Director Strachan provided brief updates on the State Patrol freeze on 5974; the Technology committee ALPR draft coming to members for feedback via GTWO; thanks to Sheriff Thurman for the years he served on the Medal of Honor committee and his humble service; and discussed the Sheriff elections coming up this year.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

President John Nowels announces the new Executive Board Members following a count of the ballots from earlier in the meeting:

- Vice President (Chief Position) – Chief Rebecca Mertzig, Bellingham Police Department
- Sheriff at-large – Sheriff Brian King, Clallam County Sheriff's Office
- Chief at-large – Chief Matt Brown, Port Orchard Police Department

ADJOURN:

President Nowels adjourned the meeting at 8:48 AM.

2026-2027
Strategic Intentions

Washington Association of
SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS

Draft changes are subject to Executive Board review and approval on November 10, 2026, and consideration by WASPC membership on November 11, 2026.

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Executive Summary

This document serves to provide a long-term overview of what we do and where we are going.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs is to lead collaboration among law enforcement professionals to enhance public safety.

Vision Statement

Our vision is a safe, secure, and resilient future where communities, families, and businesses thrive through collaborative public safety.

Identity Statement

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs advances its mission by serving law enforcement professionals, primarily in the State of Washington, by providing sustainable programs, projects and services.

Values

The Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs value:

- A mission-driven association;
- Honesty and integrity;
- Diversity and inclusivity;
- Accountability and responsibility to our members and our communities;
- Quality services to our members;
- Membership involvement;
- Public/private partnerships;
- Competent, professional staff; and
- Innovative law enforcement leadership.

Organizational

The association was founded in 1963 and consists of executive and top management personnel from law enforcement agencies statewide. Our membership includes sheriffs, police chiefs, the Washington State Patrol, the Washington Department of Corrections, and representatives of several federal agencies. WASPC is governed by its executive board.

WASPC is the only association of its kind in the nation combining representatives from local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement into a single body, working toward a common goal.

WASPC's function is to provide specific materials and services to all law enforcement agencies in the state~~, members and non-members alike~~.

The 1975 legislature designated the association as a "combination of units of local government."[1]

Principles for Community Trust

WASPC advocates for policies and systems to promote trustworthy, credible, well-resourced systems to uphold the rule of law, which should be consistently and fairly applied by supported professionals doing the job the right way. Communities and businesses cannot thrive without public safety and the knowledge that criminals will be held accountable by professionals doing the job the right way.

- Perceptions of Law Enforcement: Law enforcement remains one of the most respected professions in Washington. Ensuring that law enforcement is worthy of the public's trust is top priority for WASPC. We take concerns about police interactions with the community seriously and continuously work to improve our policies, training, culture and transparency. There is a lack of understanding that the men and women who swear an oath to uphold public safety are required to face violent and chaotic situations. We accept that responsibility while we also ask individuals to take responsibility for their own actions, for policy makers and elected officials to bring our communities together and for all of us to work together for common solutions.
- Rule of Law: WASPC strongly urges elected policy makers to create laws that are clear, supported, and can be consistently enforced. Disagreements or different applications of laws based on political expediency or policy makers' unwillingness to make difficult decisions leads to reduced trust in the rule of law and is harmful to public safety and public trust.
- Deadly Force: We will continue to work to improve training, focus on de-escalation, and provide transparency. We also expect the community to take responsibility for supporting law enforcement in the split-second decisions required, and to reinforce that reducing officer-involved deadly force incidents will be enhanced by not attacking or fighting with law enforcement. De-escalation is for everyone. We strongly support the

[1] RCW 36.28A.010: Declarations.

following "Tips for Safety" from the Washington State American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)[2]:

STAY CALM AND STAY PUT. Don't run or suddenly move.
KEEP YOUR HANDS where the officer can see them
and free of any objects if possible.
NEVER TOUCH any police officer.
FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS. You can always make a
complaint later if you feel your rights were violated.

- Criminal Justice Reform: WASPC acknowledges that implicit and institutional bias and discrimination exist in all aspects of society: criminal justice, education, housing, health care, finance, and more. We will work in concert with policy makers and others to make systemic improvements to understand, reduce and control the implicit and institutional biases and barriers that inhibit every person's success. Reform in the criminal justice system should be based on public safety outcomes and should not ignore concern for law enforcement, victims of crime, and justice. Assisting individuals with re-entry, providing necessary resources to break the cycle of offending, behavioral health and substance use disorder, and reducing recidivism is good for public safety. Achievement of these goals are worth our state's investment of time, money, and resources.

- Accountability: We advocate for ensuring that public safety and victims of crime are front and center when considering changes to policy. According to the WA Department of Corrections, the number of persons incarcerated in the state's prisons has been reduced by 25% in the last six years, while the capacity of the system has been reduced 8% while the population has grown 7%. 85% of persons in our state prisons have been sentenced for violent crimes[3]. WASPC believes that releasing offenders without first establishing alternative infrastructure and ensuring public safety provides the worst of both worlds; less public safety, more repeat offenders, and fewer resources to break the cycle. Increased accountability including incarceration is an important part of public safety.

- Justice for Victims: WASPC supports public safety policy that provides justice to victims of crime. We believe public safety is a core function of government, and the men and women of law enforcement need to have the tools to provide justice for victims.

- Behavioral Health & Substance Use Disorder: WASPC strongly urges our policy makers to fund and support a robust, "wrap-around' system for those with unmet behavioral health needs. This system is underfunded, understaffed and does not have the capacity to effectively replace criminal justice responses at this time, and the system should be in place before removing law enforcement responses. WASPC does not believe that further placement into the community and overall reductions of institutions for those with most serious illnesses is good policy. Placing people with serious health issues out onto the street is not compassionate and can result in increased calls for service, and potential violent interactions with the public and law enforcement. WASPC believes there is a positive role for incentivized treatment through potential criminal sanctions.

[2] Wallet Card: Your Rights With the Police - ACLU of Washington (Accessed 10/6/25)
[3] Data Analytics | Washington State Department of Corrections

- Homelessness: WASPC supports a comprehensive approach to homelessness. There are many complex dynamics that contribute to the issue. Criminal transients and those who willingly commit crimes should be prosecuted within the law. They are not in the same category as those experiencing homelessness, including those with behavioral health problems and addictions, who need and will accept help. We urge policy makers to delineate between these two groups and solutions should recognize their differences.

- Law Enforcement and Corrections Training: Washington should fully fund the law enforcement and corrections officer academies and mandated continuing training. Funding of law enforcement training is a state responsibility.

- Public Safety Funding and Staffing: Public safety is a core function of government and should be funded that way. According to the FBI data, Washington ranks last in the nation in law enforcement officers per capita[4]. More officers prevents crime, promotes de-escalation, enhances accountability through proper supervision and training, and serves victims by providing the response and follow up they deserve.

- Illicit Drug Trafficking Enforcement: The harm and violence related to illicit drug trafficking is both a public health and public safety crisis. WASPC supports responses that include criminal accountability, reducing supply, and aggressive enforcement against organized criminal enterprises.

- Use of Data: WASPC supports making policy decisions based on data that is comprehensive, objective, and credible. Policy decisions should not use selective data which is misleading or serves a political narrative.

Membership

WASPC membership includes Active, Associate, Affiliate, and Life categories. Applications are reviewed by the **WASPC Membership Committee** and **WASPC Executive Board**, with final approval made by the **WASPC Executive Board**.

Members may represent the association by chairing a WASPC committee, as a WASPC representative on a task force or work groups, and/or as an elected member of the **WASPC Executive Board**.

WASPC intends to:

- Contact newly appointed/elected chiefs, sheriffs, and agency heads upon their appointment to encourage their participation in WASPC.

- Host a quarterly new member Q/A session to share information on WASPC projects, programs, and services.

- Encourage new members to participate in LEMAP, accreditation, and professional development opportunities.

[4] Table 77 in the "Law Enforcement Employees Data" collection
https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/home

- Invite all new members to attend WASPC conferences.

Committees

Committees are the mechanism by which the members come together in smaller groups to conduct the business of the Association. Committees are formed by the **WASPC Executive Board**. Any member can serve on any committee by simply requesting inclusion.

The WASPC Executive Assistant will communicate with the WASPC Committee Chairs to collect and disseminate meeting agendas, reports, and other committee information updates.

The **WASPC Vice President** serves as the board liaison to WASPC committees.

WASPC intends to:

- Maintain the following standing committees:
  Boating Safety;
  Corrections;
  Financial and Personnel;
  Homeland Security/Intelligence;
  Indian Country Law Enforcement;
  Legislative;
  Membership;
  Professional Services;
  ~~Public Trust;~~
  ~~Small Agency;~~
  Technology and Data;
  Traffic Safety;
  University Policing; and
  Wellness & Resiliency.

- Require each committee to maintain a charter outlining the committee's purpose, membership, chairperson(s) and duties, to be reviewed and approved by the **WASPC Executive Board**.

- Encourage members to join committees.

- Encourage all committees to meet as necessary to discuss relevant topics. ~~at least semi-annually.~~

- Encourage all committees to submit a written report following each meeting.

- Assign a WASPC staff member to serve as a staff liaison/convener for each committee.

- Annually conduct a review of all committees. The review will be conducted at the annual Board Retreat. Inactive committees may be removed. New chairs/co-chairs for the committee may be appointed by the President.

- Create Ad-Hoc committees and taskforces that are single-issue driven. Taskforces and Ad-Hoc committees are created by the President and shall continue only during the term of that President.

Partnerships

WASPC is recognized in statute as a "combination of units of local government". As such, WASPC relies on partnerships and positive working relationships to provide services to our members.

~~**WASPC intends to:**~~

- ~~Maintain a partnership with the Washington Chapter of the FBI—NAA.~~
- ~~Maintain liaison relationships with the following groups:~~
  ~~Behind the Badge;~~
  ~~Blue Bridge Alliance;~~
  ~~Explorers;~~
  ~~Legal Advisors;~~
  ~~Law Enforcement Torch Run;~~
  ~~LEIRA;~~
  ~~NIBRS;~~
  ~~Sex Offender Notification and Registration; and~~
  ~~WA Crime Prevention Association.~~

Programmatic/Operational

The Association offers various programs, projects and services which support WASPC's mission to enhance collaboration among law enforcement executives.

Conferences

Conferences are a key service that WASPC provides its members. The conferences provide training, networking, contact with vendors, and the conduct of Association business. Conferences are held semi-annually in various locations around the state.

WASPC intends to:

- Continue "Critical Issues Forums" for panels on topics of interest to our members.
- Provide time at conferences for awards and recognition.
- Control presentations and agendas to avoid redundancy.
- Provide scholarship opportunities for members at each conference.
- Continue to facilitate relationships and opportunities among conference attendees to engage in networking.
- Invite retirees/life members to conferences.
- Sponsor a vendor show at each Spring Conference.

- Provide sponsorship opportunities for exhibitors at each conference.
- Implement virtual conference platform when necessary due to emergency or global pandemic.
- Implement training tracks for Corrections and Executive Development.

Executive Training

Maintain an executive development training program.

WASPC intends to:

- Manage, in collaboration with Washington risk management organizations and others, chief/sheriff and command level development training, and provide support for our members to access training to increase professionalism and reduce risk.
- Evaluate a structured mentorship initiative to support training and ongoing success for development of emerging leaders.
- Maintain a training platform to offer a suite of professional development courses for WASPC members.

Executive Peer Support

- Maintain a law enforcement executive peer support program.

Management Support Services

Accreditation provides for the professionalism of the law enforcement industry by providing a review process for agencies. In 1976 the Association was directed by the Washington State Legislature to develop standards and goals for Washington State Law Enforcement. The Association has maintained an operational accreditation program since that time.

The LEMAP program provides law enforcement administrators an opportunity to have a critical review of their organization through the eyes of peer professionals. The resulting report should serve as a guide to identify areas in need of strengthening and highlight positive or innovative programs existing within the agency. A LEMAP assessment also provides interested agencies with a roadmap of information that will greatly assist them should they decide to pursue WASPC accreditation.

Peer review and outside audits are central to agency performance and continuous improvement.

WASPC intends to:

- Encourage the use of the Loaned Executive Management Assistance (LEMAP) program ~~to members~~.

- Remove cost as an impediment to LEMAPs and Accreditation, to encourage our members' use of these resources, through grants and partnerships with risk management pools.
- Continue to inform ~~members~~ agencies of the benefits of the WASPC Accreditation program.
- Encourage implementation of preferred practices, model policies and procedures to further the professionalism of law enforcement and corrections.
- Ensure management services programs are available ~~to all members~~.
- ~~Pursue WASPC's accreditation program to be considered an Authorized Independent Credentialing Body with the Department of Justice.~~
- Provide executive search services as requested.

Legislation

WASPC serves as the centralized point for the monitoring and influencing of law enforcement related legislation both at the state and federal level. The most effective lobbying effort utilizes the efforts of WASPC's members; however, it is recognized that there must be a coordinated effort that is accomplished by staff, both full-time and contract.

WASPC intends to:

- Conduct regional visits to Legislative Leadership in home districts.
- Maintain active liaison with partner associations.
- Continue the creation of an annual Legislative Agenda.
- Utilize "Big Themes" that include communications, policy, and legislative outcomes.
- Continue an educational lobbying presence.
- Provide real-time legislative information to all members, to include weekly webinars during the legislative session.
- Improve legislator's knowledge of the programs and services WASPC provides on behalf of the State of Washington.

Corrections

WASPC identifies local jails, including Tribal, Regional, City and County Correctional Facilities, regardless of size, as essential partners in community safety. Community safety extends further than necessary incarceration of dangerous individuals victimizing our neighborhoods. Local jails have evolved into pivotal partners in community physical health, mental health, basic education, life skills and addiction intervention. Recognizing and leveraging partnerships for the betterment of individuals and provide positive impacts on our families, towns, cities and state.

WASPC intends to:

- Provide expert assistance to ~~members~~local city and county adult correctional facilities, local governments and the state legislature when considering policy decisions for the complex operations of local jails.
- Continue to work with the State Department of Corrections to review changes to the current corrections system in the state.
- Assist in developing best practice methodologies in the areas of diversion, jail operations and reentry that serve as operational models. These models should provide for long term cost saving on the part of local jails, the state and federal bureau of prisons. An emphasis should be on collaborative methods to fund essential and preventative medical and mental health care, and evidence-based programs that enhance opportunities to break the cycle of recidivism.
- Provide a conduit of communication and exchange of ideas, between government and organization, with local jail officials.
- Explore partnerships to support jail services liaison services, emphasizing the policy statement that each jail not operated by a Sheriff should work in cooperation with the Sheriff.
- In partnership with the WASPC Corrections Committee, develop and implement voluntary statewide jail standards, with a compliance process.

Communications

Provide communications and outreach support for WASPC itself and as a resource for our members.

WASPC intends to:

- Regularly send Executive Director newsletters to members with pertinent and timely information.
- Contract with a communications partner to provide member services and community outreach support. The communications partner will liaison with WASPC staff about WASPC's social media strategy. The communications partner will collaborate with the WASPC Executive Director to facilitate media inquiries, press releases, etc.
- ~~Develop~~ Continue the ~~a~~ positive interactions campaign aimed at developing a repository ~~of good news about policing~~honoring stories of service, care, and commitment.
- Schedule monthly "lunch and learn" webinars to highlight programs, trends, topics of interest.

Research and Planning

WASPC recognizes that there are many issues facing law enforcement executives in their respective communities. In addition to those issues that are readily apparent, there are other emerging issues that will present themselves in the future. WASPC will research these issues with its strategic partners to provide a forum for in-depth discussions and work to provide its members a response framework.

WASPC intends to:

- Schedule presentations from subject matter experts on current and emerging issues.
- Continue to work with universities and institutions of higher learning to conduct research into contemporary law enforcement public safety issues.
- ~~Develop law enforcement executive peer support program.~~

WASPC Programs and Infrastructure

WASPC provides law enforcement programs funded by the Washington State Legislature, federal grants and through the WASPC general fund operations. The programs and enterprises are often the result of legislative mandates and WASPC's unique status as a 'combination of units of local government.'

State & Federal Funded Programs

As directed by the Washington State Legislature and/or Federal Agencies, and in support of the Association mission statement.

WASPC intends to:

- Responsibly operate the following State programs:
  24/7 Sobriety Monitoring
  Arrest and Jail Alternatives Grants;
  Automated Victim Information and Notification System (VINE);
  Denied Firearms Transaction Program;
  Internet Crimes Against Children Grants;
  Jail Booking and Reporting System (JBRS);
  Law Enforcement Officer Wellness App;
  Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD);
  Mental Health Field Response Team Grants;
  Missing Persons Website;
  National Incident Based Reporting (NIBRS);
  Project Safe Neighborhoods;
  Protective Order Notification (VPO);
  Sex Offender Address Verification Grants;
  Sex Offender Case File Imaging;
  Sex Offender Website;
  Traffic Safety Community of Practice (TraCS);
  Traffic Safety Grants; and
  Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA).

Correctional Options Services

WASPC engages in business enterprises that are expected to be consistent with the overall mission of the Association and are to general revenue to support that mission.

The Correctional Options Services department was established by WASPC in 1991. WASPC Correctional Options Services offers electronic monitoring equipment (E~~H~~M) and services for alternatives to incarceration.

WASPC intends to:

- Provide excellent customer service in all areas of operations.
- Promote WASPC electronic monitoring services to state and local public safety organizations as an alternative to incarceration.
- ~~Maintain the average daily population (ADP) in the Correctional Options Services Program.~~

WASPC Infrastructure

WASPC's membership, programs, and services are supported by the WASPC staff. WASPC values competent and professional staff. Additionally, WASPC recognizes the importance of investment in infrastructure to further our mission and values.

WASPC intends to:

- Annually review WASPC's Investment Policy.
- Maintain a website with up-to-date information about the organization and the programs and services WASPC provides.
- Hire employees who demonstrate honesty and integrity.
- Review the employee salary schedule at least every five years.
- Maintain a fully functioning IT department to support WASPC members, programs, and staff.
- Contract for legal counsel to provide expert legal advice, manage day-to-day legal tasks, and protect the organization from legal risk.

Washington Association of
SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

DRAFT 2027 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

PUBLIC RECORDS ACT AMENDMENTS

"The people of ***this state*** do not yield their sovereignty ***to the agencies that serve them***." – RCW 42.56.030. (***emphasis added***)

Access to public records is a cornerstone value of Washingtonians. The Public Records Act should not be weaponized by those seeking to intimidate, punish, or harass, to inhibit the provision of essential government services, nor should it be monetized by those who are not served by the agency they seek records from. According to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee's December 2025 Report, Washington's local governments collectively spend approximately $200 million of taxpayer funds each year to comply with records requests.

Law enforcement agencies can account for upwards of 80% of the total requests in their local government jurisdiction and consequently bear the majority of the liability when malicious requestors are successful in monetizing public records for their own personal profit.

WASPC seeks to enact legislation that requires non-constituent records requestors to pay a percentage of the total costs associated with the records request; strengthens privacy protections in records requests – particularly requests made for commercial purposes; enables judicial review of records requests that appear to be to overly broad, frivolous, or retaliatory, intended to harass or intimidate, or for commercial purposes; and/or reduces the financial incentive to make bad faith records requests.

AIR SUPPORT FUNDING

Law enforcement aviation support services are provided to every jurisdiction in the state -free of charge - by four counties (King, Snohomish, Chelan, and Spokane). Air support units are invaluable resources in many search and rescue missions, missing persons, and other community caretaking and lifesaving functions of law enforcement agencies. Air support units can also be used as a vehicular pursuit alternative in some instances and provide crucial officer safety and public safety functions during certain high-risk incidents.

WASPC seeks to establish an ongoing state funded grant program to provide annual funds to:

- **Provide a base amount of funding to local law enforcement air support units that agree to assist any law enforcement agency in Washington when available; and**
- **Provide a per-mission reimbursement when a local law enforcement air support unit is deployed on a search and rescue mission.**

LAW & JUSTICE DAY

FEBRUARY 17, 2027

9 AM | COLUMBIA ROOM

JAMES MCMAHAN
Policy Director | james@waspc.org

ADAM CARNEY
Policy Specialist | adam@waspc.org

Leading collaboration among law enforcement executives to enhance public safety since 1963.

Washington Association of
SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

DRAFT 2027 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

CORRECTIONS TORT REFORM

Jails are essential for public safety, and the viability of jails in Washington is in jeopardy.

Jails also one of the most significant risk profiles for local governments, and jails cannot be privatized. According to a June 2026 study by the Washington Insurance Commissioner, the number of closed medical malpractice claims is down 14% over the past 6 years though the average cost per claim has increased by 48% (from $350,000 per claim to more than $600,000 per claim). Further, jails have a duty to ensure that drugs and other contraband are not introduced into the facility, but are prohibited from utilizing effective screening technologies to prevent the introduction of contraband.

The liability exposure to jails appears to be limitless while the ability to safely and humanely house the incarcerated continues to wane.

WASPC seeks to enact legislation to grant a level of tort protection for jails that are accredited by a recognized state or national jail accrediting entity; and facilitate the provision of medical services in jails.

BOATING SAFETY FUNDING

Vessel Registration Fees (VRF) are levied on boaters to support safe boating operations across the state. Since 1989, the first $1 million (approx.) of fees has been directed to the general fund which has reduced funds available for the 51 agencies with State Parks approved boater safety programs. Additionally, funding from the Coast Guard matching funds could be available with a redirection of VRF revenues.

WASPC seeks to amend RCW 88.02.650 to repeal the $1.1M diversion of VRFs to the state General Fund and allocate 100% of the revenues to Local Recreational Boating Safety Funding program for use by County and Municipal Marine Law Enforcement Boating Safety Program.

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