



Washington Organized Retail Crime Association

Report pursuant to [Chapter 376, Laws of 2024](#)

January 2026

Report to the Legislature

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Acknowledgments

Washington State Department of Commerce

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Table of contents

Executive summary.....	4
Stakeholders.....	6
The work in action.....	9
Opportunities and challenges	11

Executive summary

Overview

The Washington Legislature appropriated \$1,000,000 (FY 2025, general fund–state) to the Department of Commerce to contract with a statewide organization to run a pilot program to respond to organized retail crime, with a focus on diversion-oriented programs. The Washington Organized Retail Crime Association (WAORCA) builds partnerships between law enforcement professionals and loss prevention professionals to provide training, combat organized retail crime (ORC) and other crimes impacting the business community.

Authorizing Legislation

Chapter 376, Laws of 2024 ([Engrossed Senate Bill 5950](#)), §124(a)–(d) authorizes funding for a statewide pilot program to address organized retail crime (ORC) through community-based interventions. The proviso directs the Washington Organized Retail Crime Association (WAORCA) to administer a grant program that supports diversion-oriented strategies, restitution to victims, and improved coordination between retailers, law enforcement and prosecutorial offices. The legislation calls for the establishment of pilot program areas, the inclusion of small and independent retailers in stakeholder groups, and the development of data systems to track program outcomes — including the number of successful diversions, recidivism rates, and reasons for program acceptance or refusal. Additionally, the proviso supports funding for mental health crisis response in retail settings and encourages multijurisdictional collaboration to identify and address high-utilizer offenders. These directives reflect the legislature’s intent to reduce retail crime through targeted, restorative approaches that strengthen public safety and community resilience.

(a) \$1,000,000 of the general fund–state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 is provided solely for a contract with a statewide organization with a mission of developing new and innovative ways to combat organized retail crime to implement a pilot program to respond to organized retail crime, with a focus on diversion-oriented programs.

(b) The contract recipient must establish three pilot program sites. The contract recipient must make a reasonable effort to establish at least one site east of the Cascade mountains. No single pilot site may use more than \$300,000 of the funding provided under this subsection.

(c) The contract recipient must use the funds to coordinate community efforts to enhance responses to organized retail crime within each pilot site area. Coordination must include the following entities: Cities, counties, or affiliated associations with programs focused on diversion and restitution; local retail stores; law enforcement agencies; local prosecutors and public defense; and therapeutic courts. Funding may also be used for planning and other activities to achieve a targeted response to reported retail crimes from diversion programs or law enforcement agencies.

(d) The contract recipient must provide a report to the department by June 15, 2025, on the number of responses to retail crime and the number of diversions initiated for each pilot site, data regarding the role of local prosecutors at each site, and opportunities and challenges in retail crime response and diversion identified by pilot participants.

The department must submit the report to the appropriate committees of the legislature by October 1, 2025. The WAOCRA is a public-private partnership focused on collaboration among all stakeholders addressing ORC. The statewide task force improves coordination among law enforcement, prosecutors, and businesses to identify, disrupt and prosecute organized criminal rings that steal billions of dollars of goods from retailers and resell them through independent sellers online such as Facebook Marketplace, Etsy, eBay and others. Goods are sold below market value enticing the consumer to purchase the stolen item from them instead of the authorized retailer.

Pilot program goals for SFY 2025

- **Report:** Increase the reporting of ORC instances.
- **Respond:** Increase law enforcement responses to reported ORC instances.
- **Focus:** Identify or hire a designated prosecutor in each pilot program area to focus on ORC.
- **Coordinate:** Improve the coordination between retail stores, law enforcement and diversion programs with the designated prosecutor.
- **Track:** Track eligible offenders and refer them to diversion-oriented programs within the appropriate court system.
- **Hold accountable:** Prioritize prosecution of known high utilizers when diversion programming and restitution are not viable options.

Program impacts

The WAORCA Grant Program has delivered measurable improvements in the region's ability to respond to ORC, enhancing law enforcement responses, targeted prosecution and diversion opportunities that would not have been possible without this funding.

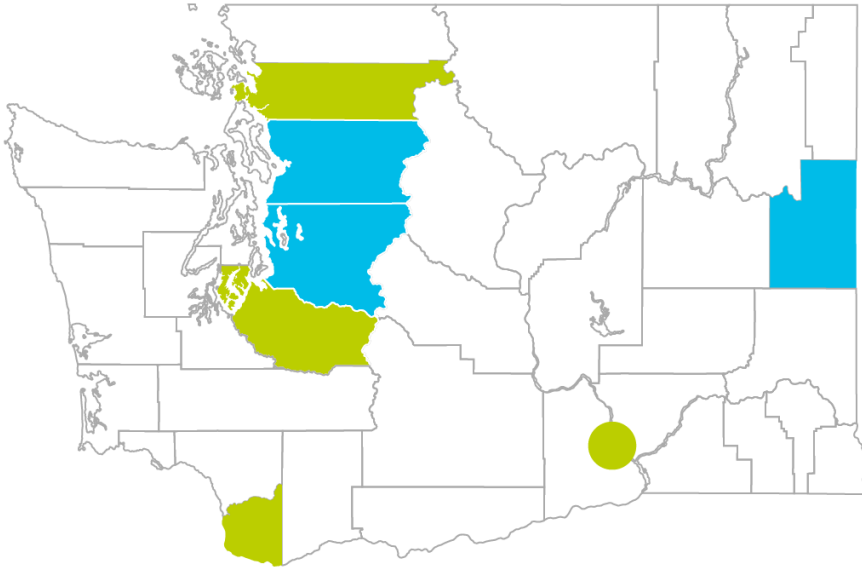
- The WAORCA Grant Program was highly effective in strengthening the overall response to ORC.
- The program led to a significant increase in law enforcement responses to ORC incidents.
- It prioritized prosecution efforts on the highest utilizers and prolific offenders, helping to reduce repeat offenses and target the most impactful cases.
- Through WAORCA funding, hundreds of offenders were offered access to diversion-oriented programs, promoting accountability and rehabilitation.
- The grant funded a dedicated prosecutor to handle diversion cases, which ensured timely case processing. Without this role, cases would take significantly longer to resolve, discouraging both small and large businesses from reporting incidents.
- Without WAORCA funding, none of these improvements would have been possible. The program directly enabled the expanded responses, prosecution focus, and diversion offerings that now support a more effective and balanced approach to addressing ORC.

Stakeholders

Stakeholder groups located in Snohomish, King and Spokane County participated in the WAORCA program oversight committee:

- Lowe's
- Kemper Development Company
- Renton Police Department
- Lululemon
- Whole Foods

Future funding can expand the program into Pierce, Skagit, Clark, Whatcom County and the Tri-Cities.



2025 Pilot Program Areas:
Snohomish County, King County, Spokane County

If future funding, potential new areas:
Pierce County, Skagit County, Clark County, Whatcom County, Tri-Cities

WAORCA program oversight committee

The WAORCA Program Oversight Committee serves as the strategic backbone of the pilot program to combat ORC, bringing together a diverse coalition of retail leaders and law enforcement. With representation from major retailers such as Lowe's, Lululemon, Whole Foods, and Kemper Development Company, alongside law enforcement leadership from the Renton Police Department, the committee provides critical guidance, oversight and accountability for grant-funded programming. This cross-sector team ensures that WAORCA's efforts remain focused, data-driven and responsive to the evolving challenges of organized retail crime (OCR), while fostering collaboration between public safety agencies and the retail community to enhance prevention, diversion and community safety outcomes across Washington.

Snohomish County stakeholder group

The Snohomish County stakeholder group brings together legal experts, diversion specialists, and Lynnwood law enforcement to implement innovative strategies that reduce organized retail crime through targeted prosecution, community-based diversion, and strengthened interagency collaboration.

- Yelena Stock – Zachor, Stock, Krepps
- Ashley Dawson – LEAD
- Robert Nelson – WAORCA
- Ryan Phillips – WAORCA
- Det. Troy Hammersmith – Lynnwood Police Department
- Deputy Chief Curtis Zatylny – Lynnwood Police Department
- Olivia Curran – Lynnwood Police Department

King County stakeholder group

The King County stakeholder group unites prosecutorial leadership, WAORCA strategists, and law enforcement officials from Seattle and Tukwila to collaboratively address organized retail crime through coordinated diversion efforts, targeted enforcement, and strengthened community partnerships.

- Patrick Hinds – King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Tim Shen – King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Deputy Chief Ryan Rutledge – WAORCA
- Brian Jordan – WAORCA
- Carl Kleinknecht – WAORCA
- Det. Jose Silva – Seattle Police Department
- Lt. Dorothy Kim – Seattle Police Department
- Det. Kevin Jones – Seattle Police Department
- Deputy Chief Eric Lund – Tukwila Police Department

Spokane County stakeholder group

The Spokane County stakeholder group brought together prosecutors, law enforcement leaders, and WAORCA representatives to collaboratively advance organized retail crime prevention, diversion strategies, and community safety initiatives across the region.

- Katie McNutly – Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Carl Kleinknecht – WAORCA
- Ryan Phillips – WAORCA
- Ryan Ehrmantrout – WAORCA
- Sgt. Brian Eckersley – Spokane Police Department
- Undersheriff Dave Ellis – Spokane County Sheriff's Office
- Deputy James Wang – Spokane County Sheriff's Office
- Elise Vandenberghe – Spokane County Sheriff's Office
- Contessa Tucker – Spokane County Sheriff's Office

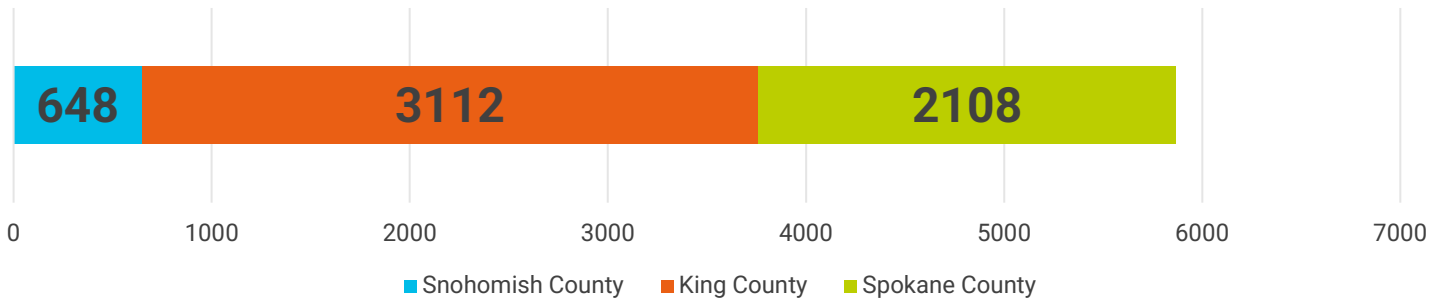
WAORCA program highlights¹: Organized retail crime reports data

From 1/1/2025 - 5/31/2025, the King, Snohomish and Spokane County prosecuting attorneys' office received 5,868 retail organized crime reports from local retailers. Law enforcement responded to 402 instances.

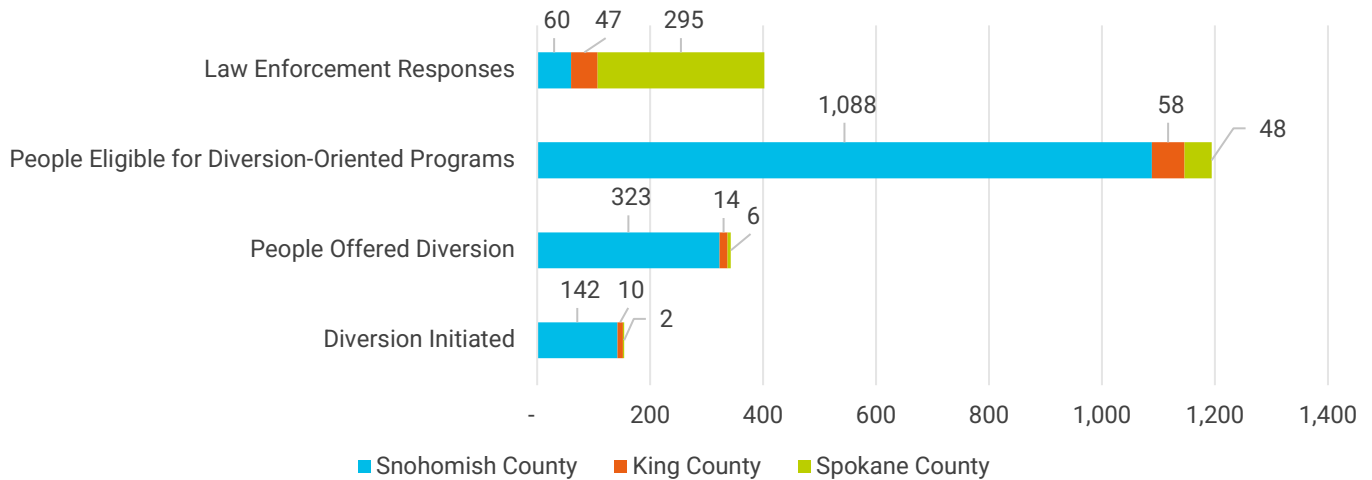
○ 1,194 defendants were eligible for court ordered diversion programming

- 323 defendants were offered diversion programming.
- 142 defendants accepted diversion programming.

Organized retail crime reports generated by county



County court offered diversion data



¹ Data collection completed by the Pacific Northwest Organized Retail Crime Association, King, Snohomish and Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's Office 1/1/2025-5/31/2025.

The work in action

These highlights provide a snapshot of how high utilizing ORC suspects are disrupted and dismantled by WAORCA funded work.

Washington pilot program partnerships

King County pilot program – Tukwila Police Department

- **Overview:** Tukwila PD Case # 24 – 0007457. Between 12/26/24 and 01/03/2025 three suspects committed several thefts at Sephora and MAC cosmetics in Southcenter Mall. The same suspects using the same vehicle were responsible for multiple thefts at ULTA cosmetics locations in King, Pierce, and Thurston counties in November and December 2024. Renton PD has an open investigation on the three suspects.
- **Number of suspects:** 3
- **Charges:** Multiple counts of Organized Retail Theft (ORT) – 1st Degree, ORT – 2nd Degree
- **Dollar amounts of loss:** Over \$35,000
- **Retailers affected:** ULTA, MAC, Sephora cosmetics

Spokane County pilot program – Spokane Police Department

- **Overview:** Spokane PD Case # 2025 – 20020061. Between 11/24 and 1/25 the suspect placed over 30 online orders to Home Depot stores in Spokane, Liberty Lake, and Spokane Valley. He drove to the stores, picked up the online orders, and then immediately cancelled the online orders. He thereby fraudulently received a full refund for the property that he took into possession.
- **Number of suspects:** 1
- **Charges:** Identity Theft, ORT, Retail Theft with Special Circumstances, Theft with Intent to Resell, Trafficking in Stolen Property, and Possession of Stolen Property. A search warrant was served at his residence, and 92 Milwaukee Power Tools manuals were found along with receipts where Lewis had pawned several power tools.
- **Dollar amount of loss:** Over \$30,000
- **Retailers affected:** The Home Depot

Snohomish County pilot program – Lynnwood Police Department

- **Overview:** From September 2024 through January 2025 four suspects used rental vehicles to steal tens of thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise from retail locations in Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties. Some single theft incidents were over \$20,000 in loss. The thefts occurred in Lynnwood, Tukwila, Kirkland, Bellevue, Seattle, and Tacoma. One of the suspects admitted to going to downtown Seattle and selling the stolen property to buyers that frequented areas populated by those experiencing homelessness.
- **Number of Suspects:** 3
- **Charges:** ORT – 1st Degree, ORT – 2nd Degree, multiple counts of Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Parole Violation
- **Dollar Amount of Loss:** Over \$150,000
- **Retailers Affected:** Lululemon, Apple, REI

Washington pilot program highlights

Snohomish County ORT grant program

“We’ve utilized grant funds for a dedicated prosecutor and assisting staff. The prosecutor’s office has created a misdemeanor post filing diversion program that focuses on crimes filed into the City of Lynnwood Municipal Court that affect or are associated with retailers. This program focuses on defendants seeking to address substance use disorders through treatment, restitution to retailers, and reducing recidivism. This program is in partnership with LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion). Additionally, with a dedicated prosecutor, there is stronger collaboration between the prosecutor’s office, retailers, and law enforcement, which allows for targeted emphasis on accountability of chronic/prolific offenders when diversion is not appropriate. Over 1,000 cases have been flagged since inception of the ORC grant program.”

Yelena Stock (City of Lynnwood Prosecutor’s Office)

“LEAD gives police officers, prosecutors and community agencies the ability to divert a person away from the criminal legal system and connect them to long term intensive case management to address unmet needs that may be contributing to their criminal history. LEAD has partnered with Lynnwood Municipal Court to accept WAORCA diversions. Participants meet with LEAD staff within 14 days to complete intake and assessments and share information about their challenges and to create an Individual Success Plan for their future. LEAD works alongside participants to achieve these individual goals. Snohomish County LEAD has operated within the county for nearly 5 years, serves 11 law enforcement agencies and has a presence in all the local courts. WAORCA ORC grant funds and management have supported increased engagement between LEAD, Lynnwood Municipal Court, and local retailers to improve community safety and offer diversion programs with proven outcomes.

Ashley Dawson (Snohomish County Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion)

Spokane County ORT Grant Program Area

“Our office is utilizing grant funds to support a prosecutor and associated support staff. We are excited to partner with the Spokane Police Department and Spokane County Sheriff’s Office on this grant program. We are hopeful that our offices will be able to collaborate to better hold offenders who victimize retail establishments accountable for their actions. Spokane County has an existing Felony Diversion program that focuses on treatment options, community service and repaying restitution obligations to victims of crime. In the first week of the grant cycle our office has identified several dozen offenders who have been charged with retail theft crimes and are eligible for our diversion program.”

Katie McNutly (Spokane County Prosecutor’s Office)

Washington Organized Retail Crime Association –

“As a direct result of ORC grant funding, one large box association member retailer in Lynnwood, WA has experienced a significant and measurable reduction in ORC. Collaboration amongst retailers, local law enforcement, prosecutors, and diversion – oriented programs immediately decreased retail theft and improved customer, employee, and community safety. While there is still a critical need for this type of collaboration in other communities, we are pleased with the progress being made in Lynnwood.”

WAORCA Board Member

Opportunities and challenges

WAORCA pilot program list of ORC prevention and diversion-oriented best practices

- WAORCA recommends continued and increased funding of the WAORCA community grant program to coordinate effective responses to ORCs with a focus on diversion – oriented programs and restitution.
- Fund dedicated diversion – oriented coordinator for potential WAORCA pilot program areas.
- Dedicate some of future program funding to directly support small businesses with a high volume of retail crime.
- Add independent and small business retailers to all program stakeholder groups.
- Track number of diversions successfully completed or in progress at the conclusion of the program funding period.
- Provide additional funding for support of people in a store and experiencing mental health crises.
- Provide a target monthly budget for law enforcement and focus more on casework to more efficiently utilize program funding.
- To better learn about the effectiveness of the program, add data collection for recidivism of offenders.
- Future programs should collect data indicating reasons why individuals accept or reject an offered diversion program.
- Facilitate multijurisdictional casework with retailers and law enforcement collectively identifying cases, providing casework, and focused on the highest utilizers.