

# Public Safety Sales Tax

*Reducing Violent Crime and the Visible Impacts of the Drug Epidemic*

# Why a PSST?

- We have a large population that is growing quickly.
- Violent crime and the impacts of the drug epidemic affect our residents' quality of life, our businesses, and our communities.
- Addressing violent crime and the drug epidemic requires additional resources at the County and in our cities.
- A PSST:
  - can directly support proven tactics that can reduce crime and target offenders immediately.
  - can fund evidence-based measures to address violence and substance abuse before they happen.
  - create or expand existing programs that reduce the visible impacts in the community.

# History of PSST Measures in Washington

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- Since 2011, Washington counties placed a public safety sales tax on the ballot 26 times (including the 2016 attempt in Snohomish) and 20 of those measures passed. Some specific items to note from these results:
  - Recent initiatives have seen success.
    - In the last five years, seven counties placed a public safety sales tax on the ballot and only one failed (see next bullet). The remainder passed easily, the closest vote being Clark County in August 2022 (58.78% / 41.22%).
  - We should ask for what we need and avoid going back for additional tax revenue.
    - In August of 2019, Spokane County overwhelmingly passed a measure for 0.1 percent for 10 years. In November of 2023, they returned to the voters asking for 0.2 percent for 30 years; this failed by a significant margin (36.67% / 63.33%).

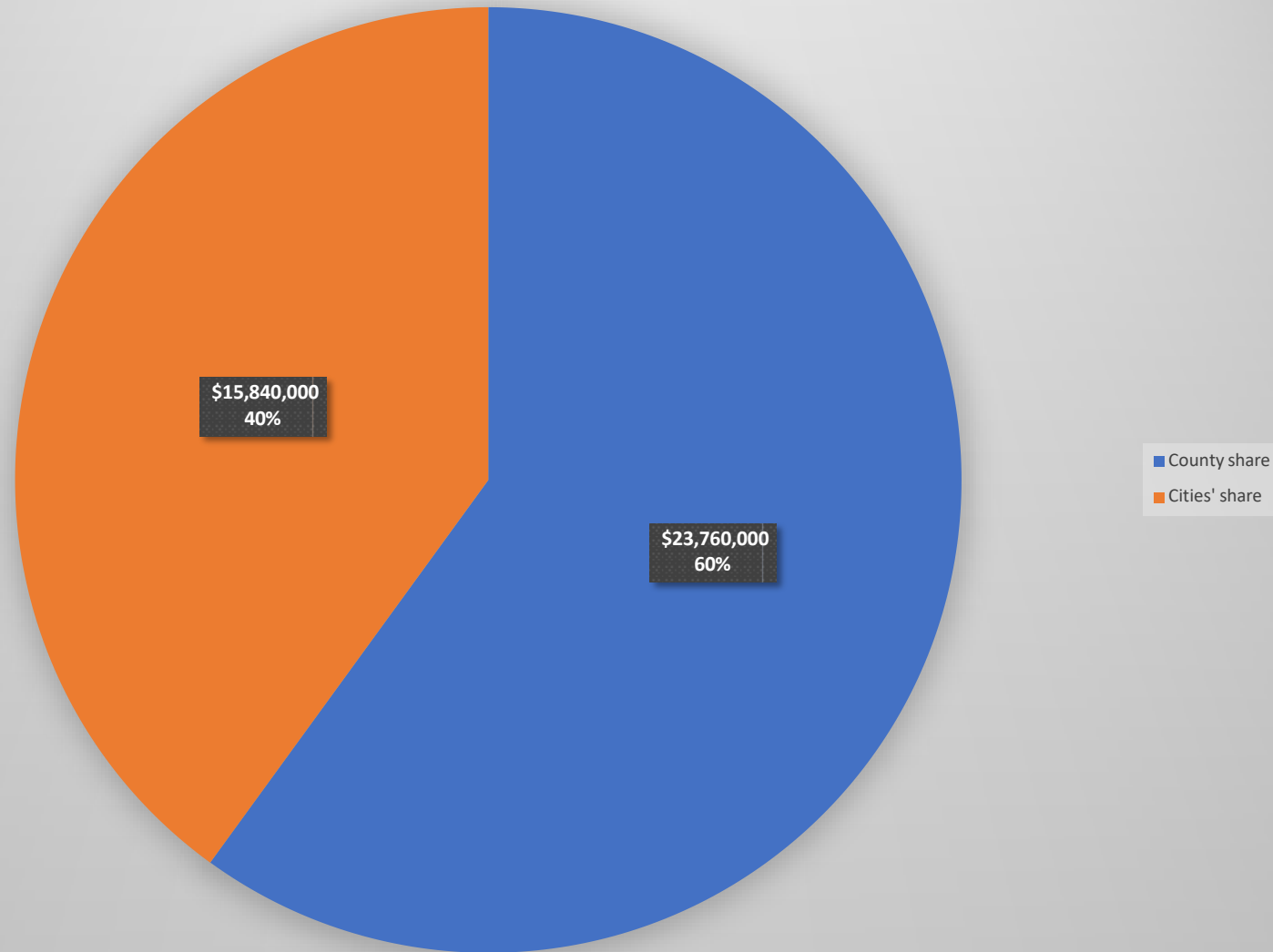
# What is a PSST?

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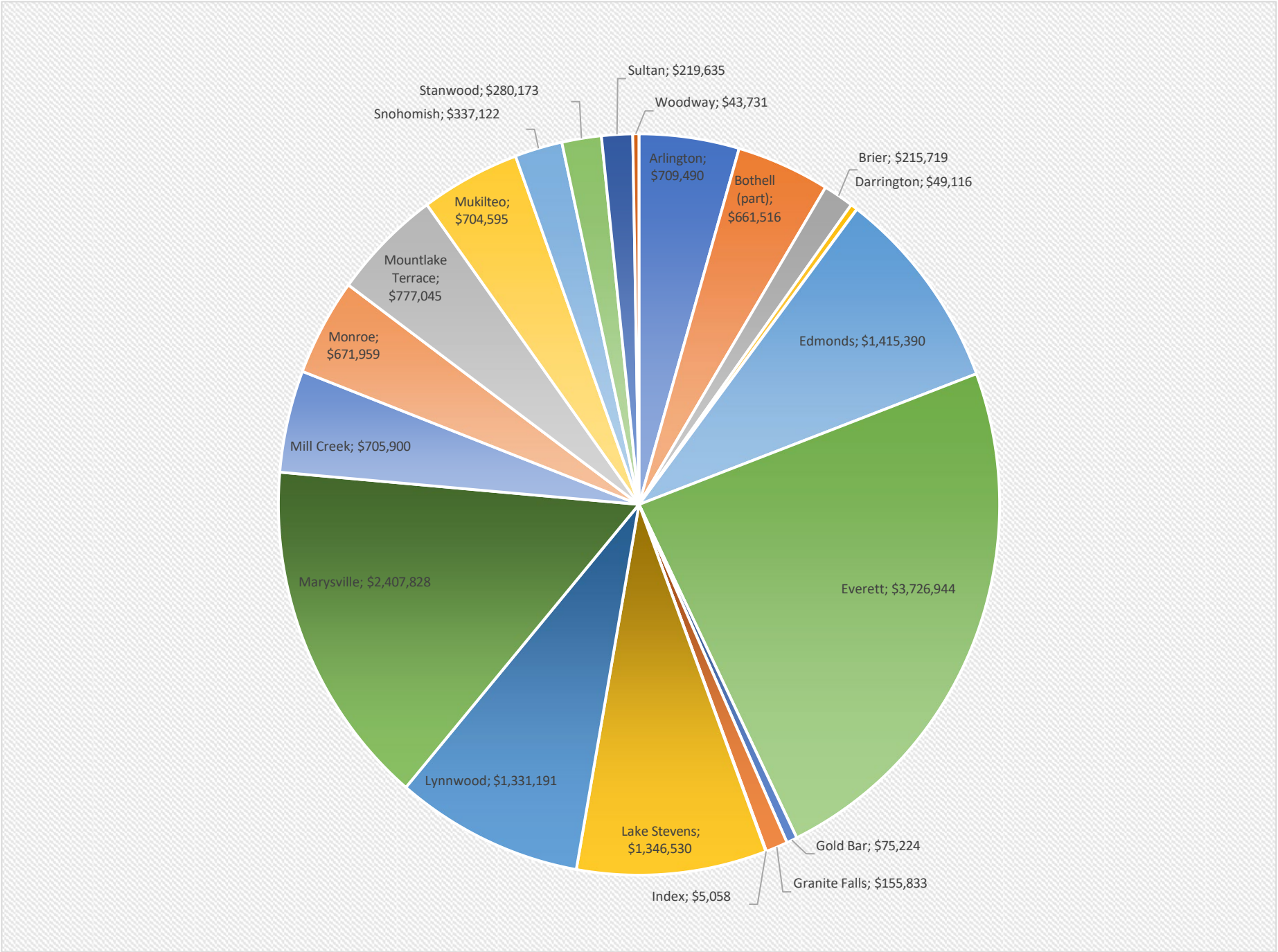
According to RCW 82.14.450:

- A county legislative authority may submit an authorizing proposition to the county voters at a primary or general election and, if the proposition is approved by a majority of persons voting, impose a sales and use tax in accordance with the terms of this chapter.
- The rate of tax under this section may not exceed three-tenths of one percent of the selling price in the case of a sales tax.
- One-third of all money received under this section must be used solely for criminal justice purposes, fire protection purposes, or both.
- Money received by a county under subsection (1) of this section must be shared between the county and the cities as follows: 60 percent must be retained by the county and 40 percent must be distributed on a per capita basis to cities in the county.

## Breakdown of 60/40 Share of Revenue



*Estimated* Annual  
Disbursement by City



# Proposed Actions to Address Violence and the Impacts of the Drug Epidemic

Hire additional law enforcement officers, including park rangers.

Provide needed resources to the criminal justice system, including the Courts, PA's Office, and OPD.

Acquire and operate a secure withdrawal management facility.

Acquire and operate a second resource center to double the capacity of Carnegie.

Expand access to treatment in the jail.

Create or expand programs to reduce the visible impacts of crime – Graffiti, derelict vehicles, etc.

Support programs that diminish the impacts of the drug epidemic on Fire/EMS

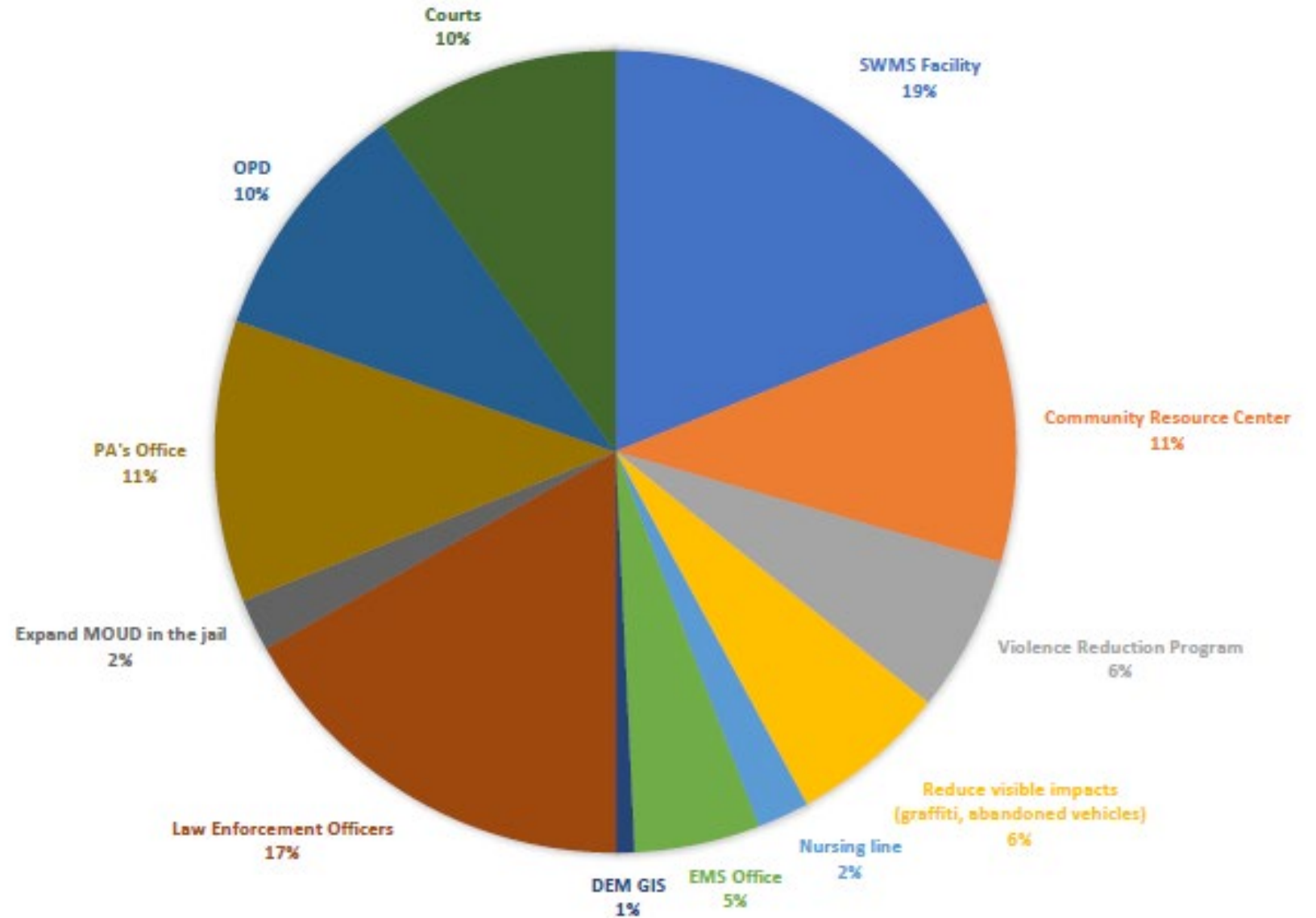
Develop a program focused on preventing youth violence.



50% for Criminal  
Justice Purposes

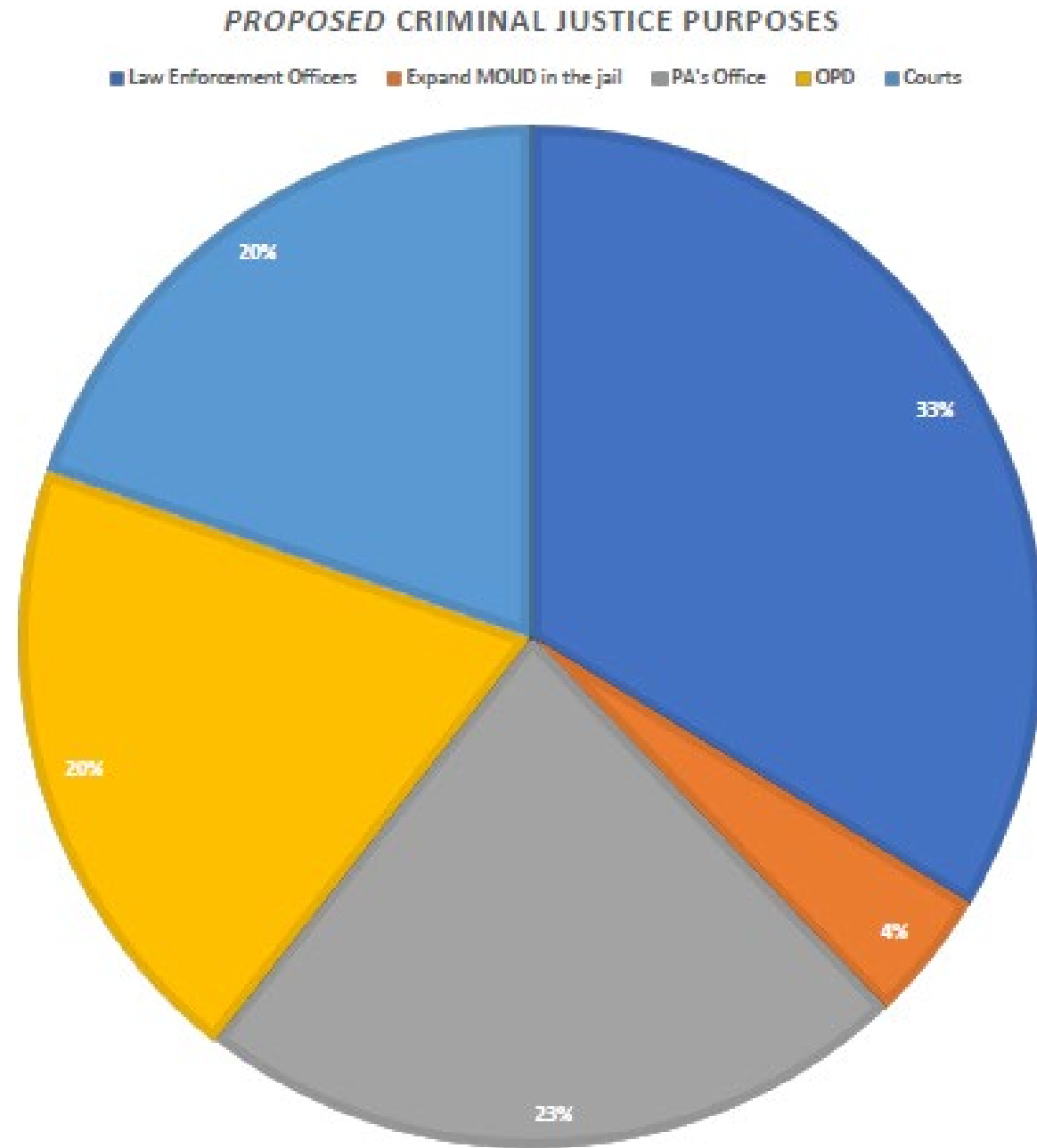
50% for Other  
Public Safety and  
Health Measures

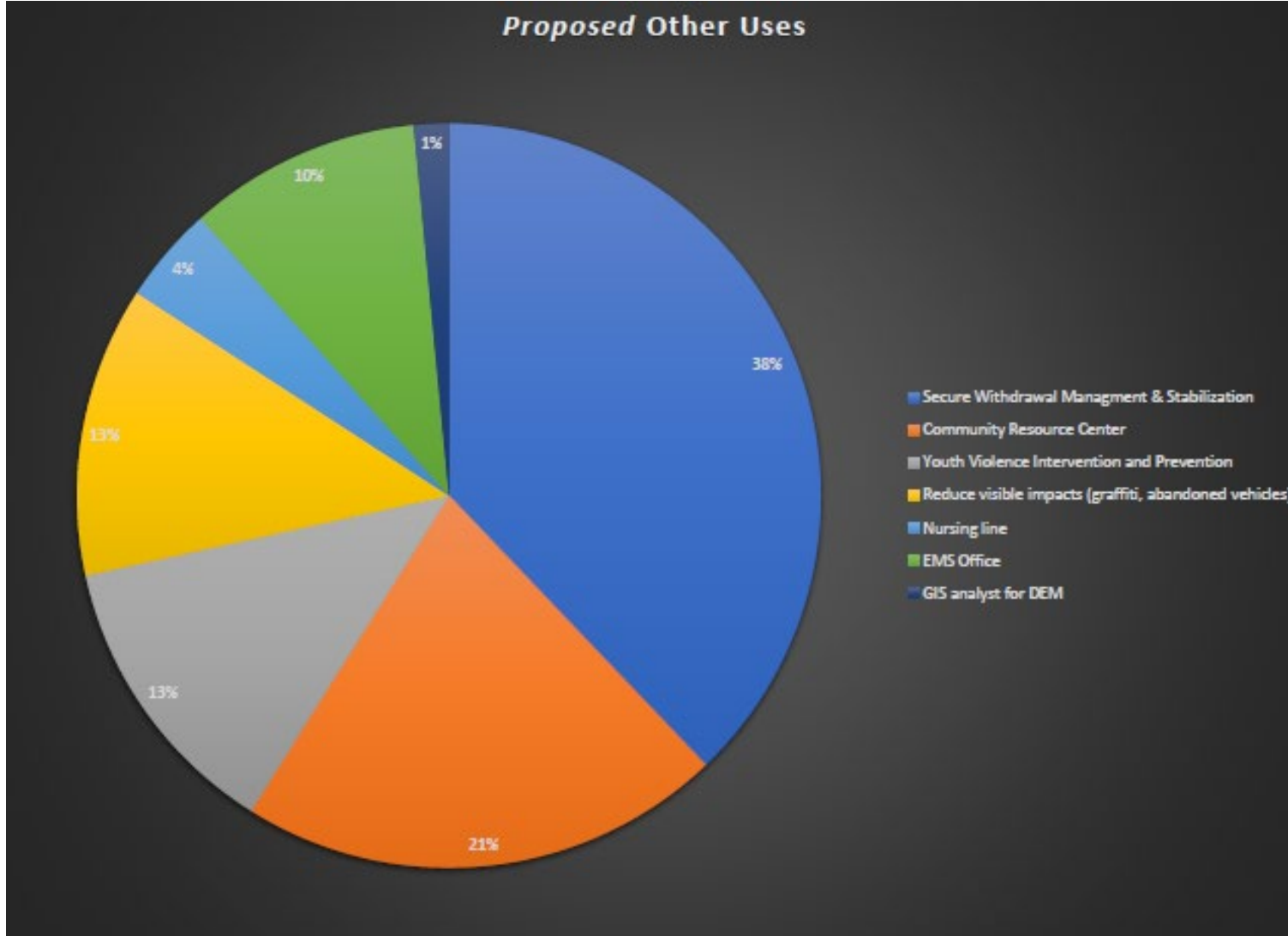
*PROPOSED OVERALL BREAKDOWN OF USE*





50% for  
Criminal Justice  
Purposes





50% for  
Other Public  
Safety and  
Health  
Measures



Questions

