



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

Motion 16998

Proposed No. 2026-0084.2

Sponsors Lewis

1 A MOTION approving the King County youth diversion
2 and intervention program report required by 2026-2027
3 Biennial Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 20023, Section 108,
4 Proviso P1, related to employment and education resources.

5 WHEREAS, the goal of youth diversion is to intervene with young people,
6 address the needs that led to behavior that caused harm, put them on a path to success,
7 and avoid additional or escalating criminal legal system involvement, and

8 WHEREAS, King County provides a range of paths for legal-system-involved
9 youth, including community-based diversion through the youth diversion and
10 intervention program, juvenile court diversion, community supervision through juvenile
11 probation counselors, and adjudication of offenses and incarceration. The prosecutor will
12 make referrals to the appropriate program or level of response based on the number of
13 prior law enforcement referrals and the seriousness of the alleged offenses, and

14 WHEREAS, the 2026-2027 Biennial Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 20023,
15 Section 108, Proviso P1, related to employment and education resources, requires the
16 executive to transmit a King County youth diversion and intervention program report,
17 and

18 WHEREAS, the proviso further requires the executive to submit a motion that
19 approves the report;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

Motion 16998

21 The King County youth diversion and intervention program report, which is
22 Attachment A to this motion, in compliance with 2026-2027 Biennial Budget Ordinance,
23 Ordinance 20023, Section 108, Proviso P1, related to employment and education
24 resources, is hereby approved.

Motion 16998 was introduced on 4/21/2026 and hearing held/closed and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 7/21/2026, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Fain, Lewis, Mosqueda,
Perry and von Reichbauer
No: 1 - Dunn

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Signed by:

Sarah Perry

062AC77E76FB49B...

Sarah Perry, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

Melani Hay

8DE1BB375AD3422...

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: A. King County Youth Diversion and Intervention Program Report, dated July 2026

King County Youth Diversion and Intervention Program Report

July 2026



King County

I. Summary

The King County Youth Diversion and Intervention (KCYDI) program builds off of the Restorative Community Pathways (RCP) pre-filing community-based diversion for young people who have been referred by law enforcement to the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) for an alleged misdemeanor offense, their families, and for community members who have experienced harm associated with those incidents.

KCYDI guiding principles focus on needs, repairing harm, providing for active accountability, centering relationships and community, ensuring volunteer participation in restorative justice, and centering youth well-being and agency. The KCYDI outcome goals for both youth and the community members who have experienced harm are to meet basic needs, education, and career goals. Outcomes for youth include increased social connection and engagement in meaningful accountability for harm they have caused without exposure to the juvenile legal system. Outcomes for community members who experienced harm include having a voice in their healing process and access to restitution funds.

The KCYDI program implementation model begins when the Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) refers a case to the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). DCHS then works with a consortium of contracted community-based organizations to provide wraparound services to referred youth and community members who experienced harm. The KCYDI program includes effective model elements from RCP, such as working with a consortium of community based organizations to provide culturally responsive wraparound services through KCYDI community navigators, flexible service lengths to respond to the needs of participants, and including services and restitution funds for community members who have experienced harm.¹ Through an RFP that DCHS plans to release in April 2026, DCHS intends to introduce changes to KCYDI that include DCHS staffing the referral manager role, enhanced data collection and reporting on school and education engagement, increased services to support youth to re-engage in school, and youth voice that informs program improvements rather than serving as primary decision-makers.

DCHS will collect selected measures quarterly and use them to summarize program implementation and related outcomes. Evaluation plans will align with the key program outcomes and data elements for KCYDI that are summarized in Appendix C of this report. DCHS expects all funded organizations to collect and report on data related to community grants. DCHS intends to share quarterly KCYDI reports with KCYDI community partners, PAO, King County Department of Public Defense (DPD), Superior Court (KCSC), and on its public-facing website.²

The proposed KCYDI program was designed with input from RCP community partners, PAO, KCSC, four years' experience with the RCP programming, and an external RCP evaluation.³

KCYDI plans to launch the Request for Proposals (RFP) for KCYDI community providers in April 2026, and to finalize contracting and transition from RCP to KCYDI in the third and fourth quarters of 2026. DCHS and community partners intend to launch KCYDI operations on January 1, 2027.

The KCYDI program brings community and county system partners together to provide a collective response to youth under 18 who have had an encounter with law enforcement. In partnership with

PAO and KCYDI community providers, Executive Girmay Zahilay looks forward to continuing this important work, supporting the health and well-being of King County youth and their communities.

II. Background

The King County Youth Diversion and Intervention (KCYDI) program builds off of the Restorative Community Pathways (RCP) pre-filing community-based diversion for youth and community members who have experienced harm.⁴ In 2020, community-based organizations supporting youth and families impacted by the juvenile legal system, in partnership with King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) and King County Department of Public Defense (DPD), proposed RCP as a community-led accountability and restoration process.⁵ The RCP proposal included all misdemeanors and felonies eligible under the newly expanded state diversion statute. The proposal was included in Executive Dow Constantine's 2021-22 biennial budget proposal as one of several strategies to prevent youth legal system involvement, reduce the number of youth in detention, and invest in community-based services. King County Council approved this funding in the County's adopted 2021-22 biennial budget, using the County's general funds.⁶

The PAO began to refer youth and community members who have experienced harm to the RCP program on November 1, 2021. From 2021 through 2025, over 2,200 King County residents were referred by the PAO to community-based agencies for services and 1,420 participants were served.

The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) will manage the County's investments in KCYDI, including the transition from RCP to KCYDI.

III. Report Requirements

This section is organized to align with Ordinance 20023, Section 108, Proviso P1.

A. A description of the proposed King County Youth Diversion and Intervention program guiding principles and outcome goals;

The KCYDI program partners with community-based organizations to provide programming to young people who have been referred by law enforcement to the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) for an alleged misdemeanor offense, their families, and for community members who have experienced harm associated with those incidents. KCYDI guiding principles are grounded in healing-centered tenets of restorative justice, which contributed to positive outcomes of youth participating in KCYDI's predecessor RCP.⁷ Restorative justice promotes conflict resolution, restoration and accountability through dialogue and reparation, and includes a focus on addressing the needs that led to the behavior that caused the harm. Research shows that these practices often result in reduced recidivism and greater satisfaction among those harmed.⁸ Traditional punitive responses (such as suspension, detention, and incarceration) fail to address the root causes of adolescent behavior. These approaches escalate emotional dysregulation in the moment and reinforce negative cycles over time.^{9, 10} Instead of teaching skills, punishment deepens trauma and alienation, especially for youth already facing systemic inequities.^{11, 12}

KCYDI principles also align with the proposed 2025 King County Youth Action Plan's (YAP) overarching principles of striving for optimal well-being, healing, and joy.¹³ According to the

proposed YAP, the well-being of children should always be a governmental priority, rather than just preventing negative outcomes. Additionally, KCYDI aligns with the proposed 2025 YAP's principle that child and youth policy development, services, and programming should intentionally include the people impacted by the policies and services in authentic and meaningful ways.

KCYDI guiding principles include:

- **Focus on needs:** seek to understand and address the needs that led to the behavior that caused the harm.
- **Repair harm:** understand the harm caused and identify and meet the resulting needs for impacted individuals and communities.
- **Active accountability:** create opportunities for meaningful and active accountability where the person responsible can be directly accountable to those harmed.
- **Center relationships and community:** build, maintain, and repair relationships, and account for the interconnected nature of communities.
- **Voluntary participation in restorative justice mediation:** individuals most directly impacted and responsible for the harm choose to participate in restorative mediation and facilitation.
- **Center youth well-being and agency:** focus on youth well-being and ensure that youth exercise agency in their own well-being.¹⁴

KCYDI outcome goals include:

- **Youth and the community members who have experienced harm have needs met** (for example, social emotional skills and regulation, behavioral health services, clothing, or wraparound services or service referrals).
- Youth and community members who have experienced harm **meet their education and career goals**, including school re-engagement and access to needed in-school services when relevant.
- Youth **increase social connection**, a key mitigation factor in reducing the likelihood of future legal system involvement.¹⁵
- Community members who experienced harm have **a voice in their healing process and access to restitution funds**.
- Youth engage in **meaningful accountability** for harm they have caused without additional exposure to the juvenile legal system.

B. A description of the framework or model to be utilized for program implementation, evaluation, and reporting;

1. KCYDI Program Implementation Model

The KCYDI program implementation model begins with the PAO referring cases to DCHS, who in turn works with a consortium of contracted community-based organizations to provide wraparound services to referred youth and community members who experienced harm.

KCYDI program implementation includes effective model elements from RCP, as well as several significant changes to implement improvements and new emphases. Continuing elements include working with a consortium of community based organizations to provide culturally responsive wraparound services through KCYDI community navigators, ensuring that service lengths are flexible to respond to the needs of participants, and including services and restitution funds for

community members who have experienced harm.¹⁶ Through the KCYDI RFP that DCHS plans to release in April 2026, the department intends to introduce important changes. These include DCHS staffing the referral manager role; enhanced data collection and reporting on school and education engagement; increased services to support youth to re-engage in school; and a clearer role for youth voice, informing program improvements rather than serving as primary decision-makers. KCYDI implementation will also include a new school liaison role to work with community navigators, youth, and schools to refine the opportunities for youth and community members who have experienced harm to engage or re-engage in education. This role will be piloted as a TLT in 2027.

KCYDI programming for both referred youth and community members who have experienced harm operate using similar processes, which are detailed further in Appendix A. PAO will refer the individuals to DCHS' referral administrator who will contact the individuals and refer to the KCYDI community-based navigator who is best suited, culturally and geographically, to provide guidance and programming. For 2026 and 2027, PAO has requested capacity to refer 525 individuals, which includes both youth and harmed parties. Based on historical acceptance rates for RCP, DCHS expects roughly 300 PAO referrals to participate in programming.

KCYDI community navigators will have an average caseload size of 15 to 20 participants at any one time. Overall annual capacity is anticipated to be around 400 participants which accounts for navigator vacancies and leave, variable participant needs, and time to engage participants prior to enrollment. They will provide or facilitate the provision of the following areas of service as part of program implementation:

- **Basic Needs:** Navigators will support youth, their family members, and community members who have experienced harm in accessing basic needs such as housing and rent support, bill payments, groceries, clothing, and mental and physical health services.
- **Education and Employment Pathways:** Navigators will provide or connect participants to academic and workforce development programs when relevant, including school reengagement, GED completion, vocational training, job readiness, and employment placement. These services will help youth build skills, pursue personal goals, and work toward financial independence, all of which are critical steps in supporting long-term success. The new school liaison will develop and maintain partnerships with King County school districts and staff at middle schools and high schools. Depending on the youth's needs, they may also work with schools, youth, and families to change schools and gain access to the services needed for youth to thrive in education settings. The school liaison will work with the referral manager to support referrals to re-engagement sites and programs, including those operated by DCHS' Children, Youth, and Young Adult Division. Lastly, the school liaison will provide technical assistance to community navigators related to issues regarding education.
- **Access to Behavioral Health Services:** When appropriate, navigators will connect participants to behavioral health services such as counseling, trauma recovery, mental health care, and substance use treatment. These supports will help to address the root causes of system involvement and are essential for holistic healing. Navigators will play a key role in ensuring participants are connected to culturally responsive care that meets both immediate and long-term needs.
- **Healing-Centered Activities and Accountability:** Navigators will connect participants to prosocial, interest-based activities that advance social and emotional skills, including

creative, youth-centered activities such as art, music, sports, and local community events. Community agencies will provide healing circles and opportunities for accountability through dialogue, reflection, and connection with peers.

- **Restitution funds for community members who experienced harm:** While formal prosecution rarely results in the reimbursement of material losses, the KCYDI model will offer some immediate compensation and acknowledgment of harm. Community members who have experienced harm will be paid from restitution funds.

The KCYDI model is also based on research that articulates the disproportionate impact the juvenile legal system has on communities of color, the traumatic impacts juvenile legal system involvement has on youth, and the benefits of restorative justice approaches. See Appendix B for details.

2. Program Evaluation Framework

DCHS values evaluation and performance measurement activities as an opportunity for learning, reflection, and continuous improvement. Evaluation activities will inform ongoing work and adaptations, provide an understanding of program effectiveness and support shared responsibility for program success. Routine evaluation by an independent party will be conducted throughout program implementation at least once every three years and will include, but not be limited to, evaluation of program impact on new arrests or referrals of program participants and overall juvenile legal system involvement, such as recidivism.

KCYDI will have a dedicated performance, measurement, and evaluation position in DCHS who will coordinate data collection and reporting plans including performance measurement and program outcomes reporting upon request of the Council through a budget proviso or expenditure restriction (or both).

DCHS will, upon the three-year anniversary of program implementation, provide a report to the Council on program implementation progress, initial lessons learned, and any recommendations for program changes moving forward, such as adding County program staff positions or adjusting the scope of work for County program staff positions.

Contracted community providers, in partnership with DCHS and PAO, will contribute to the collection of data elements and outcomes consistent with program priorities. DCHS anticipates finalizing the set of performance measures at the start of KCYDI implementation, with data collection methodology transparent and consistent across providers. DCHS intends to collect selected measures quarterly and use them to summarize program implementation and related outcomes. DCHS will align these performance measures with the *Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework*, a plain-language framework used across DCHS programs that groups performance measures into three categories:¹⁷

- How much was done? What quantity of services were provided?
- How well was it done? What was the quality of the services?
- Is anyone better off? What were the outcomes for participants?¹⁸

KCYDI Data Collection and Performance Measures

Data collection methods will be determined as part of the performance measurement and evaluation planning process with funded partners, and will involve the PAO, whose feedback and

concurrence on the evaluation plan or plans (including finalized performance measures) for funded partners will be required prior to contract execution. Collection methodology will be clearly documented and consistent across providers. Information collected is expected to include individual-level data, aggregate-level data, and qualitative data. All funded partners will collect demographic data for participants, such as age, gender identity, race, and ZIP code.

DCHS will finalize performance measures with contracted partners in the evaluation plans that are created at time of contracting prior to contract execution. Evaluation plans will align with the key program outcomes and data elements for KCYDI that are summarized in Appendix C.

Along with quantitative data, qualitative evaluation methods will be used to incorporate feedback on KCYDI services from referred youth, their families, and community members who have experienced harm, and to gain a deeper understanding of impacts and results.

DCHS will work with PAO on system level outcome measures such as recidivism and decreased involvement in the juvenile legal system.

3. Reporting

DCHS expects all funded organizations to collect and report on data related to community grants. DCHS data products do not include identifying or sensitive information, such as individuals' names. DCHS expects that contracted partners will:

- collect and internally maintain standard individual-level information about each service participant, the services they receive, and the outcomes they experience;
- report individual-level information about service participants and performance measures to King County DCHS on a quarterly basis;
- report progress toward achieving contract milestones on a quarterly basis; and
- submit quarterly narrative reports to share information about operations, participant stories, system change efforts, and other information, in a template provided by DCHS.

DCHS intends to share quarterly KCYDI reports with KCYDI community partners, PAO, DPD, Superior Court, and on its public-facing website.

C. A description of how the proposed program was informed by input from stakeholders including the prosecuting attorney's office, the superior court, and community partners, as well as prior experience with the restorative community pathways program;

DCHS designed the planned KCYDI program with input from RCP community partners, PAO, King County Superior Court (KCSC), taking into account four years' experience with the RCP programming, and the external RCP evaluation of RCP conducted by Impact Justice.¹⁹

King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Representatives of DCHS and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office have been meeting approximately monthly since the start of RCP in 2021 to discuss progress, challenges, and potential implementation refinements. In 2025, PAO provided input on changes to RCP, and the agreed-upon changes were included in Executive Shannon Braddock's letter transmitted to Council in

October 2025, as directed by Ordinance 19861, Section 107, Proviso P1.²⁰ Based on prior experience with RCP, the proposed improvements include:

- Changing the name from Restorative Community Pathways to King County Youth Diversion Intervention Program.
- Moving the roles of referral administration and consortium coordination from a community organization into DCHS' Children, Youth and Young Adult Division.
- Launching a new Request for Proposals (RFP) to reprocure community-based services.
- Enhancing data collection and reporting, especially around school and education engagement.
- Strengthening connections between KCYDI service providers and DCHS services.
- Adding a School Liaison position to support getting youth back into school and helping them stay in school and succeed at school.
- Shifting the role of the Youth Steering Committee to informing continuous quality improvement rather than holding decision-making authority.

The Executive and PAO also agreed that KCYDI should keep the following program elements:

- Provision of services to community members who have experienced harm, including access to restitution funds.
- Access to youth and families funds to help meet basic needs. The Impact Justice evaluation found that meeting basic needs is strongly linked to positive outcomes, such as completing a goal or reporting increases in skills or knowledge.²¹
- DCHS and partners will provide a community and human services approach which includes promotion, prevention, and early intervention strategies for youth with alleged misdemeanors.²²
- PAO would continue to pause felony referrals to KCYDI community-based diversion, and refer youth who have reoffended and youth alleged to have committed felonies to court diversion and court supervision through Juvenile Probation Counselors.

Additionally, PAO requested, and DCHS has planned for up to 300 to 325 misdemeanor case referrals and up to 200 referrals for community members who have experienced harm annually. Based on historical RCP acceptance rates, DCHS expects roughly 300 of these referrals to accept services.

King County Superior Court

During the design phase of RCP, King County Superior Court (KCSC) engaged stakeholders in conversations around supporting best practice models for youth diversion. This included offering resources for technical assistance, sharing ideas for model design, and providing input on successful youth engagement strategies. When RCP faced capacity challenges, KCSC directly served youth, as well as locating and reconnecting them back to RCP services, when appropriate. This ensured continuity of care and reinforced the strength of system-community partnership. Additionally, KCSC provided input regarding data tracking and information-sharing processes. KCSC engaged with the referral coordinator to enhance transparency, accountability, and timely service delivery. While communication and partnership was challenging at times, KCSC remained committed to the primary goal of improving service to youth and families through collaboration.

DCHS and KCSC share a commitment to a balanced approach that prioritizes both community and system collaboration in responding to youth needs. KCSC supports community diversion whenever an alleged harm caused by a young person can be effectively addressed through community-based

agencies, ensuring restorative and supportive interventions. KCSC-administered programs include community-based programming and services. At the same time, KCSC recognizes the importance of a coordinated system response for more serious offenses or repeat behaviors, where accountability and public safety require structured involvement. Like DCHS, KCSC is dedicated to ensuring that teams have the resources and capacity to serve all PAO-referred youth. KCSC aims to connect young people to essential services such as housing, behavioral health, education, employment, mentorship, and a variety of pro-social activities through strong partnerships between the court, community providers, and county systems. This collaborative approach ensures that every youth receives the right level of support at the right time, fostering positive outcomes and reducing future harm.

Community Partners

Over the last four years, DCHS has routinely sought feedback from RCP community partners on improvements and enhancements to the program model, including feedback on changes planned to occur through KCYDI. DCHS staff hold regular monthly check-in meetings with contracted partners, in addition to ad hoc meetings to respond to time sensitive issues. Feedback from RCP community partners included support for maintaining community navigation, the four core areas of services (basic needs, behavioral health, education and employment, healing-centered activities and accountability), adding the school liaison position, and maintaining the restitution fund and youth and families funds which provides basic needs support, such as rental and food assistance, to households served by KCYDI who are struggling to cover such necessities.

RCP community partners shared with DCHS that they did not agree with the name change, as they had done significant work to build name recognition in the community. The name recognition and understanding of what the program had to offer youth and community members who experienced harm has been important for improving the number of youth accepting services. RCP community partners also shared that they disagree with the PAO's decision to no longer send low-level felonies to community-based diversion. RCP organizations believe that youth with low-level felonies would benefit the most from community-based restorative justice services. Community partners also shared that they would like a community-based consortium coordinator, referral administrator, and additional capacity for data and evaluation.

4. A status update regarding the program's implementation timeline;

DCHS is finalizing the Request for Proposals for KCYDI community providers to launch in April 2026. DCHS and current community partners will ensure that youth and community members have an opportunity to complete services under way, and that providers can plan for changes such as ending RCP services, hiring staff under KCYDI, or transitioning from RCP services to KCYDI services. Over the course of 2026, DCHS will end RCP and replace it with KCYDI.

The timeline for DCHS to manage KCYDI implementation includes:

First Quarter 2026

- Meetings with community and County partners to gather input on KCYDI
- Draft, review, and finalize KCYDI RFP
- Draft, review, and finalize KCYDI Proviso Report
- Hire DCHS referral administrator and begin making referrals

Second Quarter 2026

- Launch KCYDI Request for Proposals
- Applicants work on and submit proposals
- Review proposals and make funding recommendations for KCYDI provider selection

Third Quarter 2026

- Review proposals and make funding recommendations for KCYDI provider selection
- Notify Council and applicants of RFP decisions
- Contract Negotiations

Fourth Quarter 2026

- Transition RCP to KCYDI
 - Extend contracts of RCP contractors not selected to provide services in KCYDI to end of 2026 to close out services
 - Extend contracts of RCP contractors selected to provide services in KCYDI to end of 2026 and engage in planning for service continuity
 - Execute all contracts for selected KCYDI providers
 - Gather input from current and new providers and coordinate continuity of services to referred youth and community members for the transition of RCP services to KCYDI

First Quarter 2027

- Finalize KCYDI performance, measurement, and evaluation plans
- Launch KCYDI program implementation with selected community partners

Based on the plan described above, all providers not selected for continued funding would receive three months of close-out time to ensure that currently enrolled youth can successfully complete the program, or if necessary, transfer to other providers starting in 2027.

5. A cost estimate for broadening program eligibility to provide felony diversion to youth.

If PAO began referring felony cases to KCYDI at similar rates as early 2025, approximately 120 additional participants would be served annually. With no other program changes, KCYDI would need to hire five to six additional navigators. DCHS estimates the total cost, including staff wages and benefits, operating costs for the agency, supervision, youth and families funds, and restitution funds would be \$1 million to \$1.2 million annually.

This cost estimate assumes currently-funded caseload levels and similar resources per participant, and assumes community-referred youth would continue to be served.

Anticipated capacity (400 annual participants) is higher than the number of anticipated PAO-referred participants for 2026 (roughly 300), so depending on actual participation and policy choices regarding community-referrals and caseloads, actual costs to serve felony referrals could be lower.

IV. Next Actions

The KCYDI program brings community and county system partners together to provide a collective response to youth under 18 who have an encounter with law enforcement. KCYDI builds off the County's previous pre-filing, community-based diversion program that included restitution for community members who experienced harm. Through input from community and County partners KCYDI introduces enhanced data collection and reporting capacity, increased focus on how to support youth to succeed in school, and County administration of referral operations. DCHS plans to continue to measure its community diversion work and provide regular reports regarding effectiveness. KCYDI program elements include approaches that help prevent future legal system involvement, address underlying causes, and provide for meaningful accountability of referred youth and were informed by PAO, KCSC and community partner input. Community members who experienced harm will also have access to support services and restitution funds. In partnership with PAO and KCYDI community providers, the Executive looks forward to continuing this important work supporting the health and well-being of King County youth and their communities.

V. Appendices

Appendix A

Process flow for youth and community members who experienced harm referred by PAO to KCYDI

Process for PAO-referred youth to KCYDI community navigator

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) will refer eligible youth to a KCYDI referral manager at DCHS, rather than filing charges and referring the youth to the court system.^{23, 24} The DCHS referral manager will then contact the youth or their family member (parent or guardian) to explain the KCYDI program and services available to them. Once the youth has agreed to participate in KCYDI, the referral manager will assign the youth to a community navigator based on geographic location, race or ethnicity, spoken language, and navigator capacity.²⁵ DCHS will work with contracted providers to ensure that community navigators are a diverse group of individuals in terms of geographic location, race or ethnicity, gender, and languages spoken. As much as feasible, navigators hired by KCYDI contracted organizations will be people representative of populations disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system and with experience working with youth and communities disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system. According to the Council of State Governments Justice Center, programs that incorporate credible messengers, individuals with lived experience, and culturally affirming practices build trust and strengthen youth engagement in programming, schools, and community.²⁶ Accessibility also plays a critical role; locating services within youth communities removes logistical barriers such as transportation and increases sustained participation.²⁷

The community navigator will contact the referred youth and family to begin building relationships, and to assess the needs of the youth and family. The community navigator will then co-create a plan with the referred youth and their support system, based on their strengths, goals, and needs. The referred youth's plan will identify ways to address gaps in basic needs, create space for healing, accountability, and restoration, connect them to resources, and build community around them. The community navigator will remain in contact with the referred youth as needed, and at least weekly, as they fulfill their plan.

Community navigators may connect referred youth to a variety of different services. Among these are counseling and other mental health services, assistance with immigration issues, mentorship, social-emotional skills building, case management, internships, employment services, peer-to-peer learning, and education support like high school credit recovery, tutoring, or enrollment in GED classes. While selected KCYDI contracted partners are expected to have knowledge of many community services available, DCHS will also provide contracted partners with information on existing education, employment, behavioral health, and housing services operated by King County or the County's community partners.

Process for PAO-referred community members who have experienced harm to KCYDI community navigator

Upon referral by PAO, the DCHS referral manager will reach out to community members who have experienced harm to understand the harm that occurred; discuss the possibility for restitution funds, and assess whether there are gaps in basic needs and other services that could be

addressed. When relevant and desired, the referral manager will refer community members who have experienced harm to a KCYDI community navigator. DCHS expects that services for community members who experience harm will be like those of referred youth. This may include mental health services, assistance with immigration issues, mentorship, case management, internship and employment opportunities, and education support, such as high school credit recovery, tutoring, and enrollment in a GED class.

Appendix B

Details on how KCYDI is Informed by Research

KCYDI program elements include prevention and early intervention approaches that can help prevent legal system involvement. For example, systemic challenges like housing instability, food insecurity, caregiver incarceration, and fragmented education systems often result in youth becoming disconnected from school, community, and opportunity.²⁸ These factors, compounded by racial bias, punitive school climates, and unmet basic needs, disproportionately affect marginalized youth and can lead to involvement in the legal system.²⁹

Youth and families of color are at higher risk of becoming involved in the juvenile legal system due in large part to the cumulative disadvantages they experience resulting from systemic racism and bias.³⁰ With a diverse set of providers, KCYDI will be culturally responsive. Research shows that culturally responsive diversion offers a meaningful alternative that can address underlying causes, promote healing, and help youth reconnect with education and community.³¹ When programming centers youth well-being and identity, it fosters resilience, connection, and future orientation, which promote positive academic and life outcomes.³²

KCYDI community navigators work closely with referred youth and serve as trusted adults that strengthen youth accountability by offering care, lived experience, and healing-centered strategies.³³ Individualized wraparound services (e.g., basic needs, housing, mental health services) stabilize youth, reduce recidivism, and increase engagement in school and employment.³⁴

The normal process of adolescent brain development is to make risky choices for a period before reaching adulthood.³⁵ Research shows that punitive legal responses exacerbate trauma and inequality without reducing youth behavioral challenges. In contrast, culturally responsive diversion programs addressing basic needs not only foster healing and success but can improve public safety outcomes with less cost.³⁶ Expanding and supporting positive youth development services to youth and families in their communities holds the most promise to keep youth from encountering the legal system.³⁷

Appendix C

Outcomes and Data Collection for the KCYDI Program

KCYDI will provide the opportunity for the community to support youth to meet their goals and avoid further involvement in the juvenile legal system by providing early intervention. As measured through data elements summarized below, KCYDI will:

- Meet the individualized needs of participants (e.g., reconnection to education or employment, social emotional skills and regulation, behavioral health, or wraparound services or service referrals, etc.) and support them to meet their education, employment and career goals;
- Foster long-lasting relationships and support for participants as social connection is a key mitigation factor in reducing the likelihood of future legal system involvement;
- Center the voice of participants in their healing process and offer youth an opportunity to engage in meaningful accountability for the harm they have caused without formal involvement in the juvenile legal system; and
- Recognize the intrinsic need to provide healing and care for youth, and provide youth with the basic needs, tools, resources, and community building necessary to engage in their own healing.

DCHS, in partnership with the PAO, will collect and analyze data elements, including the following. Contractors will be expected to collect and report on these elements and/or support the County's efforts to collect these elements.

- **Services Delivered:** Number of youth served in the program, caseload for each navigator, age at referral, grade level/school status (enrolled, expelled, not attending), race, ethnicity, gender identity, zip code, primary language spoken, Special Education status (if available and appropriate), and foster care or child welfare involvement (yes/no).
- **Completion Outcomes:** Completion status (completed, partially completed, withdrawn, or terminated), date of completion, reason for non-completion if applicable, restitution to harmed party and date the restitution was provided.
- **Program Participation and Engagement:** Services received (such as but not limited to conflict resolution, restoration and accountability activities, mentoring, education, and/or employment), and goals met in participant action plan. Referrals to behavioral health treatment or services and services received. Referrals to housing resources and information, and youth participation in school-based supports and educational resources.
- **Participant Voice:** Youth satisfaction, caregiver satisfaction, harmed party satisfaction.

- **Program Outcomes:** Lower rates of new referrals or arrests, improved school engagement (attendance, progress towards graduation), more equitable outcomes across race, gender, and geography.
- **Long-Term Outcomes:** Reduced juvenile legal system involvement, improved youth stability and well-being, continued educational involvement, housing security, reduced racial and ethnic disparities, lower system costs compared to prosecution and detention.

VI. Endnotes

¹ Culturally responsive diversion offers a meaningful alternative to the juvenile legal systems; it can address underlying causes, promote healing, and help youth reconnect with education and community. Beardslee et al. (2019). Under the radar or under arrest: How is adolescent boys' first contact with the juvenile justice system related to future offending and arrests? <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-36669-002>; Seacrest, L. (2023). Data-driven deflection: A systems approach to reducing juvenile arrests. https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FINAL_r-street-policy-study-no-290.pdf

² Measuring DCHS' impact. <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dchs/about-king-county/about-dchs/data-reports>

³ See Evaluation of King County Restorative Community Pathways. <https://impactjustice.org/innovation/research-action-center/building-community-led-alternatives-to-youth-prosecution/>

⁴ See the Restorative Community Pathways Updated Implementation Plan transmitted in 2022, as called for by Ordinance 19210, Section 18, Proviso P2, as amended by Ordinance 19307, Section 7, and Ordinance 19364, Section 14, for additional background and context on programs leading up to RCP and KCYDI.

⁵ Proposed Motion 2021-0319 – Appendix B. A MOTION acknowledging receipt of the implementation plan on Restorative Community Pathways required by the 2021-2022 Biennial Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 19210, Section 18, Proviso P2, as amended by Ordinance 19307, Section 7.

<https://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5086139&GUID=C66A43AA-1791-458A-9FF8-323158F90921>

⁶ Proposed Motion 2022-0321 – Appendix B. A MOTION acknowledging receipt of the updated implementation plan on restorative community pathways required by the 2021-2022 Biennial Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 19210, Section 18, Proviso P2, as amended by Ordinance 19307, Section 7, and Ordinance 19364, Section 14, related to the office of performance, strategy and budget.

<https://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5747172&GUID=188BC47C-67FA-4177-BD43-65DD083D8FEE>

⁷ KCYDI's predecessor RCP was developed through a partnership with community organizations working with legal system-involved youth, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and Department of Public Defense.

⁸ Council of State Governments Justice Center. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/restorative-justice-practices-and-credible-messengers-promising-innovative-approaches-for-improving-outcomes-for-youth-in-the-juvenile-justice-system/>

⁹ Jackson et al. (2012). An overview of prevention of multiple risk behaviour in adolescence and young adulthood <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdr113>

¹⁰ Toews et al. (2024). Effective strategies and interventions for engaging at-risk youth: a rapid systematic review of the literature <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s44202-024-00147-0>

¹¹ MacArthur et al. (2018). Individual-, family-, and school-level interventions targeting multiple risk behaviours in young people

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD009927.pub2/full>

¹² Toews et al. (2024). Effective strategies and interventions for engaging at-risk youth: a rapid systematic review of the literature <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s44202-024-00147-0>

¹³ Proposed Motion 2025-0366. A MOTION adopting the 2025 King County Youth Action Plan.

<https://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7760680&GUID=69D1C7DC-BC39-4093-BC56-3B473E58E1B7>

¹⁴ When programming centers youth well-being and identity, it fosters resilience, connection, and future orientation, which promote positive academic and life outcomes. Mendel, R. (2024). Protect and redirect: Best practices for juvenile diversion-- the Sentencing Project. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/protect-and-redirect-best-practices-for-juvenile-diversion/>; Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018). Transforming Juvenile Probation: A Vision for Getting It Right. <https://www.aecf.org/resources/transforming-juvenile-probation-executive-summary>; Bhargav, M., & Swords, L. (2024). Two sides of the coin: The roles of

adverse childhood experiences and positive childhood experiences in college students' mental health. J. Interpersonal Violence, 39, 2507–2525. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11071601/>; Del Toro, J., & Wang, M. T. (2020). School cultural socialization and academic performance: Examining ethnic-racial identity development as a mediator among African American adolescents. Child Development, 92(4), 1458–1475. <https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.13467>; Hurd, N. M. & Sellers, R. M. (2013). Black adolescents' relationships with natural mentors: Associations with academic engagement via social and emotional development. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 19, 76–85. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fa0031095>

¹⁵ Social isolation significantly increases risk for depression, anxiety, and poor physical health outcomes. Mann et al. (2022). <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00127-022-02261-7>; Murthy. (2023). <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>. The severity of this challenge has prompted the U.S. Surgeon General to issue a 2023 Advisory on youth isolation and the Washington State Department of Health to prioritize building social connections across the lifespan as a high-priority public health matter; Murthy. (2023). <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>; WA DOH. (2024). <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-08/420-387-SocialConnectionReport.pdf>. While schools are important settings for fostering youth connection, they can also be environments where bias-based exclusion and discrimination negatively impact students, Cooley et al. (2016). <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/chapter/bookseries/abs/pii/S0065240716300180?via%3Dihub>; Rueger et al. (2016). <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fbul0000058>; Russell et al. (2012). <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300430>. Ensuring continuous social support, therefore, requires engagement across all institutions and contexts.

¹⁶ Culturally responsive diversion offers a meaningful alternative to the juvenile legal systems; it can address underlying causes, promote healing, and help youth reconnect with education and community. Beardslee et al. (2019). Under the radar or under arrest: How is adolescent boys' first contact with the juvenile justice system related to future offending and arrests? <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-36669-002>; Seacrest, L. (2023). Data-driven deflection: A systems approach to reducing juvenile arrests. https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FINAL_r-street-policy-study-no-290.pdf.

¹⁷ Results Based Accountability. <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dchs/about-king-county/about-dchs/data-reports/data-team>

¹⁸ Results Based Accountability: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dchs/about-king-county/about-dchs/data-reports/data-team>

¹⁹ See Evaluation of King County Restorative Community Pathways. <https://impactjustice.org/innovation/research-action-center/building-community-led-alternatives-to-youth-prosecution/>

²⁰ Ordinance 19861, Section 107, Proviso P1.

²¹ See Evaluation of King County Restorative Community Pathways. <https://impactjustice.org/innovation/research-action-center/building-community-led-alternatives-to-youth-prosecution/>

²² Strategies include case management, concrete basic needs support, social, emotional, and life skills development, education and employment pathways, restorative justice.

²³ The KCPAO determines eligibility of youth up to age 18, which includes most first-time misdemeanors. The PAO paused previously eligible non-violent felonies in 2025.

²⁴ The DCHS referral manager will sit in the Children, Youth, and Young Adult Division's unit that includes education and employment services to young people ages 16 to 24 years old.

²⁵ DCHS will run a request for proposal (RFP) process in 2026 to select community-based organizations that will host community navigators to work with referred youth and community members who have experienced harm. As required by Ordinance 20023, Section 108, Proviso P2, the Executive plans to transmit a preview copy of the RFP to the Council 21 days before its release.

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- ²⁶ Council of State Governments Justice Center. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/restorative-justice-practices-and-credible-messengers-promising-innovative-approaches-for-improving-outcomes-for-youth-in-the-juvenile-justice-system/>
- ²⁷ How students' transportation options—or lack thereof—affect educational and health outcomes. Housing Matters. <https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/how-students-transportation-options-or-lack-thereof-affect-educational-and-health-outcomes>
- ²⁸ Hodara, M., et al. (2023). The Washington State Open Doors Youth Reengagement System Students Served and Program Outcomes 2015–2021. Community Partnership for Reengagement Initiative. https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2023-12/wa_state_open_doors_report_0.pdf
- ²⁹ Crum  , L., et al. (2020). Creating Paths for Change: Understanding Student Disengagement and Reengagement. <https://roadmapproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Creating-Paths-for-Change-Understanding-Student-Disengagement-and-Reengagement.pdf>; Hong, J.S., et al. (2024). Sex and Racial/Ethnic Differences in School Security Measures, Bullying Victimization, and Perceived School Safety: Implications for Pediatric Health Care. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38429027/>; Mendel, R.A. (2024). Protect and Redirect: Best Practices for Juvenile Diversion. The Sentencing Project. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/protect-and-redirect-best-practices-for-juvenile-diversion/>
- ³⁰ Mental Health America. (2010-2014). Black and African American Communities and Mental Health. <https://mhanational.org/resources/racism-and-mental-health>; Badger, E., et al. (2018). Extensive Data Shows Punishing Reach of Racism for Black Boys. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/19/upshot/race-class-white-and-black-men.html>; National Registry of Exonerations. Race and Wrongful Convictions in the United States. <https://exonerationregistry.org/>
- ³¹ Beardslee et al. (2019). Under the radar or under arrest: How is adolescent boys' first contact with the juvenile justice system related to future offending and arrests? American Psychological Association <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-36669-002>; Seacrest. (2023). Data-Driven Deflection: A Systems Approach to Reducing Juvenile Arrests https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FINAL_r-street-policy-study-no-290.pdf
- ³² Mendel, R. (2024). Protect and redirect: Best practices for juvenile diversion. The Sentencing Project. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/protect-and-redirect-best-practices-for-juvenile-diversion/>; Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018). Transforming Juvenile Probation: A Vision for Getting It Right. <https://www.aecf.org/resources/transforming-juvenile-probation-executive-summary>; Bhargav, M., & Swords, L. (2024). Two sides of the coin: The roles of adverse childhood experiences and positive childhood experiences in college students' mental health. *J. Interpersonal Violence*, 39, 2507–2525. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11071601/>; Del Toro, J., & Wang, M. T. (2020). School cultural socialization and academic performance: Examining ethnic-racial identity development as a mediator among African American adolescents. *Child Development*, 92(4), 1458–1475. <https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.13467>; Hurd, N. M. & Sellers, R. M. (2013). Black adolescents' relationships with natural mentors: Associations with academic engagement via social and emotional development. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 19, 76–85. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fa0031095>
- ³³ Onyeka et al. (2022). The role of positive youth development on mental health for youth of color living in high-stress communities: A strengths-based approach. *Psy. Services*, 19, 72–83. <https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2022-01209-001.html>; Gilgoff & Ginwright. (2015). Toward more equitable outcomes: A research synthesis on out-of-school time work with boys and young men of color. *After-school Matters*, 21, 11–19. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1063851>
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³⁵ Casey, B.J. (2008). The Adolescent Brain. *Dev Rev*, 28(1), 62-77. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18400927/>

³⁶ Bintliff. (2016). Re-engaging disconnected youth: Transformative learning through restorative and social justice education. *Intl. Review of Edu.*, 62, 647–649. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11159-016-9575-4>; Justice Policy Institute. (2020). Sticker shock 2020: The cost of youth incarceration. Washington, DC. <https://justicepolicy.org/research/policy-brief-2020-sticker-shock-the-cost-of-youth-incarceration/>; Loprest et al. (2019). Disconnected young adults: Increasing engagement and opportunity. *J. Social Sciences*, 5(5), 221–243. <https://www.rsfjournal.org/content/5/5/221>; Mawn et al. (2017). Are we failing young people not in employment, education, or training? A systematic review meta-analysis of reengagement interventions. *Systematic Reviews*, 6(16), 1–17. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s13643-016-0394-2>

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