

## Care and Closure: Progress Report on the Strategic Planning Process for the Future of Secure Juvenile Detention

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August 2023



**King County**

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## II. Proviso Text

Ordinance 19546, Section 106, Employment and Education Resources, Proviso P1:<sup>1</sup>

Of this appropriation, \$300,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits two progress reports on the strategic planning process for the future of secure juvenile detention at the children and family justice center ("CCFJC"), each accompanied by a motion to acknowledge receipt of the report and the motions acknowledging receipt of the reports are passed by the council. Each motion should reference the subject matter, the proviso's ordinance number, ordinance section and proviso number in both the title and body of the motion. Upon passage of each motion, \$150,000 is released for expenditure or encumbrance.

A. The first report shall include, but not be limited to:

1. A discussion of progress on the project since the June 30, 2022, Children and Family Justice Center - Strategic Planning Project report;
2. An overview of community engagement activities from July 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022, including a summary of key findings;
3. A draft recommendations framework developed by the project advisory committee;
4. A discussion of state law requirements for juvenile detention in King County, and how those requirements interact with CCFJC strategic planning;
5. A discussion of applicable labor laws that interact with CCFJC strategic planning; and
6. Identification of King County Council involvement and any legislative actions that are anticipated to be part of project implementation.

B. The second report shall include, but not be limited to:

1. The project advisory committee's final recommendations for the future of secure juvenile detention at CCFJC;
2. A summary of how the project advisory committee's recommendations were developed; and
3. An overview of community engagement conducted throughout the project including key findings.

The executive should electronically file the first report and motion required by this proviso no later than June 30, 2023, and the second report and motion required by this proviso no later than October 31, 2023, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the law, justice, health and human services committee or its successor.

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<sup>1</sup> Ordinance 19546. [[LINK](#)]

### III. Executive Summary

The King County Executive oversees the secure detention facility located within the Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CCFJC) at the request of Superior Court, which has statutory authority for juvenile detention under state law.<sup>2</sup> Under the County Executive, the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention’s (DAJD) Juvenile Division is responsible for the care and custody of all youth in detention.<sup>3</sup>

In July 2020, the King County Executive committed to converting youth detention units at the Children and Family Justice Center to other uses no later than 2025, stating, “phasing out centralized youth detention is no longer a goal in the far distance. We have made extraordinary progress and we have evolved to believe that even more can be done.”<sup>4</sup>

As called for by Ordinance 19546, this report is the third report submitted to the King County Council on the strategic planning effort to close the youth detention center at the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CCFJC) by 2025 and repurpose it for other community-identified uses.<sup>5</sup> The Executive submitted the first proviso report on September 30, 2021 and submitted the second proviso report on June 30, 2022.

The September 2021 report included an overview of key historical context relative to the strategic planning work and documented previous and ongoing efforts to reduce the number of young people in detention over the past two decades. The September 2021 report identified previous engagement with interested parties, outlined next actions, and included an estimated timeline for the process.<sup>6</sup>

The June 2022 report built on the September 2021 report by detailing the proposed approach for the community-centered engagement process and outlining the project’s structure, including the Advisory Committee, subcommittees, and collaborations with system and community partners. The report also highlighted a shift in leadership for the project from DAJD to the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and updated the timeline of the project’s implementation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> King County Code 2.16.175. Juvenile Court Services-Detention Facilities-Administration by the County Executive [[LINK](#)]. See also RCW 13.20.060. Transfer of administration of juvenile court services to county executive—Authorized—Advisory board—Procedure. [[LINK](#)]

<sup>3</sup> King County Code (KCC) 2.16.175. Title 2 Administration – Administrative Offices and Executive Departments. [[LINK](#)]

<sup>4</sup> King County Executive Office. Executive State of the County (2020). [[LINK](#)]

<sup>5</sup> King County Ordinance 19546. [[LINK](#)]

<sup>6</sup> The September 2021 proviso report was required in Ordinance 19210, Section 50, P3, as amended by Ordinance 19307, Section 31, Proviso P3. September 2021 Proviso Report [[LINK](#)]

<sup>7</sup> The June 2022 proviso report required in Ordinance 19210, Section 50, P3, as amended by Ordinance 19307, Section 31, Proviso P3. June 2022 Proviso Report [[LINK](#)]

King County’s effort to transform its response to youth in crisis and end youth detention is supported by research. Research shows that youth detention and incarceration fail to produce the desired outcomes of rehabilitation and accountability for young people.<sup>8</sup> It also has immediate and long-term collateral consequences for young people, such as financial penalties; restrictions in public benefit programs; housing restrictions with public housing programs; disruptions and barriers to education and employment; and trauma and continued stigma.<sup>9</sup> Evidence further highlights that crime survivors, or harmed community members, are twice as likely to prefer investing in crime prevention, crisis assistance, and strong communities over increasing arrests, strict punishment, and incarceration.<sup>10 11</sup> Further research highlights that community-based alternatives to detention and incarceration are more effective in producing better public safety outcomes for youth who have caused serious harm in their communities, especially when interventions are multi-faceted and tailored to blend specific supports for youth.<sup>12 13</sup> These types of interventions are supported by diverse national partners, including associations for juvenile and family court judges and administrators of youth and correctional facilities.<sup>14</sup>

In early 2023, the Executive Office branded this initiative *Care and Closure: a plan for youth healing, accountability, and community safety*. This name clarifies the Executive’s commitments to 1) expand the community-based continuum of resources, accountability, and care for young people and harmed community members to better meet their needs and support their healing; and 2) close the youth detention center. It also reflects three essential components in this work: centering youth and their healing, ensuring accountability for harm caused, and bolstering community safety by resourcing communities and creating more effective responses to harm.

As called for by the King County Council, this report responds to six requirements related to: progress since the June 2022 proviso, engagement findings with impacted communities, a draft recommendations framework (referred to in the report as a draft framework), state requirements for

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<sup>8</sup> The Sentencing Project (2022). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>9</sup> National Governors Association (2023). State Strategies to Address the Needs of Justice-Involved Youth Impacted by Collateral Consequences [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>10</sup> Alliance for Safety and Justice (2022). Crime Survivors Speak: National Survey of Victims’ Views on Safety and Justice. [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>11</sup> Harmed community members and/or harmed parties, also commonly known as victims, are individuals who have been directly or indirectly affected by crime. This report uses “harmed parties” to reference community members who have been directly or indirectly harmed by youth crime.

<sup>12</sup> The research measures effectiveness of these programs in several ways, including recidivism or the likelihood of the youth reoffending or committing another offense within a certain period of time. Research also looks at program impacts on youth wellbeing, such as developing new skills, developing a sense of belonging, and contributing to their communities.

<sup>13</sup> Sentencing Project (2023). Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>14</sup> National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2022). Judicial Leadership for Community-Based Alternatives to Juvenile Secure Confinement [\[LINK\]](#). Youth Correctional Leaders for Justice (2020). Statement on Ending Youth Prisons [\[LINK\]](#).

youth detention, labor considerations for supporting detention staff through the transition, and Council’s role in the continued process and implementation of the recommendations.<sup>15</sup>

### **Progress Since June 2022**

King County has made significant progress in the Care and Closure effort and is on track for the major milestones outlined in the June 2022 proviso report.

The Executive Office, DAJD, and DCHS successfully transitioned project leadership from DAJD to DCHS, and DCHS is now leading Care and Closure in partnership with DAJD and the Executive Office to identify community-based alternatives to youth detention. DCHS continues to convene the Advisory Committee, a group of community partners, system partners, and impacted community members, as a key component of the community-centered process.<sup>16</sup> The Advisory Committee guides the project and will ultimately co-create recommendations informed by community input. The Advisory Committee recently launched three subcommittees to deepen the project’s recommendations development and expand the community partners and perspectives informing the recommendations. King County convenes the Advisory Committee with support from the Burns Institute, a national nonprofit with expertise in youth legal system transformation. DCHS has also deepened partnerships with community organizations and engagement with impacted community members in this planning process, as further outlined below.

### **Engagement with Impacted Communities**

Since June 2022, King County and community partners have been gathering input and feedback from nearly 1,200 impacted community members, including impacted youth, family members, harmed community members, and community partners.<sup>17</sup> DCHS and its partners convened listening sessions, conducted interviews and surveys, and met with hundreds of impacted community members in detention, virtually, and in communities throughout King County.<sup>18</sup>

This engagement with hundreds of young people, families, and community members who are impacted by the youth legal system and organizations working with young people showed that the County needs expanded community-based responses to intervene when youth cause serious harm in their communities.

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<sup>15</sup> King County Ordinance 19546 [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>16</sup> The Advisory Committee is comprised of community representatives, impacted young people and families, and systems partners. Of the current 14 members on the Advisory Committee, seven represent community perspectives and impacted communities, including three representatives under 25 years old and one parent. See Appendix C for the composition of the Advisory Committee.

<sup>17</sup> The term “impacted youth” in this planning process refers to young people between the ages of 12 and 24 years old who have been involved in the youth legal system, been confined in detention or participated in electronic home monitoring, participated in a diversion program, or harmed by other youth.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendices E through J for more information about findings from the community-led engagement, listening sessions with youth in detention, interviews with youth on electronic home monitoring, and input from community organizations.

The engagement with impacted communities highlighted three key findings:

1. Many impacted youth, families, and community members believe that secure youth detention is not an effective solution for most or all youth and should not be relied on to make communities better and safer.
2. Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members want more resources focused on supporting youth healing, accountability, and community safety. These resources include more spaces other than detention to reflect on mistakes made; stability and structure; supportive mentors with similar lived experiences; resources to transform and stabilize their home environments; and greater support for their families.
3. Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members want King County to have expanded responses that center understanding as to why harm occurred, prevent harm from occurring, create real community safety, and foster collaborative and community-centered care.

### **Draft Framework**

The initial draft framework in this report integrates components developed by the Advisory Committee with DCHS' support and signals the anticipated approach of the final recommendations. This report does not include the full range of those recommendations, because the Advisory Committee and subcommittees were developing them as of the writing of this report. However, the draft framework highlights the work done by the Advisory Committee to understand the values, principles, and needs members intend to consider when identifying the community-based alternatives necessary to close the youth detention center, support impacted youth, and promote greater community safety.

The Advisory Committee has identified 12 shared values to help ensure value-based, not fear-based, decision-making for its development of recommendations to end the use of secure youth detention: centering impacted young people and families; honesty; transparency; integrity; accountability and commitment; empathy; listening to each other; restorative; respect; diversity; allowing others to speak their truth; and healing.<sup>19</sup>

The Advisory Committee has also identified six initial guiding principles to help inform the group's recommendations for alternatives to secure youth detention:

1. Prioritize meeting the needs for all youth, harmed parties, and community members;
2. Keep youth in their communities;
3. Prioritize racial equity and anti-racism;
4. Focus on radical healing and accountability, not punishment;
5. Holistically support and center impacted youth, harmed parties, and communities in the development and implementation of alternatives to secure youth detention; and
6. Be transparent with how the alternatives are being developed and implemented.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The Advisory Committee created these shared values in May 2022. The list of shared values is included in the meeting agendas and notes and highlighted at the beginning of each Advisory Committee meeting. King County Care and Closure (2023) [[LINK](#)]

<sup>20</sup> See the project website for meeting notes, agendas, and slides from the Advisory Committee meetings. King County Care and Closure (2023). Advisory Committee [[LINK](#)]

A draft holistic continuum of care informed by the initial guiding principles and community engagement graphically depicts the range of community-based supports identified by impacted youth, family members, and harmed parties needed to meet the needs of these groups. Included as Figure 6 in the report, this tool underscores that while many supports already exist in King County, the County and its partners may need to tailor and expand those resources and develop new ones to meet the complex needs of youth in detention and harmed parties. These critical supports are categorized into nine elements: mentorship and supportive communities, education, transportation, employment and financial stability, medical and behavioral health, family support, housing, accountability, and healing.

The Advisory Committee and subcommittees are using and refining the initial draft framework to inform recommendations on the community-based alternatives necessary for youth healing, accountability, and community safety and to close the youth detention center.

### **State Law Requirements for Youth Detention**

While King County is building toward a future without a youth detention center, Washington State law requires King County to operate a youth detention center and use detention to detain youth for certain offenses.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, unless alternative facilities can comply with statutory requirements, those statutes will need to be repealed or amended so that King County is not obligated to have a youth detention center or detain young people in a youth detention center. To inform a state legislative strategy, King County will need to further examine the potential impacts of different legislative changes on other counties in the state and the ability to use expanded community-based alternatives as suitable placements for young people with specific offenses.

The Executive intends to work with state legislators, the public, and the King County Council to propose and adopt state legislative priorities to make needed changes to existing state statutes. The Executive plans to partner with state legislators and the Governor to achieve those legislative priorities.

### **Labor Laws and Supporting Detention Staff**

The County's transition to close the youth detention center at the CCFJC will be a major organizational change for Juvenile Division staff.<sup>22</sup> The Executive is committed to supporting staff and respecting their needs, rights, and concerns throughout the Care and Closure process and implementation of the recommendations to close youth detention. The Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act, Chapter 41.56 Revised Code of Washington (RCW), requires the County to negotiate with labor representatives

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix M for a list of all identified state requirements for secure youth detention in Washington State. Two state statutes, RCW 13.04.135 and RCW 13.16.030, require the maintenance and operation of a physically secure facility where juveniles may be confined for 24 hours a day and where staff is present to maintain such confinement. RCW 13.04.135. Establishment of house or room of detention. [\[LINK\]](#) RCW 13.16.030. Mandatory function of counties. [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>22</sup> There are five represented bargaining units at the DAJD Juvenile Division with a total of 142 represented employees that may be directly impacted by the closure of the detention center. See Appendix N for a more information on the bargaining units within DAJD's Juvenile Division.

regarding changes to mandatory subjects of bargaining, such as changes to employee wages, hours, and working conditions.<sup>23</sup> In addition to following the labor laws and processes detailed in this full report, the Executive is committed to preparing detention staff for the transition to a variety of career pathways, including at the adult jails, in different departments supporting youth and family members, or in other careers within or outside of the County.

### **Council Involvement**

The King County Council is engaged in the Care and Closure initiative in multiple ways, including through briefings, input into recommended community organizations for the County to engage in the planning process, and staff attendance at Advisory Committee meetings. The Council will have several opportunities to continue to be involved in project planning and support project implementation at the local and state level. The Executive welcomes further collaboration with Council, outreach during public education activities, and engagement activities such as town halls.

The Council's legislative and fiscal policymaking is important for the implementation of the recommendations from this initiative. Council action will be necessary to support state legal changes and related investments as county legislative priorities. Council action will also be required to implement most state legislative changes and invest local dollars in existing and needed local youth-centered services outlined in the recommendations from this process.

### **Next Actions**

Working with community, labor, and systems partners, the Executive is continuing to transform the County's response to youth in crisis, including eliminating secure detention for youth. Expanding the range of community-based alternatives to support young people and their healing, accountability, and community safety and closing the youth detention center advances King County's commitment to becoming an anti-racist, pro-equity government. Ultimately, the County needs to transform its youth legal system to better meet the needs of impacted youth, families, and harmed community members.

The Executive intends to proceed with closure of the youth detention center only when sufficient resources and support are in place to expand the community-based alternatives to secure youth detention.

Consistent with Ordinance 19546, the Executive expects to provide the Advisory Committee's recommendations for the future of secure youth detention in late 2023. These recommendations are expected to include a pathway to transition sustainably toward community-based alternatives that reflect the framework in this report and achieve racial equity, improve outcomes for youth, and support safer communities in King County.

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<sup>23</sup> RCW 41.56. Public Employees' Collective Bargaining [\[LINK\]](#)

## IV. Background

As called for by Ordinance 19546, this report is the third report submitted to the King County Council on the strategic planning effort to close the youth detention center at the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CCFJC) by 2025 and repurpose it for other community-identified uses.<sup>24</sup> The Executive submitted the first proviso report on September 30, 2021 and submitted the second proviso report on June 30, 2022.

The September 2021 report included an overview of key historical context for the strategic planning effort to close the County's youth detention center and repurpose the space for other community-identified uses.<sup>25</sup> It highlighted that despite successful efforts to reduce the overall number of young people in detention in King County, the racial disparities of young people of color in detention has continued to worsen.<sup>26</sup> The report identified previous engagement with interested parties for the process, outlined next actions, and included an estimated timeline for the process.<sup>27</sup> The Executive Summary of the September 2021 report is in Appendix A.

The June 2022 report built on the September 2021 report by providing project updates and outlining next steps for the process.<sup>28</sup> It detailed the proposed approach for the community-centered engagement process to center the perspectives and experiences of impacted youth, family members, and harmed community members in King County. It outlined the project's Advisory Committee, a group of community partners, systems partners, and impacted community members, as a key component of the community-centered process.<sup>29</sup> The Advisory Committee continues to guide the project and will ultimately co-create recommendations informed by community input.<sup>30</sup> The June 2022 report also highlighted a shift in governance for the project from the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) to the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), in acknowledgement of the

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<sup>24</sup> In his July 2020 State of the County address, King County Executive Constantine made the commitment to expand community-based alternatives to secure youth detention and fully convert the youth detention capacity to other uses no later than 2025. King County Executive Office. Executive Constantine's State of the County [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>25</sup> September 2021 Proviso Report, required by Ordinance 19210, Section 50, Proviso P3, as amended by Ordinance 19307, Section 31, Proviso P3. [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>26</sup> September 2021 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>27</sup> September 2021 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>28</sup> June 2022 Proviso Report, required by Ordinance 19210, Section 50, Proviso P3, as amended by Ordinance 19307, Section 31, Proviso P3. [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>29</sup> The Executive Office established the Advisory Committee in March 2021 to guide and shape the project. The September 2021 proviso response and June 2022 proviso response outlined the Advisory Committee in further detail. September 2021 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#) and June 2022 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>30</sup> The Advisory Committee is comprised of community representatives, impacted young people and families, and systems partners. Of the current 14 members on the Advisory Committee, seven members represent community perspectives, including three representatives under 25 years old and one parent. See Appendix C for information on the Advisory Committee members. The County provides stipends to the Advisory Committee's community members for their time and expertise, including participation in meetings and other opportunities such as serving on funding panels.

importance of expanding community-based alternatives to secure youth detention as the County prepares to close the youth detention center. Lastly, it updated the timeline of the project's implementation.<sup>31</sup> The Executive Summary of the June 2022 report is included in Appendix B.

This third report highlights the continued progress the County has made to close the youth detention center and expand community-based alternatives to secure youth detention. It outlines significant project updates since June 2022 and summarizes the support from impacted communities, including youth in detention, their families, harmed community members, and community organizations, to expand community-based alternatives to secure youth detention. It also addresses requirements from Council on a draft framework of recommendations, state laws that require secure youth detention, labor laws supporting detention staff through the transition, and opportunities for Council to be involved in the effort. It builds on the previous reports with updated data and demonstrates how Executive departments have moved forward on the milestones and efforts to center impacted communities in the planning process.

This report also details the continued work of the Advisory Committee since June 2022, including the recent launch of subcommittees. As outlined in the June 2022 proviso response, the Advisory Committee's subcommittees serve as another avenue for the project's community engagement.<sup>32</sup> The subcommittee structure allows for engagement with community organizations, impacted young people and family members, and systems partners, and for deeper discussion on specific topics. These subcommittees connect to the Advisory Committee, and many of the Advisory Committee members participate in subcommittees. There are three subcommittees: 1) Identifying alternatives to secure youth detention; 2) Strengthening community infrastructure; and 3) Engaging impacted communities. More information about the subcommittees and their role in developing recommendations is included in Section C.

In early 2023, the Executive Office branded this initiative *Care and Closure: a plan for youth healing, accountability, and community safety*. This name helps clarify the County's commitments to 1) expand the community-based continuum of resources, accountability, and care for young people and harmed community members to better meet their needs and support their healing; and 2) close the youth detention center. It also reflects three essential components in this work: centering youth and their well-being, ensuring accountability for harm caused, and bolstering community safety by resourcing communities and creating more effective responses to harm.

DCHS led the development of this proviso response on behalf of the Executive Office and as the lead agency for Care and Closure. Other departments, including the DAJD, Office of Labor Relations (OLR), and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) Civil Division supported the response to other proviso requirements. Each section of this report identifies the County agencies that led and supported the development of the response.

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<sup>31</sup> June 2022 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>32</sup> June 2022 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

## Department Overview

King County’s youth legal system and efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of secure youth detention is made up of several different County departments. While the Executive helps sets the vision for the broader criminal legal system in King County, the operations, roles, and responsibilities across the legal system are shared across the Executive departments and separately elected departments outlined below.

## Department of Community and Human Services

DCHS’ mission is to provide equitable opportunities for people to be healthy, happy, and connected to community.<sup>33</sup> Its wide array of programs and expertise, ranging from behavioral health to children, youth, and young adult services to affordable housing to supports for individuals with developmental disabilities, align with the goal of addressing the complex needs and risks of young people involved in the legal system through community-based alternatives. DCHS also manages and administers several of the County’s special purpose revenue funds in health, housing, and human services. These include Best Starts for Kids (BSK), the MIDD behavioral health sales tax fund, the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy, and the Health Through Housing initiative.<sup>34 35 36 37</sup>

DCHS’ Children, Youth, and Young Adult Division (CYAD) is working toward a vision for this region where all young people have equitable opportunities to be happy, healthy, safe, and thriving members of their communities. The division delivers re-engagement, education, and employment services for youth and young adults.<sup>38</sup> Within its portfolio, CYAD supports critical BSK investments in and programs for promotion, prevention, and early intervention including youth development, childcare subsidies and workforce development, positive family connections, liberation and healing from systemic and internalized racism, youth and family homelessness prevention, and school-based health centers.<sup>39</sup> The division also manages the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account (PSTAA), which supports investments for early learning facilities, K-12 community-based supports, and college, career, and technical education.<sup>40</sup>

CYAD also plays an important role in youth legal system transformation.<sup>41</sup> This DCHS division administers the community-led, County-supported Restorative Community Pathways (RCP) program;

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<sup>33</sup> Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) [[LINK](#)]

<sup>34</sup> Best Starts for Kids [[LINK](#)]

<sup>35</sup> MIDD is referred to in King County Code and related legislation as the mental illness and drug dependency fund, tax, or levy. DCHS. MIDD Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund [[LINK](#)]

<sup>36</sup> Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy [[LINK](#)]

<sup>37</sup> Health Through Housing [[LINK](#)]

<sup>38</sup> Children, Youth and Young Adults Division [[LINK](#)]

<sup>39</sup> Best Starts for Kids. Programs and opportunities [[LINK](#)]

<sup>40</sup> Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account (PSTAA) [[LINK](#)]

<sup>41</sup> There are many terms associated with the youth legal system including the juvenile justice system, juvenile criminal legal system, and youth criminal legal system. This report uses “youth legal system” to encompass these many terms and use the non-stigmatizing term of “youth” rather than “juvenile”, “offender”, or “criminal”.

manages BSK's Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline investments; staffs the Children and Youth Advisory Board and its Youth Justice Subcommittee; and leads the Care and Closure project featured in this proviso response.

### **Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention**

The Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) operates three detention facilities and various community supervision programs for pre- and post-trial defendants throughout King County. DAJD is responsible for the care, custody, and support of youth who are detained in the juvenile detention facility at the CCFJC. It operates King County's Alternatives to Secure Detention (ASD) program, providing community supervision to youth assigned to electronic home monitoring (EHM). The Executive operates the juvenile detention facility on behalf of the separately elected Superior Court.<sup>42</sup>

DAJD is involved as staff support for the Advisory Committee and represented on the Care and Closure subcommittees.

### **King County Superior Court**

King County Superior Court is King County's general jurisdiction trial court. Superior Court is part of the judicial branch of government. Superior Court judges are elected, and the Court is led by the Superior Court Presiding Judge. Among other responsibilities under the Washington Constitution and state statutes, Superior Court has responsibility for juvenile offender cases which are adjudicated in the Juvenile Court and cases for youth tried as adults.

King County Juvenile Court handles cases when youth younger than 18 are accused of committing an "offense," which is how Juvenile Court describes an action or behavior that occurs when a youth breaks a law. Young people are different than adults, which is why there is a separate court for hearing their cases. Juvenile Court Judges use a range of legal options to meet both the safety needs of the community and the service needs of the youth and their families. The primary goals of Juvenile Court are to promote public safety, help youth build skills, address treatment needs, support families, and successfully restore youth to the community.<sup>43</sup> Juvenile Court Services provides opportunities for youth and families to receive supportive interventions and programming with the goal of eliminating future involvement in the legal system.

The Superior Court, Juvenile Court, and Juvenile Court Services are all represented on the Care and Closure Advisory Committee.<sup>44</sup>

### **Department of Public Defense**

The Department of Public Defense (DPD) provides legal representation to adults and juveniles who have been charged with a crime and cannot afford an attorney, as well as people facing civil commitment, parents who could lose their children in a dependency action, and people seeking to vacate a past felony

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<sup>42</sup> Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>43</sup> King County Juvenile Court [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>44</sup> King County Juvenile Court Services [\[LINK\]](#)

or misdemeanor conviction. DPD works to address racial disproportionality in the criminal legal system, the collateral consequences of system involvement, and other structural and systemic issues that undermine the rights of clients. DPD is part of the executive branch and operates as an independent voice that promotes justice and equity for its clients and advocates for their objectives and interests.<sup>45</sup> DPD's Juvenile Defense practice area focuses on partnering closely with its young clients, supporting them through the complexities of the criminal legal system and helping them obtain their stated objectives.<sup>46</sup>

DPD is represented on the Care and Closure Advisory Committee.

### **Prosecuting Attorney's Office**

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) employs more than 500 people, including more than 260 attorneys. The King County Prosecutor, who is a separately elected official, leads the PAO. The PAO Criminal Division represents the State and the County in criminal matters in the King County District and Superior Courts, the state and federal courts of appeal, and the Washington and U.S. Supreme Courts. The Criminal Division is responsible for prosecuting all felonies in King County and all misdemeanors in unincorporated areas of King County. The PAO has a Juvenile Division which handles juvenile cases. The Juvenile Division carries out the duties of the prosecutor in a manner consistent with the purposes of the Juvenile Justice Act (JJA) which include providing a) for punishment commensurate with the age, crime, and criminal history of the juvenile offender; b) for the rehabilitation and reintegration of juvenile offenders; and, c) for the handling of juvenile offenders by the communities whenever consistent with community safety.<sup>47</sup>

The PAO Juvenile Division is represented on the Care and Closure Advisory Committee.

### **Youth Detention**

The King County Executive oversees the secure youth detention center located within the CCFJC on behalf of the separately elected Superior Court, which has statutory authority for juvenile detention under state law.<sup>48 49</sup> Under the County Executive, DAJD's Juvenile Division is responsible for the care and custody of all youth in detention. The Juvenile Division is committed to providing quality, innovative, and comprehensive services to youth, families, and their communities.<sup>50</sup> The Juvenile Division also operates King County's Alternatives to Secure Detention (ASD) program, providing community supervision to youth assigned to electronic home monitoring (EHM) by King County Superior Court.

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<sup>45</sup> Department of Public Defense [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>46</sup> Department of Public Defense Juvenile Defense [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>47</sup> Prosecuting Attorney's Office Juvenile Division [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>48</sup> King County Code 2.16.175. Juvenile Court Services-Detention Facilities-Administration by the County Executive [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>49</sup> RCW 13.20.060. Transfer of administration of juvenile court services to county executive—Authorized—Advisory board—Procedure. [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>50</sup> DAJD Youth Detention [\[LINK\]](#)

Youth detention in Washington State is connected to but separate from the state’s Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR).<sup>51</sup> Juvenile courts use detention to detain a young person pre-adjudication while court proceedings take place or for short sentences. Youth detention is designed to be a short-term stay to detain youth while their court case moves through the system. In contrast, the state uses JR to detain a young person post-adjudication. This means that a juvenile court judge has found them guilty of an offense and has sentenced them to a period of time according to state sentencing guidelines. Placements in JR facilities are longer stays, and these facilities serve youth until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>52</sup> Counties operate youth detention centers while the state operates the JR facilities.<sup>53</sup>

### **Roles of Select Executive Branch Departments and Offices in Care and Closure**

The County’s effort to expand community-based alternatives to secure youth detention and close the youth detention center is interdepartmental and leverages the specific expertise of DAJD, DCHS, and the Executive Office.

- DAJD leads efforts to improve conditions of confinement for youth in detention today. DAJD also supports Care and Closure as a key partner, strategically providing its expertise of detention operations in the process. DAJD leads components of the Care and Closure process related to staff at the youth detention center and labor management.
- DCHS leads Care and Closure, the community-centered planning process to develop the recommendations of the community-based alternatives needed to support young people involved in the criminal legal system and close the youth detention center. DCHS convenes the Advisory Committee and subcommittees, engages community and systems partners, and provides project updates to relevant interested parties.
- The Executive Office supports Care and Closure as a key partner and adviser, resourcing the work as appropriate and coordinating the project with other relevant projects within the youth criminal legal system. The Executive Office will lead components of the process related to the repurposing of the youth detention center when it closes. In addition, other departments may be included in future phases of this project as implementation activities are scoped, and recommendations implemented.

### **Updated Context and Research**

King County is one of several jurisdictions in the country committed to eliminating secure youth detention and expanding community-based alternatives that better support youth healing, accountability, and community safety.<sup>54</sup> Supported by historic federal investments and grounded in

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<sup>51</sup> Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Juvenile Rehabilitation [[LINK](#)]

<sup>52</sup> DCYF Juvenile Rehabilitation Frequently Asked Questions [[LINK](#)]

<sup>53</sup> King County Juvenile Legal System Family Handbook [[LINK](#)]

<sup>54</sup> Other jurisdictions that have closed or are working to close their youth detention centers and youth prisons in favor of community-based alternatives include: California State Youth Correction Facilities and Division of Juvenile Justice; San Francisco, CA; Contra Costa County, CA; Hennipen County, MN; Olmstead County, MN; Racine County,

decades of research on the harms of detention, many jurisdictions are striving to expand community-based alternatives to secure youth detention and end youth detention.

Research demonstrates that youth detention is an ineffective place for producing positive outcomes for youth and disproportionately impacts youth of color.<sup>55</sup> The Executive is committed to transforming the youth legal system to better support youth, especially youth of color, and promote community safety where everyone can be safe and have what they need to thrive.<sup>56</sup> While some youth may benefit from the support and structure that detention provides, such as safe shelter and nutritious food, the Executive believes those benefits can be achieved through other means and settings that are more restorative and focused on healing.

Underlying this effort is an explicit focus on racial equity and advancing pro-equity policies. Youth of color, specifically Black youth, are overrepresented in the youth detention center and across all the elements of the youth legal system.<sup>57</sup> <sup>58</sup> Thus, the elimination of secure youth detention and expansion of community-based alternatives focused on healing, accountability, and community safety will most positively benefit youth of color and expand the community-based alternatives and supports available in their communities.

*Updated research:* Research shows that youth detention and incarceration fail to produce the desired outcomes of rehabilitation and accountability for young people.<sup>59</sup> A December 2022 report by the

Youth who spend time in detention also are more likely to be arrested and punished for future delinquent behavior.

*Sentencing Project (2023). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence.*

Sentencing Project found that the initial decision to place a young person in youth detention before or during the adjudication process greatly increases the odds that the youth will be placed in residential custody in a state facility if they are found delinquent, even controlling for offense history and relevant factors. Youth who spend time in detention also are more likely to be arrested and punished for future delinquent behavior. Time in youth detention also increases the likelihood that youth will be arrested and incarcerated as adults.<sup>60</sup> One 2020 study cited from Washington state examined the impact of

pretrial detention in 46,000 juvenile cases and found that an individual's experience in detention is

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WI; Washington, DC; and state governments in Arizona, Illinois, Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, and Wisconsin. No Kids in Prison (2020). Youth Prison and Juvenile Detention Facilities Closures During COVID19 [\[LINK\]](#). Urban Institute (2018). Transforming Closed Youth Prisons [\[LINK\]](#). The Sentencing Project (2022). Repurposing Correctional Facilities to Strengthen Communities [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>55</sup> The Sentencing Project (2022). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>56</sup> In the July 2020 State of the County address, King County Executive Constantine stated his intention to propose community-based alternatives to secure youth detention and to seek to fully convert the youth detention capacity to other uses. King County Executive Office. Executive Constantine's State of the County [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>57</sup> Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention. Population information – Adult and Juvenile Detention [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>58</sup> Road map to Zero Youth Detention (2019) [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>59</sup> The Sentencing Project (2022). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>60</sup> The Sentencing Project (2022). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence [\[LINK\]](#)

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associated with a 33 percent increase in felony recidivism and 11 percent increase in misdemeanor recidivism.<sup>61</sup> Across the research, these negative outcomes result not just from long periods of incarceration at state juvenile rehabilitation facilities but also from detention, which is designed to be short-term in nature.<sup>62</sup>

Detention has both immediate and long-term collateral consequences for young people involved in the youth legal system. A February 2023 report by the National Governors Association highlighted the immediate collateral consequences that youth and their families face when detained or incarcerated. These include financial penalties such as fines and fees, restrictions in public benefit programs, driver’s license suspension, housing restrictions with public housing programs such as Section 8 housing assistance, disruptions and barriers to education, and trauma and continued stigma.<sup>63</sup>

Evidence also shows that the adult and youth legal systems fail to support those who have been harmed, including those who have been harmed by young people. A September 2022 report from the

“Crime survivors are twice as likely to prefer investing in crime prevention, crisis assistance, and strong communities over increasing arrests, strict punishment, and incarceration.”

*Alliance for Safety and Justice’s Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice (2022). Crime Survivors Speak.*

Alliance for Safety and Justice’s Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice highlighted findings from a national survey about the views of crime survivors on safety and justice.<sup>64</sup> The Alliance found that crime survivors are twice as likely to prefer investing in crime prevention, crisis assistance, and strong communities over increasing arrests, strict punishment, and incarceration. They also found that only one in four crime survivors found the legal system helpful in providing information about recovering from crimes or referrals for support services.<sup>65</sup>

Research underscores the effectiveness of community-based alternatives to incarceration compared to traditional youth legal system interventions. A review from the National Academies of

Science highlights that multi-faceted community-based interventions are more effective than placement in detention and juvenile rehabilitation, even for youth with the highest-risk levels. The review highlighted that “well-designed community-based programs are more likely than institutional

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<sup>61</sup> Walker, S. and J.R. Herting (2020). The Impact of Pretrial Juvenile Detention on 12-Month Recidivism: A Matched Comparison Study [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>62</sup> The Sentencing Project (2022). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>63</sup> National Governors Association (2023). State Strategies to Address the Needs of Justice-Involved Youth Impacted by Collateral Consequences [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>64</sup> Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>65</sup> Alliance for Safety and Justice (2022). Crime Survivors Speak: National Survey of Victims’ Views on Safety and Justice. [\[LINK\]](#)

confinement to facilitate healthy development and reduce recidivism for most young offenders.”<sup>66</sup> A recent June 2023 report by the Sentencing Project outlined several interventions that research shows are effective in reducing young people’s likelihood of reoffending. These include cognitive-behavioral skill-building, mentoring, family counseling and support, positive youth development opportunities, tutoring and academic support, employment and workforce development opportunities, wraparound care, and restorative justice. Further, the Sentencing Project report highlighted that interventions are most effective when they are layered or braided together so that “supports, services, and opportunities [can be] tailored to the needs of each young person.”<sup>67</sup> This growing body of research supports and aligns with the Executive’s goal of expanding community-based alternatives to secure youth detention to improve outcomes for youth and community safety.

A review from the National Academies of Science shares that “well-designed community-based programs are more likely than institutional confinement to facilitate healthy development and reduce recidivism for most young offenders.”

*National and local movement toward youth legal system transformation:* There is growing national consensus on limiting secure youth detention, and even closing detention facilities, in favor of expanding community-based alternatives for young people. Diverse key partners have underscored the importance of expanding and tailoring community-based alternatives to youth charged with serious offenses to support community safety. In 2022, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) published a brief highlighting the importance of judicial leadership for community-based alternatives to secure confinement. NCJFCJ highlighted that community-based alternatives can help “promote personal growth and positive behavior changes for justice-involved youth; reduce trauma to youth that results from confinement and institutionalization; reduce the possibility for a youth to return for a new offense, reduce cost by using funds to invest in community alternatives and programs rather than in secure confinement that is more expensive and less effective; and make progress in achieving race equity for youth.”<sup>68</sup> Former and current administrators of youth detention and correctional facilities have organized into Youth Correctional Leaders for Justice (YCLJ) to end youth incarceration and close youth prisons.<sup>69</sup> YCLJ envisions “a new future focused on creating ‘pipelines of possibility,’ alongside youth, families, communities, advocates, and leaders in other systems. This vision centers around safely providing *all* youth with access to the support and guidance they need to become thriving, productive adults, within their own homes and communities.”<sup>70</sup>

The federal government has also promoted the need to expand community-based alternatives and move away from youth detention and incarceration. In 2022, the United States Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) established three priorities grounded in

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<sup>66</sup> National Academies of Science (2013). Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach [[LINK](#)]

<sup>67</sup> Sentencing Project (2023). Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration. [[LINK](#)]

<sup>68</sup> National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2022). Judicial Leadership for Community-Based Alternatives to Juvenile Secure Confinement [[LINK](#)]

<sup>69</sup> Youth Correctional Leaders for Justice [[LINK](#)]

<sup>70</sup> Youth Correctional Leaders for Justice (2020). Statement on Ending Youth Prisons [[LINK](#)]

empirical research and adolescent brain development: “1) treating kids as kids; 2) serving them at home, with their families and in their communities; and 3) opening up opportunities for young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.”<sup>71</sup> Since 2022, OJJDP has launched several specific grant opportunities for local and state governments to establish community-based alternatives to youth incarceration and close youth detention centers and prisons.<sup>72 73</sup> The federal government asserts this funding will help “reduce recidivism and improve public safety by helping jurisdictions more effectively and equitably reinvest resources in efforts that facilitate the successful reintegration of justice-involved youth.”<sup>74</sup> In April 2023, King County applied for these federal funds to further support the Care and Closure work and was awaiting notice from the federal government as of the writing of this report.

*Historical Conditions:* Years of community and systems partner efforts in King County have bolstered support for and action to transform responses to young people in crisis involved in the legal system. In August 2012, King County voters approved a nine-year property tax to finance a new Clark Children and Family Justice Center, which opened in February 2020. The project replaced courtrooms, offices, and parking. It also replaced the former detention facility, substantially reducing the capacity of detention from 212 to 112 beds.<sup>75 76</sup> During the construction of the CCFJC beginning in 2013, Black-led community organizations launched a “No New Youth Jail” campaign.<sup>77</sup> The No New Youth Jail movement catalyzed broader community attention on the importance of community-based alternatives to secure youth detention, highlighted the harms of detention on youth, and cultivated political will to transform the youth legal system.<sup>78</sup>

In September 2018, the Executive released the County’s Road Map to Zero Youth Detention, a groundbreaking strategic plan that launched King County on the journey to eliminate secure detention for youth and addressed the community’s calls for transformation. It outlined practical solutions informed by communities and employees designed to help young people thrive; keep youth from entering the youth legal system; divert young people from further youth legal system involvement; and support strong communities. The Road Map to Zero Youth Detention states, “The journey to Zero Youth Detention means carefully expanding the range of community-based diversion options until it becomes the primary response for most youth who come into contact with the legal system.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (2022). Priorities that Keep Kids’ Best Interests at the Heart of What We Do [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>72</sup> OJJDP (2022). New OJJDP Initiative Promotes Community-Based Alternatives to Youth Incarceration [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>73</sup> OJJDP (2023). OJJDP FY 2023 Community-Based Alternatives to Youth Incarceration [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>74</sup> OJJDP (2023). OJJDP FY 2023 Community-Based Alternatives to Youth Incarceration [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>75</sup> The CCFJC was built with 156 beds; 32 beds are outside of secure custody. An additional 12 beds are transitional use only (e.g., orientation and classification). Seven Living Halls contain 16 beds each for a total of 112 beds.

<sup>76</sup> September 2021 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>77</sup> King County Facilities Management. Major Projects and Capital Planning. Clark Children and Family Justice [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>78</sup> No New Youth Jail [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>79</sup> King County Roadmap to Zero Youth Detention [\[LINK\]](#)

Since its original launch in 2018, King County’s Zero Youth Detention (ZYD) has evolved from an initiative into an approach shared across the Executive’s youth legal system transformation efforts. The original ZYD road map is connected to and has helped foster several related efforts, including the Community Supports program, Restorative Community Pathways, and this Care and Closure effort.<sup>80</sup> In 2020, the ZYD team in Public Health began focusing on rising youth gun violence in the County. This focus led to Public Health developing and establishing a Regional Gun Violence team to address community violence and the prevalence of gun violence among young people in King County.<sup>81</sup> Although ZYD is no longer an active initiative in King County, the road map and related efforts continue to shape and inform the County’s efforts to end secure youth detention.

Collaborative and individual efforts over the last two decades have from Superior Court and the PAO, along with the departments involved in the youth legal system, led to significant declines in the use of secure youth detention, as further detailed in the Updated Data section below.<sup>82</sup> Additional administrative and operational changes made by these departments during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the adjustments made to the juvenile detention intake criteria, have helped further reduce the number of youth in detention while slowing the spread of the virus in the detention center.<sup>83</sup> Each County agency described in the Department Overview Section above has contributed to the reform efforts that have made the Executive’s commitment to transform the response to youth in crisis in King County possible and achievable.

### **Updated Data**

Despite King County’s significant progress to reduce the number of youth in detention, disproportionality between youth of color and white youth in secure youth detention continues to persist. The June 2022 report highlighted the state of King County’s secure youth detention in 2021.<sup>84</sup> Data for 2022 is updated below.

Overall, the number of young people in detention has decreased over the past decade. Between 2010 and 2020, the average daily population of youth in secure detention dropped by 70 percent, from 89 to 27 youth. From 2021 to 2022, the average daily population of youth in secure detention increased, from 22 youth to 34 youth, due likely to an increase in complexity of cases and needs of the young people in

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<sup>80</sup> ZYD originally developed the Community Supports program for youth on Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM) and helped foster the development of community-based diversion programs such as Restorative Community Pathways (RCP). Both programs are further outlined later in this section.

<sup>81</sup> King County Regional Gun Violence [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>82</sup> The County’s previous participation in national reform efforts such as MacArthur Foundation’s Models for Change, Reclaiming Futures, and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative has helped apply broader frameworks to system changes. Local efforts such as the Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan, Uniting for Youth, Best Starts for Kids, Zero Youth Detention, and Juvenile Therapeutic Response and Accountability Court created specific investments and have further driven system changes to reduce the number of youth involved in the criminal legal system and in detention.

<sup>83</sup> Juvenile Court. Juvenile Detention Intake Criteria [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>84</sup> June 2022 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

detention and COVID-19 related backlogs.<sup>85</sup> While this population increased by 54 percent over the last year, this was still an overall reduction of 61 percent since 2010.<sup>86</sup>

Disproportionality between youth of color and white youth has continued to worsen while the number of young people in secure youth detention has decreased. In 2010, the average daily population of youth in secure detention was comprised of 73 percent youth of color and 27 percent white youth. By 2020, the representation of white youth in detention decreased to 23 percent, while the representation of youth of color increased to 77 percent. In 2022, the percentage of white youth decreased again to 19 percent while the percentage of youth of color in secure detention increased to 81 percent. Black youth made up 54 percent of youth in detention; Latino/Hispanic youth made up 17 percent; white youth made up 19 percent; Asian/Pacific Islander youth made up 5 percent; and Native American youth made up less than 2 percent.<sup>87</sup> In comparison, the total youth population aged 12 to 17 years old in 2021 in King County had a proportion of 65 percent white youth; 11 percent Black youth; 22 percent Asian youth; and 2 percent Native youth.<sup>88</sup>

Most young people in King County's youth detention center are held for serious offenses. In 2022, 69 percent of youth were held on felony crimes against persons, including assault or sexual violence. Approximately 17 percent were held on auto decline in adult court, less than five percent of youth were held on misdemeanor crimes against persons, and less than five percent of youth were held on felony crimes against property.<sup>89</sup>

Youth under 18 years old are most often charged in the juvenile court but can be charged as adults. The average daily population of young people in detention in 2022 included an average of six youth charged as adults, down from eight youth charged as adults in 2021.<sup>90</sup> As described first in the September 2021 report, the path through the adult legal system for youth charged as adults is complex, and the time for resolution of these cases is significantly longer than youth who are charged in juvenile court.<sup>91</sup> In 2022,

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<sup>85</sup> The relative increase in King County's secure youth detention numbers between 2021 and 2022 mirror increases that took place in jurisdictions across the country. In August 2022, the Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that the number of youth held in detention nationally in June 2022 rose nearly to its pre-pandemic level. Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Number of Youth in Secure Detention Returns to Pre-Pandemic Levels [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>86</sup> DAJD Population information – Adult and Juvenile Detention. 2022 Detention and Alternatives Report [\[LINK\]](#) and 2021 Detention and Alternatives Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>87</sup> DAJD Population information – Adult and Juvenile Detention. 2022 Detention and Alternatives Report [\[LINK\]](#) and 2021 Detention and Alternatives Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>88</sup> OJJDP Easy Access to Juvenile Populations, Population Profiles [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>89</sup> DAJD Population information – Adult and Juvenile Detention. 2022 Detention and Alternatives Report [\[LINK\]](#) and 2021 Detention and Alternatives Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>90</sup> DAJD Population information – Adult and Juvenile Detention. 2022 Detention and Alternatives Report [\[LINK\]](#) and 2021 Detention and Alternatives Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>91</sup> September 2021 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

the average length of stay in secure detention for youth charged as adults was nearly 283 days, while youth with cases in juvenile court had an average length of stay of 23 days.<sup>92</sup>

DAJD's ASD program allows many youth involved in the court system to stay in their communities through house arrest or EHM.<sup>93</sup> In 2022, the average daily population of youth on EHM was 24 youth, up from 18 youth in 2021. Similar to the racial proportions of youth in detention, Black youth are overrepresented in the population of youth on EHM.<sup>94</sup>

### **Countywide Coordination and Investments in Youth Legal System Transformation**

Since the June 2022 report, King County has made progress on several efforts to reduce harm in the youth legal system and support young people in their communities. Figure 1 below depicts how the Executive Department is conceptualizing the transformation of the youth legal system. On the left side of the image, the County's prevention efforts to protect and promote well-being for youth and families include efforts such as BSK and educational supports offered at YouthSource and Learning Center North.<sup>95</sup> On the righthand side of the image, the County's reconnection and restoration efforts to help youth reengage with their communities after they leave confinement include interventions like Credible Messenger programs and intensive behavioral health supports for them and their families.

The nine elements of supports identified by impacted youth, family members, and harmed community members in this project and highlighted in section C of this report are embedded throughout this continuum. Many efforts address multiple elements at the same time and layer those elements to better support youth. For example, Family Intervention and Restoration Services (FIRS), a collaboration between the Juvenile Court and the PAO, provides short-term respite housing for youth involved in domestic violence within their home while also providing immediate behavioral health support, including family counseling and reconciliation services, to youth and their families.<sup>96</sup> However, there are not any current efforts, including youth detention, providing all the elements to youth with the most complex needs who are involved in the legal system.

This continuum image highlights how sustained, strategic, and coordinated efforts are needed across every stage to ensure the best outcomes for young people in King County. A single focus on prevention would help stem the overall number of youth coming into the legal system but would not supplant the need for critical interventions for youth who cause serious harm in their communities. In a similar way, a

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<sup>92</sup> DAJD Population information – Adult and Juvenile Detention. 2022 Detention and Alternatives Report [[LINK](#)] and 2021 Detention and Alternatives Report [[LINK](#)]

<sup>93</sup> Although youth can attend school and participate in community activities, the EHM program is considered a form of secure detention, although the data of secure youth detention and EHM are recorded separately.

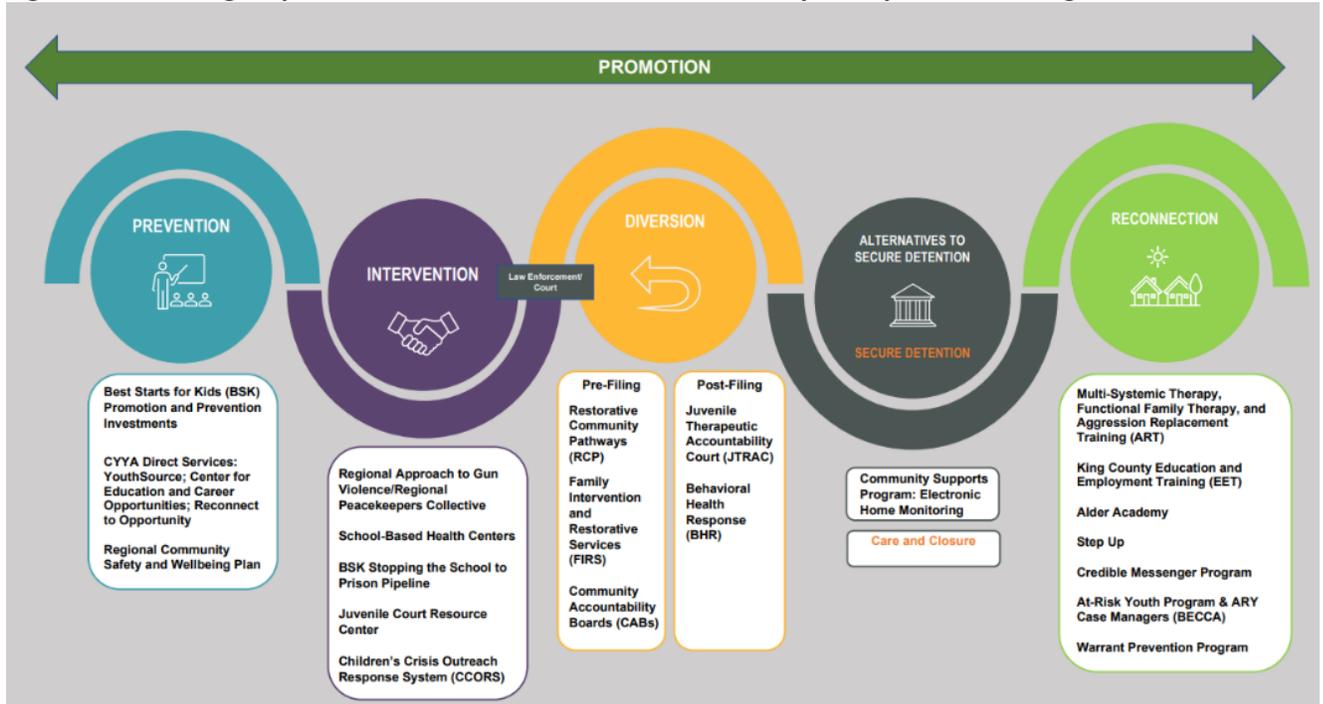
<sup>94</sup> Among youth on EHM, Black youth made up 61 percent; Latinx youth made up 23 percent; white youth made up 11 percent; Asian/Pacific Islander youth made up 4 percent; and Native American youth made up less than one percent. DAJD Population information – Adult and Juvenile Detention. 2022 Detention and Alternatives Report [[LINK](#)]

<sup>95</sup> DCHS. Children, Youth, and Young Adults Division [[LINK](#)]

<sup>96</sup> King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Family Intervention and Restorative Services [[LINK](#)]

single focus to eliminate secure youth detention without sustained prevention efforts would fail to address the number of youth entering the youth legal system and prevent the system from shrinking. King County needs coordinated and sustained efforts across the entire youth system of care to maintain the important progress made over the past decade and to advance efforts to bolster racial equity and transformation. The Care and Closure effort showcased in this proviso is but one key initiative on the journey to safer communities in King County where youth, families, and community members can thrive.

**Figure 1: Youth Legal System: Violence Prevention and Community Safety and Wellbeing Continuum<sup>97</sup>**



One landmark effort in this continuum has been the Restorative Community Pathways Program (RCP), a comprehensive, community-led and County-supported diversion program. In November 2021, RCP started receiving referrals from the PAO for young people up to age 17 and community members who experienced harm. Between November 2021 and December 2022, the community-led RCP consortium has served more than 270 young people diverted from the youth legal system and nearly 60 community members who experienced harm.<sup>98</sup> Of the 145 youth who participated in RCP from November 2021 to mid-August 2022, only eight percent had new case referrals. During the same period, 20 percent of youth who were charged through traditional prosecution had new case referrals.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Appendix D includes a version of Figure 2 that includes definitions for each of the stages.

<sup>98</sup> DCHS Restorative Community Pathways Quarter 4 Report.

<sup>99</sup> King County Executive Office (2022). King County Executive Constantine speaks to early success of evidence-based juvenile diversion programming and impacts to public safety. [\[LINK\]](#)

Another important community-based initiative in the youth legal system is the Community Supports program for youth on EHM. Administered in a partnership between the Executive Department’s Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget (PSB), DAJD’s Juvenile Division, and the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (referenced throughout this report as Urban League), the Community Supports program offers direct services to meet the needs of youth who are involved with or have been on EHM. The program provides pathways for them to avoid secure detention and directly into strengthened community supports. These supports include educational support, mentorship, financial assistance, employment support, recreational activities under community supervision, transportation for needed services, referrals to other services, and advocacy.<sup>100</sup> Between 2021 and 2022, the Community Supports program has provided services to 71 young people on EHM.<sup>101</sup>

### **Report Methodology**

DCHS developed this report with support from DAJD, PAO, OLR, and the Executive Office, informed by the Advisory Committee. The information contained in this report draws upon various data, reports, and presentations created by King County staff members from DCHS, DAJD, and PSB. The report summarizes engagement activities conducted by community partners funded by DCHS to inform this project. Finally, the Advisory Committee developed the components in the initial draft framework of the recommendations during discussions at its regular monthly meetings, with staff support from DCHS.

As discussed above, the Advisory Committee is a group of community partners, systems partners, and impacted community members that guide the project and will co-create the recommendations. DCHS convenes the Advisory Committee with consultant support from the W. Haywood Burns Institute (Burns Institute).<sup>102</sup> The Advisory Committee is open to the public.<sup>103</sup> Its meetings often have several public guests, and staff from several King County agencies attend the meetings along with the official Advisory Committee members.

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<sup>100</sup> DAJD (2022). Community Supports Program: Electronic Home Monitoring [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>101</sup> King County Performance Budget Strategy (PSB) (2021). Internal program data.

<sup>102</sup> The Burns Institute is a Black-led, national nonprofit with a diverse team working to transform the administration of justice. Burns Institute [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>103</sup> Information on the Advisory Committee meetings can be found on the Care and Closure project website. [\[LINK\]](#)

## V. Report Requirements

The goal of the Care and Closure initiative is to radically transform the County’s response to youth in crisis. At the end of this phase of the King County’s Care and Closure initiative, the Executive will submit a set of recommendations to Council that expand community-based alternatives to secure youth detention and close the juvenile detention center located within the CCFJC. The Advisory Committee and community priorities will continue to guide and inform the development of the Executive’s recommendations. Ultimately, the implementation of these recommendations, including appropriate resources for community-based alternatives and state legislative changes, will establish more effective responses to young people in crisis and impacted by the youth legal system.

The Executive knows from evidence that closing secure youth detention and expanding community-based approaches will lead to more just and accountable alternatives that support young people and community members who experience harm.<sup>104</sup> These alternatives will promote community safety and well-being, especially in communities most affected by violence, by transforming the options for young people in crisis. These alternatives will advance anti-racist and pro-equity policies and operations needed to confront the embedded systemic racism of the legal system and mitigate the long-lasting harms of youth incarceration that disproportionately impact youth of color.<sup>105</sup> <sup>106</sup> Ultimately, King County seeks to unwind generations of systemic racism by transforming the youth and adult legal systems and enhancing public safety, so every person is safe in their home and community.

Consistent with requirements of Ordinance 19546, this report describes: 1) the progress of Care and Closure since the June 2022 proviso report; 2) an overview of community engagement activities from July 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022 and key findings; 3) an initial draft recommendations framework that incorporates components developed by the Advisory Committee with support from DCHS; 4) state law requirements for juvenile detention in King County; 5) applicable labor laws that interact with the project; and 6) King County Council involvement and any legislative actions that are anticipated to be part of project implementation. The responses contained in the sections below align with each of the proviso requirements.

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<sup>104</sup> The Sentencing Project (2022). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>105</sup> The Sentencing Project (2023). Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>106</sup> The Sentencing Project (2022). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence [\[LINK\]](#)

**A. A discussion of progress on the project since the June 30, 2022, Children and Family Justice Center – Strategic Planning Project report**

King County has made significant progress engaging impacted communities and partnerships with the Care and Closure initiative. The work is on track for the major milestones outlined in the June 2022 proviso report.<sup>107</sup> Figure 2 below provides a snapshot of those milestones, status, and a summary of progress made.

**Figure 2: Progress Toward Project Milestones Outlined in the June 2022 Proviso Report**

<b>Project milestone</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Transition project governance to DCHS	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 2022 – DCHS began facilitating the Advisory Committee</li> <li>• September 2022 – Project staff moved from DAJD to DCHS. DAJD remains in close partnership with DAJD.</li> <li>• January 2023 – The Executive named the initiative to end secure detention for youth “Care and Closure” to emphasize the need to expand of care for youth, families, and harmed parties along with the closure of the youth detention facility.</li> </ul>
Continue to convene Advisory Committee and launch subcommittee structure	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCHS has continued to convene the Advisory Committee to guide the project.<sup>108</sup></li> <li>• June 2023 – The Advisory Committee launched three subcommittees in June 2023 to deepen the project’s recommendation development. The three subcommittees are: 1) Identifying alternatives to secure youth detention; 2) Strengthening community infrastructure; and 3) Engaging impacted communities.<sup>109</sup></li> </ul>
Finalize the contract for project support with the Burns Institute	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• December 2022 – DCHS finalized a contract with the Burns Institute. DCHS continues to partner with the Burns Institute to convene the Advisory Committee meetings and support additional impacted community engagement.<sup>110</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>107</sup> June 2022 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>108</sup> In 2022, the Advisory Committee met every other week for a total of 15 meetings. In 2023, the Advisory Committee moved its meetings to a monthly cadence to allow for subcommittees to meet regularly. The agendas, notes, and slides for the Advisory Committee meetings are available on the project website. King County Care and Closure (2022). [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>109</sup> King County Care and Closure (2023) [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>110</sup> The June 2022 proviso response provides additional details on the Executive’s decision to partner with the Burns Institute for this project. June 2022 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#)

Project milestone	Status	Summary
Engage experts to reimagine King County’s juvenile legal system	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCHS continues to partner with AHSWAY (Allies in Healthier Systems for Health and Abundance in Youth) on a project analyzing the existing community resources for youth and families in King County.<sup>111 112</sup></li> </ul>
Deepen impacted youth, family member, and community member engagement; strengthen community partnerships; and continue engagement with detention staff	Ongoing	<p>As detailed in Section B below, DCHS has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosted listening sessions with youth in detention and partnered with Urban League to interview youth on EHM.</li> <li>Funded and partnered with eight community organizations to engage impacted communities.</li> <li>Met with several County consortium groups to present information and get feedback on youth support needs.<sup>113</sup></li> <li>Hosted listening sessions with DAJD Juvenile Division detention staff and continued providing regular updates.<sup>114</sup></li> </ul>
Expand capacity to support project	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>February 2023 – The project became fully staffed via time-limited positions allocated in the 2023-2024 biennial budget.<sup>115</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>111</sup> Led by Dr. Benjamin Danielson, AHSWAY is focused on ending youth incarceration in Washington State by 2030 and promoting paths to opportunity that are youth-centered, community-informed and evidence-based. University of Washington Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (2021) [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>112</sup> DCHS and AHSWAY have collaborated on a community services landscaping project to map existing resources for impacted youth and families in King County. AHSWAY has collected information from over 400 local organizations on their services, programs, populations they serve, and where they are located – focusing first on organizations that offer: housing support; diversion services and reentry services for young people involved in the juvenile legal system; behavioral health support, and workforce development. AHSWAY has developed gap analyses on the first three areas, and the Advisory Committee and subcommittees will use those analyses to identify existing gaps and opportunities to strengthen the community infrastructure needed to support youth, their families, and harmed community members.

<sup>113</sup> Highlighted in greater detail in Section B, DCHS engaged several consortium groups made up of several organizations including Washington State Partnership Council on Behavioral Health and Reentry Joint Committee in December 2022 [\[LINK\]](#); BSK Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline Provider Network in December 2022; and King County Reengagement Provider Network in January 2023 [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>114</sup> Led by DAJD and supported by DCHS and the Executive Office, engagement with detention staff included additional listening sessions with detention center staff, regular email and posted project updates to staff, an overview of the project during New Employee Orientation for recently hired Juvenile Division staff, comment boxes located throughout the detention center, and small group updates. In addition, detention staff participate as representatives in the Advisory Committee and subcommittees. More information is included in Section B below.

<sup>115</sup> The King County 2023-2024 Budget included two 18-month Term Limited Temporary positions. One position was filled with the existing project manager. DCHS posted a job posting for a Community Partner Co-Lead in November and held two rounds of interviews with candidates. Community members on the Advisory Committee participated in the interview panel as well as staff from DCHS, DAJD, and Juvenile Court Services. DCHS hired the new Co-Lead in February 2023.

Project milestone	Status	Summary
Develop initial draft framework of recommendations	Complete	As detailed in Section C below, the initial draft recommendations framework highlights three components developed by the Advisory Committee. These components include shared values, initial guiding principles, and a holistic continuum of care to support youth healing, accountability, and community safety.

***B. An overview of community engagement activities from July 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022, including a summary of key findings***

Impacted communities engaged throughout this process have stated their support to expand community-based alternatives to secure youth detention that foster youth healing, accountability, and community safety. As mostly youth of color, these youth in detention, on EHM, and in the community are keenly aware of how systemic racism, historic disinvestment, and community violence have shaped their lives and their involvement in the youth legal system. Impacted youth, their families, and harmed community members have stated throughout this process that they overwhelmingly want to address harm in their communities, support youth to learn from their mistakes, be held accountable to harm caused, and promote opportunities for youth and families to succeed.

King County employed a multi-faceted community-centered engagement strategy, described in detail in the June 2022 proviso report, to ensure those who are most affected by the youth legal system are centered in this planning process.<sup>116</sup> Impacted youth, their families, and harmed community members have the best insight into what solutions will be most effective to address the challenges in their lives, but often face barriers to share their perspectives and be part of designing solutions.<sup>117</sup> As shown in Figure 3 below, King County and community partners gathered input and feedback from nearly 1,200 impacted community members, including youth, family members, harmed community members, and community partners.

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<sup>116</sup> The community-centered engagement strategy outlined in the June 2022 proviso report included centering the perspectives and input of impacted young people in detention and on Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM) and community-led engagement with youth, families, and harmed parties in the community. The strategy also included the feedback from community organizations working with young people involved in the youth legal system and continued engagement with youth detention center staff. The June 2022 proviso report includes additional details about the multi-faceted engagement strategy. June 2022 Proviso Report [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>117</sup> King County intentionally partnered with trusted community organizations and used a variety of strategies to reduce barriers for impacted community members to participate. They provided gift card incentives for participating impacted community members, hosted both in-person and virtual engagement opportunities, met with youth and family members already participating in programs, provided meals and snacks, coordinated rides to and from events, and provided childcare for parents.

This section first summarizes the engagement activities with, and key findings from, impacted community members between the submission of the June 2022 proviso and June 2023.<sup>118</sup> The section then highlights engagement and feedback from community organizations and detention staff working at the youth detention center.

**Figure 3: Summary of Impacted Community Engagement and Activities**

Impacted Community	Engagement Strategy and Lead	Number of Individuals
Youth in secure detention	Listening sessions hosted by DCHS in partnership with DAJD <sup>119</sup>	33 youth provided input
Youth on EHM	Interviews hosted by Urban League in partnership with DCHS <sup>120</sup>	20 youth provided input

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<sup>118</sup> Although community engagement has taken place since July 2022, DCHS and partners engaged most impacted youth and community members between November 2022 and March 2023.

<sup>119</sup> Beginning in November 2022, DCHS has partnered with DAJD to regularly convene listening sessions with young people in detention. DCHS met with youth in each of the living halls and engaged over 33 youth across 12 one-hour sessions. More details on the listening sessions with youth in detention and specific findings can be found in Appendix E.

<sup>120</sup> Since November 2022, DCHS partnered with the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (Urban League) to solicit input and feedback from youth on EHM. More details on the interview with youth on EHM and specific findings can be found in Appendix F.

Impacted Community	Engagement Strategy and Lead	Number of Individuals
Youth, family members, and harmed community members	Listening sessions, surveys, interviews, podcasts, and radio shows led by trusted community organizations in partnership with DCHS <sup>121 122 123</sup>	More than 900 community members provided input <sup>124</sup> Nearly 65 percent of the participating community members were youth under 25 years old; nearly a third were family members and community members; and 52 participants identified as being harmed personally or having a family member harmed in King County <sup>125</sup>
Youth in community	Listening sessions and community surveys led by DCHS in partnership with other community partners <sup>126</sup>	Over 65 impacted youth provided input

<sup>121</sup> DCHS intentionally partnered with community organizations already working with and trusted by impacted young people, family members, and harmed community members to directly engage these populations. These organizations included African Young Dreamers Empowerment Program International (AYDEPI) [\[LINK\]](#); CHOOSE 180 [\[LINK\]](#); El Centro de la Raza [\[LINK\]](#); Glover Empower Mentoring [\[LINK\]](#); Pro Se Potential [\[LINK\]](#); Somali Family Safety Task Force [\[LINK\]](#); Victim Support Services [\[LINK\]](#); Your Money Matters Mentoring [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>122</sup> In November 2022, DCHS launched a Request for Applications (RFA) for King County community organizations to propose and conduct engagement activities that would best engage youth, families, and community members impacted by the youth legal system. King County Care and Closure. Community Engagement for Strategic Planning Process RFA [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>123</sup> More details on the community-led engagement activities with impacted youth, families, and community members and their specific findings can be found in Appendix G. DCHS also hosted two sessions where the community organizations shared the findings from their community-led engagement activities with the Advisory Committee and King County staff. Recordings of those findings are available on the project website. King County Care and Closure [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>124</sup> A majority of the participating youth, family members, and community members identified as people of color and most identified as being impacted by either the youth or adult legal systems. Each community partner collected demographic information for the participants in their specific engagement activities. More information can be found in the specific findings for each organization in Appendix G.

<sup>125</sup> The number of harmed community members who participated across these various engagement activities is likely much higher than 52 individuals, but data was not captured on this question across all community-led engagement activities. However, Victim Support Services explicitly recruited community members who have been harmed or had a family member harmed by youth in King County, and the organization convened three listening sessions with a total of 52 community members.

<sup>126</sup> DCHS convened additional listening sessions with youth from December 2022 to June 2023. In December 2022, project staff hosted a discussion with Black female students at Garfield High School. In April 2023, project staff met with youth from King County and Pierce County serving on the Consejo Youth Council. In May 2023, project staff met with youth at The Garage in Issaquah. See Appendix H for more details on these engagement activities.

Impacted Community	Engagement Strategy and Lead	Number of Individuals
	Activities while tabling at community resource events led by DCHS <sup>127</sup>	More than 170 community members, including impacted youth and families, provided input

**Figure 4: Visual of Impacted Community Member Engagement**

**Nearly 1,200 community members shared their perspectives from July 2022 to June 2023**



**Summary of Key Findings from Communities Impacted by the Youth Legal System**

Impacted communities, including youth in detention, youth on EHM, youth in community, families and parents, and harmed community members, envision more just, effective, and holistic responses to youth in crisis. Although not every group or individual agreed with specific strategies, the consensus from engagement feedback is clear: King County can and must create more effective responses for young people in crisis and expand community-based supports for young people involved in the youth legal system, their families, and harmed community members. This section outlines the three key findings from the engagement activities.

<sup>127</sup> DCHS promoted awareness of the project at eight community events serving young people and families in King County between June 2022 and June 2023.<sup>127</sup> The project team shared flyers highlighting the goals of the project, answered questions from community members, and solicited input from community members on this question: “What should happen when a young person causes serious harm in their communities?” More details on the compiled findings from community awareness building can be found in Appendix I.

1. Many impacted youth, families, and community members stated that secure youth detention is not an effective solution for most or all youth and should not be relied on to make communities better and safer.
2. Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members need more resources focused on supporting youth healing, accountability, and community safety. These resources include more spaces other than detention to reflect on mistakes made; stability and structure; supportive mentors with similar lived experiences; resources to transform and stabilize their home environments, and greater support for their families.
3. Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members want King County to have expanded responses that center understanding why harm occurred, prevent harm from occurring, create real community safety, and foster collaborative and community-centered care.

**Finding 1: Many impacted youth and families stated that secure youth detention is not an effective solution for most or all youth and should not be relied on to make communities better and safer.**

Youth shared that detention does not work to reduce youth crime and instead causes more harm to young people, especially young people of color, and their communities. Youth and community members emphasized that detention does not hold youth accountable and instead delays their personal growth. Several youth in detention said that they do not need to be locked up to deal with their behaviors and that being confined does not change behavior. Some youth in detention shared that the overall environment of detention made it difficult to make good decisions.

Other youth in detention and on EHM echoed experiences outlined by the research referenced in the Background Section of this report. Youth in detention shared that detention disconnects them from their family and supportive community ties; disrupts their educational goals and prohibits future employment goals; worsens their mental health and outlook; and lacks important programs that could benefit the youth such as job training, life skills classes, and personal development. Many youth in detention shared that they want themselves and other youth to be held accountable for the actions they have taken and harm that they have caused to others. However, most youth stated detention prevents or hinders such accountability from taking place and instead creates more harm.

Many participants across the engagement activities were in favor of replacing the youth detention center with community-based alternatives. One youth in detention said, “In here, [detention] makes you turn out worse. You never get right, you are always in trouble. You need to get right – you should be sent to a place to sit for a minute, but [it should be] some place that benefits you.”

Many harmed community members and some young people stated that the County should still have a secure physical place for youth who cause the most serious harm, have the highest needs, or present the greatest risk to the community. Some shared concerns that the complete closure of the detention center may provide leniency for youth or remove accountability. Instead of closing the detention center, most harmed community members and some others advocated for improving the experience of youth in detention, bolstering programs to support rehabilitation, and investing in prevention methods to serve youth at-risk for involvement in the youth legal system.

The Executive recognizes that it is critical to balance each of these perspectives across diverse community groups and address these concerns while moving forward with the work of transforming the County’s response to youth in crisis. As outlined in the Background Section of this proviso report, DAJD is leading the County’s effort to improve conditions of confinement for youth in detention today, including expanding programming for youth in detention and improving the safety and security for youth and staff at the youth detention center.<sup>128</sup> As further outlined in Figure 1 in the Background Section, the County is investing in initiatives across the youth legal system spectrum, including in prevention efforts such as Best Starts for Kids. It is possible and necessary that the County works to provide the best possible care for youth in custody today while also planning for a future without secure youth detention where community-based alternatives serve youth involved in the youth legal system and uphold community safety and accountability for the harm caused by the youth.

**Finding 2: Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members need more resources focused on supporting youth healing, accountability, and community safety. These resources include more spaces other than detention to reflect on mistakes made; stability and structure; supportive mentors with similar lived experiences; resources to transform and stabilize their home environments, and greater support for their families.**

*More spaces and ways other than detention to reflect on mistakes made, get resources to address basic needs, and repair harm through actions, including serious harm in their communities*

Youth, families, and community members stated they need more spaces and opportunities for youth to address behavior besides the youth detention center. One youth in detention said: “we need a place where people can make mistakes without getting punished for it.” Another youth in detention said: “whatever it is — it shouldn’t be like this [detention]; everyone should be held accountable, but no one should be stuck here.” Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members shared that they want more spaces where the focus is on healing and rehabilitation, not punishment.

Several youth in detention and in community reflected that sometimes youth need a break from their normal lives to address their behaviors. They underscored the importance of providing safe spaces where youth who caused harm could “take a break from society and think about what you did while making atonement.” Others emphasized the need to remove a youth from active harm to address their needs and support them before their return to the community. However, youth engaged in this process emphasized that the youth should not be placed in detention during this time but rather a different supportive environment. Although many youth said that they found it difficult to identify specific alternatives to secure youth detention, many shared different elements they would like to see in community-based alternatives. These elements are highlighted in the box below.

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<sup>128</sup> DAJD anticipates releasing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for expanded community programming in youth detention by July 2023.

### Elements of community-based alternatives identified by impacted youth

- More frequent and greater connection to their families: Several youth shared that while they were in detention, they were only able to stay connected to their parents and not their younger siblings or their grandparents. Others mentioned that they need additional support before they could have greater connection with their families, such as reunification support.
- Individualized goal setting, needs assessments, and support from caring adults to help achieve those goals and address their needs: Youth shared that detention does not provide individual support or allow them to pursue their own interests.
- Connection to resources: All youth emphasized the importance of getting connected to resources to help them and their families. One group of youth in detention shared that they want to be connected to a resource navigator regularly, at least once a month, to understand all the different resources they may need.
- 24/7 availability, barrier-free, and safe spaces: Youth pointed to public spaces like McDonald's and Denny's as places where they previously found the all-hours safety in the community that they needed. Some youth pointed out that more community centers are needed and should be barrier-free, cost-free, and safe spaces for youth to get what they need.
- Trauma-informed and restorative programming to address their needs: Several youth in detention highlighted that too often, their offense ("the what") is given greater importance than their needs ("the why"). Youth in detention also highlighted that they wanted more programs to support their growth such as anger management and intensive therapy.
- Youth-centered and welcoming: Youth want to be welcomed and supported in physical spaces.

Some youth and harmed community members stated that physical alternatives to detention are needed for some youth who cannot be safely in their homes or in their communities when secure youth detention is closed. Youth in the community wanted more places where youth can go to receive services until they are stabilized; community houses with caring adults who provide 24/7 support; supportive group homes; community rehabilitation centers, and more places and programs where youth can go where they earn freedoms and privileges based on good decisions. Impacted parents and communities shared many similar ideas including: supervised small group homes; intensive counseling centers or residential treatment facilities; transition centers or housing for youth as they move from the detention center back into their communities, or foster homes with highly trained professionals.

While the majority of harmed community members stated that secure youth detention should be where youth go when they cause serious harm, they also shared additional ideas about alternatives including prevention services youth at-risk for community involvement; educational/mentorship centers with collaborative wrap-around services for youth; alternative schools for youth; centers to support people with mental health and substance abuse disorder issues, education, counseling, case management, and

social services; vocational training and educational programs, and shelters for youth experiencing homelessness.

#### *Greater structure and stability*

Impacted youth in detention and the community emphasized the importance of stability and structure, especially with creating more structured opportunities for youth to be engaged through activities such as sports, afterschool programs, or internships. However, youth in detention and in the community shared that it is not enough to just fill youths' time and schedules. Youth want activities they are interested in and programs that speak to their experiences. They also highlighted they needed support from caring adults in their lives or mentors to participate in those pro-social activities.

#### *Consistent and supportive adults and mentors, especially mentors with similar lived experiences*

Impacted youth emphasized the importance of having caring adults in their lives to support their development and growth. Both youth in detention and in the community highlighted the need for consistent, positive, and strong mentors with similar lived experiences to help them navigate challenges, overcome negative peer pressure, or resist boredom.

Youth in detention and EHM also wanted to give back to their community and help mentor to prevent other youth from getting involved in the youth legal system. One group of older boys in detention wanted to mentor younger kids and highlighted that they already have many skills that are important to being positive mentors including lived experience, good listening skills, and positive encouragement and empathy. Youth on EHM shared that they wanted to share their experiences with younger kids to help underscore the importance of getting the right support and changing their mindset.

#### *Transformation and stabilization of their home environments and connection to individualized resources*

Impacted youth, families, and community members highlighted the need to transform and stabilize the home environments and community conditions of young people involved in the youth legal system. Youth in detention were quick to note that it does not matter what happens in detention if they are put back into the same difficult environments and face the same challenges that they faced before. They urged that their specific circumstances need to be transformed to prevent their future and further involvement in the youth and adult legal systems.

Across all the engagement, impacted community members named many critical supports needed to support youth, both involved in the youth legal system and at-risk for involvement, families, and harmed community members:

- Mental health and behavioral health supports, including intensive treatment facilities with restorative justice approaches
- Substance use treatment and alcohol treatment
- Stable, safe, and affordable housing
- Jobs, paid internships, and workforce development training
- Affordable, accessible, and safe transportation to and from programming and supports
- Mentoring programs, including credible messenger programs
- Alternative education programs that provide additional support to youth who need it, trade schools, and more supportive educational settings

- Restorative justice programs and approaches to address harm in schools and their communities<sup>129</sup>
- Diversion programs to prevent youth from entering the youth legal system and to connect to resources to address underlying causes
- Community centers, teen centers, and positive and welcoming places for youth
- Second chance opportunities through community service
- Sports programs, art programs, music programs, and life skill development programs
- Connections to cultural institutions such as “Youth Mutamars” (youth conventions) with imams

Notably, harmed community members and other community members also emphasized that the people who have been harmed also need expanded services. They shared that the government needs to be more responsive to personal and often severe trauma. They wanted more services available for harmed community members to address their trauma and needs, such as therapy, restorative justice, medical care, and expanded victim services.

Impacted community members also highlighted that greater awareness of those programs is needed. Many youth were unaware of the different resources that exist to support young people and stated it should be easier to find programs and support. Harmed community members highlighted the need to develop specialized resources for youth who cause harm and increasing accessibility to them in their communities. Impacted youth, families, and community members also highlighted that more funding is needed to strengthen the diversity of community providers supporting young people.

Impacted youth and community members wanted programs, especially mentorship programs, to have a longer duration and expand through young adulthood. Many youth in detention and community shared frustrations of programs ending after they turned a certain age or after a short period. They want to be able to rely on the trust and relationships they build in programs to continue, even past the point where they are out of crisis and stabilized.

#### *Greater support for families and parents*

Impacted youth, families, and community members also highlighted the importance of supporting families and parents while young people are involved in the youth legal system. They shared that the youth legal system significantly impacts the families of the young person. Parents, guardians, and siblings need support too. Specific communities including immigrants, refugees, people who speak a primary language other than English, and families with previously or currently incarcerated family members may need more help with getting connected to resources and navigating the youth legal system.

Impacted youth and community members reinforced the concept that the family must be supported for a young person to be supported. Many community members emphasized that an intergenerational

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<sup>129</sup> Restorative justice emphasizes repairing harm caused by one individual to another. OJJDP Restorative Justice for Juveniles: Literature Review [\[LINK\]](#)

strategy is needed to address underlying harms to families that stem from structural racism, trauma, community disinvestment, and over-policing.

**Finding 3: Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members want King County to have expanded responses that center understanding why harm occurred and prevent harm from occurring, create real community safety, and foster collaborative and community-centered care.**

*Understand why youth cause harm and create more resources to support prevention*

Impacted youth and communities across all the engagement activities highlighted the need to understand the root cause of harm and better support young people. Youth in detention highlighted that too often, their offense (“the what”) is given greater importance than their needs (“the why”). They shared that when young people are responsible for harm, supportive adults should first try to understand what is going on. Youth in the community and community members also emphasized the importance of understanding and addressing the root causes and underlying traumas of why a youth has caused serious harm, instead of focusing just on the harm caused.

Impacted youth stressed that getting to the root of the issue and the “why” of the offense is more important than detention. Impacted youth in the community emphasized that young people “do not want to be out here committing crimes. If they are doing these things, it is often because something went wrong or is going wrong at home...These young people are screaming for help at home to solve the problems in their communities.” Impacted communities pointed to prevention needed to address the many factors affecting young people: systemic racism, over-policing, mental health issues, poverty, bullying, stress, home issues, negative peer pressure, and lack of community supports.

*Center accountability, not punishment, and support youth*

Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members across the engagement clearly stated that accountability is a critical component of any response to youth who cause harm in their communities. Most youth defined accountability as being held responsible for the harm they caused. They highlighted that it is “more than just saying sorry” and should include steps or actions made to address the issue. Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members also stated that the involvement, perspectives, and consistent and intensive support of community members who have been harmed is critical to repairing harm and promoting community safety.

*Address basic needs and create real community safety*

Impacted youth, family members, and harmed community members envisioned a safer community for everyone, where all youth and community members get the resources they needed to thrive. Real community safety for these impacted youth, their families, and harmed community members would mean safe, affordable, and stable housing; public places including schools, community centers, and parks where young people feel welcome, safe, and supported to achieve their goals; financial stability; neighborhoods where they can walk outside and not be afraid of gun violence or discrimination; crisis centers where communities can support individuals in crisis without relying on law enforcement, and supportive services including mental health, behavioral health, and substance use disorder treatment where youth and adults can access the tools they need to address trauma.

Impacted youth and community members shared, however, that they do not currently feel safe in their communities. Youth in detention and in community shared that their communities are overpoliced and suffer from disinvestment; they feel pushed out or unwelcome at their schools; and they face community violence and gang violence on a regular basis. Several girls in detention and in the community shared that the lack of gender-specific resources in their communities and unwanted attention from men makes them feel unsafe. Impacted community members and family members shared that they feel targeted by law enforcement and immigration enforcement because the color of their skin. They also shared that they feel the generational impacts of systemic racism and intergenerational trauma.

#### *Foster community and collaborative approaches to addressing harm*

Across conversations, impacted youth, families, and community members expressed the perspective that the work to transform the youth legal system will require everyone to work together. Impacted youth and community members emphasized community-rooted and collaborative approaches where the community of a young person meets the needs of young people and holds them accountable when they cause serious harm in the community without significant government intervention. Many impacted youth in community and community members shared that ultimately, responses to harm must be grounded and addressed in the community because communities know what they need.

Many youth in detention and in the community distrust the government and youth and adult legal systems. They shared that they feel the people working in the youth legal system and in public safety do not care about them, their families, or the struggles they face. Instead, youth and communities expressed the idea that the youth legal system and society sets young people of color up to fail. One previously incarcerated youth in the community said the youth legal system is “set up for us to keep coming back and making it easy for us to do things that we shouldn’t be doing ... Once you are released, you are automatically blacklisted, and it makes it impossible to move on from the past and carry on to have a better future.” One harmed community member echoed that sentiment from a different perspective: “Victims of crime are often forgotten and sometimes even re-victimized by the system. They should allow us to fully participate in decisions that concern us, and provide us with the assistance, support, and protection we need.” Building trust between the youth legal system, youth, community partners, families, and harmed community members will be important for sustainable alternatives to secure youth detention.

#### **Engagement with and Findings from Community Organizations Supporting Young People**

In addition to engaging impacted community members, DCHS also engaged several groups of community organizations working with impacted community members to solicit feedback on gaps and opportunities to expand community-based alternatives to secure youth detention.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Specifically, DCHS engaged with: Washington State Partnership Council on Behavioral Health and Reentry Joint Committee in December 2022 [[LINK](#)]; BSK Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline Provider Network in December

Findings from the community organizations gathered from the engagements echo many themes highlighted above. Organizations also identified needs to:

- Integrate support and referral systems for youth across the youth legal system into community, including reentry of young people from detention back into community.
- Expand basic needs support for youth and families involved in the youth legal system, including no-barrier shelters, culturally responsive mental health support, greater employment opportunities, positive and caring mentors, transportation, financial stability, legal support, and support for harmed community members.
- Embed more restorative approaches, including getting to the root of the issue and matching needs with resources, not detention, when a young person causes serious harm in community.
- Individualize and tailor services and approaches for impacted youth.
- Create more leadership opportunities for youth involved in the youth legal system including mentoring younger people in the community, facilitating peer sharing opportunities with older youth, and more platforms for youth to shape services and lead efforts across the youth legal system.
- Develop more flexible funding for community providers to meet the continually evolving needs of youth and sustain their workforce of staff members with lived experience.
- Enhance support for family members and parents of impacted young people including tools and resources to support the youth and their individual goals, family reunification efforts that take place over a longer period of time, trauma-informed care to address generational trauma, and opportunities for the family to support the youth in getting the resources they need.
- Facilitate longer positive engagement for youth involved in the youth legal system, as transformational engagement to support youth takes a lot of time and resources to be effective.

### **DAJD Employee Listening Sessions**

As outlined in Section A, DAJD, in partnership with DCHS and the Executive Office, continues to engage with, and inform detention staff about, the Care and Closure initiative. This includes providing regular project updates, utilizing comment boxes, and making presentations at new employee orientations. Leveraging the vast experience of its staff, DAJD has also engaged detention staff to share what they think is needed to support youth outside of detention.

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2022; King County Reengagement Provider Network in January 2023 [\[LINK\]](#); Housing Stability for Youth in Courts (H-SYNC) in March 2023 [\[LINK\]](#); Consejo Counseling and Referral Service in April 2023 [\[LINK\]](#); and Urban League in April 2023 [\[LINK\]](#). More information about the specific findings from the discussions with community organizations can be found in Appendix J.

Care and Closure: Progress Report on the Strategic Planning Process for the Future of Secure Juvenile Detention

In July 2022, DAJD, in partnership with the Executive’s Chief People Officer, convened four listening sessions with detention center staff.<sup>131 132</sup> In those sessions, staff expressed concerns about the community-based alternatives created to replace youth detention and whether those alternatives would support youth with complex needs, especially youth who have caused serious harm. Staff expressed concern about how community partners could support youth with complex needs who can be non-compliant and difficult to manage. Staff also asked how the County plans to retain the Juvenile Division staff throughout this process and support staff through a transition, including retention incentives, job placement opportunities, training and professional development, and career support.

Information shared in the July 2022 listening sessions helped inform development of a suite of retention incentives for Juvenile Detention Officers and other Juvenile Division staff at the youth detention center that were subject to the bargaining process with labor groups.<sup>133</sup> These incentives included general wage increases, retention incentives for staff who stay through 2023, and voluntary overtime incentives.

In October and November 2022, DCHS, in partnership with DAJD, convened five in-person listening sessions with detention center staff. These sessions built on the previous listening session series, focusing on introducing detention staff to DCHS leadership entrusted to lead the Care and Closure initiative.<sup>134 135</sup> In those sessions, staff expressed concerns about community safety and the safety of young people when the detention center closes.

Staff shared their commitment to serving young people and their skills, dedication, and commitment to the youth in their care. Staff also highlighted that there are youth who do not belong in detention, but there is nowhere else for them to go. They shared ideas including the expansion of residential facilities for youth who do not have a safe or supportive home environment; specific inpatient and outpatient resources such as mental health services, sexual violence treatment, and substance use disorder treatment; gang intervention services; and wraparound services for parents and families of youth who may need intensive resources to better support their youth at home.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> There were 50 staff from across the Juvenile Division including Juvenile Detention Officers, Community Surveillance Officers, Health Clinic Staff, Food Service Staff, Juvenile Programs Staff, and Administrative Support Staff.

<sup>132</sup> See Appendix K for the summary of findings from the July 2022 engagement with detention staff.

<sup>133</sup> King County Office of Labor Relations. King County Labor Contracts. Staffing Mission Critical Detention Operations at the Children and Family Justice Center [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>134</sup> The October 2022 sessions were designed for staff to meet directly with DCHS leadership, learn about DCHS programs and the department’s role in the strategic planning process, and share their experiences of caring for the young people in detention.

<sup>135</sup> There were 34 staff from across the Juvenile Division, including Juvenile Detention Officers, Food Service staff, Juvenile Programs staff, and Alternatives to Secure Detention staff. See Appendix L for the summary of findings from the October 2022 engagement with detention staff.

<sup>136</sup> For more information about what detention staff identified as opportunities for community-based alternatives to secure youth detention, see Appendix L.

### ***C. A draft recommendations framework developed by the project advisory committee***

Integrating components developed by the Advisory Committee, the initial draft recommendations framework (referred to in this report as the draft framework) described in this section reflects the anticipated approach of the final recommendations that the Advisory Committee and its subcommittees were developing as of the writing of this report. The Executive intends to submit these recommendations to the Council at the end of 2023.

The initial draft framework contains three core components. The first component is made up of the Advisory Committee's values that members wanted to center throughout this planning process. The second component is the initial guiding principles which were developed by the Advisory Committee to support recommendation development in the process. The third component is a holistic continuum of care that highlights the different elements needed to support youth healing, accountability, and community safety and design the community-based alternatives that are needed to close the youth detention center, support impacted youth, and promote greater community safety. DCHS integrated these components developed by the Advisory Committee into the initial draft framework structure outlined below.<sup>137</sup>

The initial draft framework details examples of these different elements, including those that already exist as well as those that do not yet exist and need to be further defined. These core components align with the key findings from the hundreds of perspectives shared by impacted community members and the robust research on what works to prevent youth from further legal system involvement. The section below highlights next steps for the draft framework and how it will inform the Advisory Committee and subcommittees' development of recommendations. Please note that the initial draft framework included in this report is a work in progress and does not yet reflect the full range of recommendations that will be submitted to Council by the end of the year.

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<sup>137</sup> In July 2023, DCHS presented the components together in the initial draft framework for the Advisory Committee review and discussion. The Advisory Committee, through the subcommittees and the recommendation development process, will further refine and then finalize the draft framework. See the Next Steps for the Draft Framework subsection below for more details about how the Advisory Committee and subcommittee will use this initial draft framework.

The initial draft framework reinforces that the youth detention center cannot be replaced with a single alternative or a single solution. Thus, a wide range of community-based alternatives will need to be established to meet the complex needs of youth and harmed parties impacted by the youth legal system. As a key part of this range of alternatives, the Advisory Committee’s draft framework envisions spaces and programs designed for healing, repairing harm, connecting to resources, community safety, and accountability.

**Core Advisory Committee Insight:**  
There is not one single solution to replace youth detention. A wide range of community-based alternatives will need to be established to meet the complex needs of youth and harmed parties impacted by the youth legal system.

### **Advisory Committee Values**

The draft framework below emphasizes the Advisory Committee’s underlying shared values of:

- Centering impacted young people and families
- Honesty
- Transparency
- Integrity
- Accountability and commitment
- Empathy
- Listening to each other
- Restorative
- Respect
- Diversity
- Allowing others to speak their truth
- Healing<sup>138</sup>

### **Initial Guiding Principles**

In January 2023, the Advisory Committee developed initial guiding principles to support the development of recommendations for the community-based alternatives to secure youth detention and the closure of the youth detention center. The Advisory Committee members identified these guiding principles through a series of small group discussions during several virtual meetings. The discussions were informed by presentations by youth legal system experts and people with lived experience in previous Advisory Committee meetings, including the history of the youth legal system and detention.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Established by the Advisory Committee in May 2022, the full list of shared values is included in the agenda and notes for every Advisory Committee meeting. King County Care and Closure. Draft Working Group Agreements.

[\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>139</sup> The presentations to the Advisory Committee in 2022 included an overview of youth detention in King County from DAJD (August 2022); an overview on the history of the youth legal system and the role of racism and white supremacy in upholding the system from the Burns Institute (September and October 2022) an overview of the

The Advisory Committee then identified six initial guiding principles to help shape the future recommendations for alternatives to secure youth detention:<sup>140</sup>

1. Prioritize meeting the needs for all youth, harmed parties, and community members;
2. Keep youth in their communities;
3. Prioritize racial equity and anti-racism;
4. Focus on radical healing and accountability, not punishment;
5. Holistically support and center impacted youth, harmed parties, and communities in the development and implementation of alternatives to secure youth detention;
6. Be transparent with how the alternatives are being developed and implemented.

While developing these principles, the Advisory Committee discussed the need to:

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youth legal system in King County from the Executive Office (October and November 2022); an overview of the existing programs for youth in CYYAD from DCHS (November 2022); and an overview of the King County Juvenile Court and Juvenile Court Services from Superior Court’s Juvenile Court staff (November 2022). In addition, the community organizations that led the engagement with impacted youth, many of them led by people with lived experience in the legal system, presented their findings to the Advisory Committee in April 2023. King County Care and Closure. Meeting Notes [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>140</sup> The Advisory Committee and subcommittees will likely further refine this list of initial guiding principles in the development of the recommendations.

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- prioritize the needs of the youth as they express them, rather than with assumptions on what their needs are;
- make sure that the alternatives do not add to the racial disproportionality of the current youth legal system;
- acknowledge that one young person may be involved in multiple systems at one time (i.e. juvenile court, homelessness, behavioral health, dependency systems);
- move away from the concept that youth are safer in detention than in community; and
- be transparent with information about the current challenges and opportunities to transform the youth legal system.<sup>141</sup>

These initial guiding principles align with the key findings from the engagement with impacted communities, which are outlined in Section B and highlighted in the box to the right. Aligned findings include meeting the needs of youth, their families, and harmed parties; creating additional places and programs besides detention to support youth healing, accountability, and community safety; and focusing on healing, not punishment.

The Advisory Committee and subcommittees will continue to use these initial guiding principles to shape the recommendations of community-based alternatives needed to support youth healing, accountability, and community safety and close the youth detention center.

### **Holistic Continuum of Care**

The Advisory Committee’s initial guiding principles and findings from engagement with impacted communities highlight the importance of focusing on understanding and addressing the complex needs for youth involved in the youth legal system, their families, and harmed community members. The Advisory

#### Key Findings from Impacted Community Members:

1. Many impacted youth, families, and community members believe that secure youth detention is not an effective solution for most or all youth and should not be relied on to make communities better and safer.
2. Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members want more resources focused on supporting youth healing, accountability, and community safety. These resources include more spaces other than detention to reflect on mistakes made; stability and structure; supportive mentors with similar lived experiences; resources to transform and stabilize their home environments; and greater support for their families.
3. Impacted youth, families, and harmed community members want King County to have expanded responses that center understanding why harm occurred, prevent harm from occurring, create real community safety, and foster collaborative and community-centered care.

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<sup>141</sup> King County Care and Closure. Advisory Committee Initial Guiding Principles [\[LINK\]](#)

Core Advisory Committee and Impacted Community Insight: Supports need to be better aligned, tailored to youth involved in the youth legal system including being culturally specific for youth of color, and better resourced to adequately meet the needs of youth and harmed community members.

Committee and impacted community members further identified that youth require tailored and individualized services because their needs and circumstances are as unique as the youth themselves. Youth detention is not designed to provide such tailored and specific supports for youth. Research underscores the effectiveness of multi-faceted interventions and supports that are tailored to the needs of each youth compared to single supports or the traditional youth legal system.<sup>142</sup>

Guided by the initial guiding principles and input from the community engagement process, the Advisory Committee, with staff support from DCHS, developed an initial graphic of a holistic continuum of care to inform and shape recommendation development. The continuum shows the support needs that youth, families, and harmed community members identified, with a specific focus on needs identified by youth in detention and youth on EHM. The Advisory Committee is using the holistic continuum of care image as a tool to ensure proposed alternatives to secure youth detention address the needs identified by the youth and community members. In May 2023, the Advisory Committee discussed the holistic continuum of care in small groups and provided feedback to ensure that the image, depicted in Figure 6 below, captures what community members shared.<sup>143</sup>

The continuum of care details specific supports, identified by impacted youth and community, across nine different elements: mentorship and supportive communities, education, transportation, employment and financial stability, medical and behavioral health, family support, housing, accountability, and healing (shown in Figure 5 below).

Recent research highlights the effectiveness of several types of interventions mirrored in the draft continuum of care below:

- Cognitive-behavioral skill-building
- Mentoring and positive adult support
- Family counseling and support
- Positive youth development opportunities that support healing
- Tutoring and other support to boost academic success
- Employment and work readiness
- Wraparound care
- Restorative justice

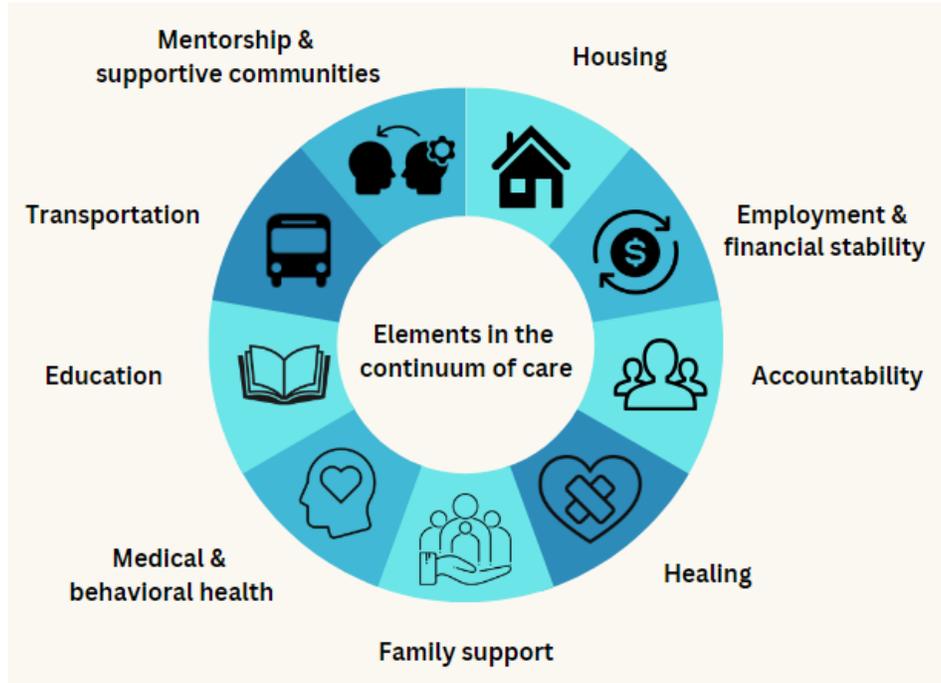
*Sentencing Project (2023). Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration.*

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<sup>142</sup> The Sentencing Project (2023). Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>143</sup> King County Care and Closure. May 22, 2023 Advisory Committee Notes [\[LINK\]](#)

Figure 5: Elements of the Continuum of Care



- **Mentorship and supportive communities** -- reflects the importance of consistent and caring adults or groups of adults who have shared lived experience and can provide impacted youth with positive encouragement or guidance to navigate difficult situations.
- **Education** -- highlights the importance of various intentional supports to help impacted youth reengage with their education, including alternative education opportunities and supports to be successful in their original education environment.
- **Transportation** -- reinforces the need for more accessible, affordable, and safe transportation options for impacted youth who may not have reliable access to private transportation. Unreliable, unsafe, or expensive transportation options can make it difficult for youth to access and consistently participate in available community services, especially when services are located across the County.
- **Employment and financial stability** -- underscores the desire of, and often need for, impacted youth to provide for themselves and their families to address basic needs or other material needs. It also highlights the need for paid training, workforce development, and apprenticeship opportunities for impacted youth under the legal working age.
- **Medical and behavioral health** -- addresses the growing prevalence of medical and behavioral health issues among youth including mental health issues, alcohol and substance use disorders, and unaddressed behavioral issues among impacted youth who have often experienced significant and often unaddressed trauma in their young lives.
- **Family support** -- recognizes that impacted youth are part of larger family systems where individuals, such as guardians, siblings, or the entire family may have unaddressed needs to be

addressed. Families can get the help they need and be better equipped to help the impacted youth.

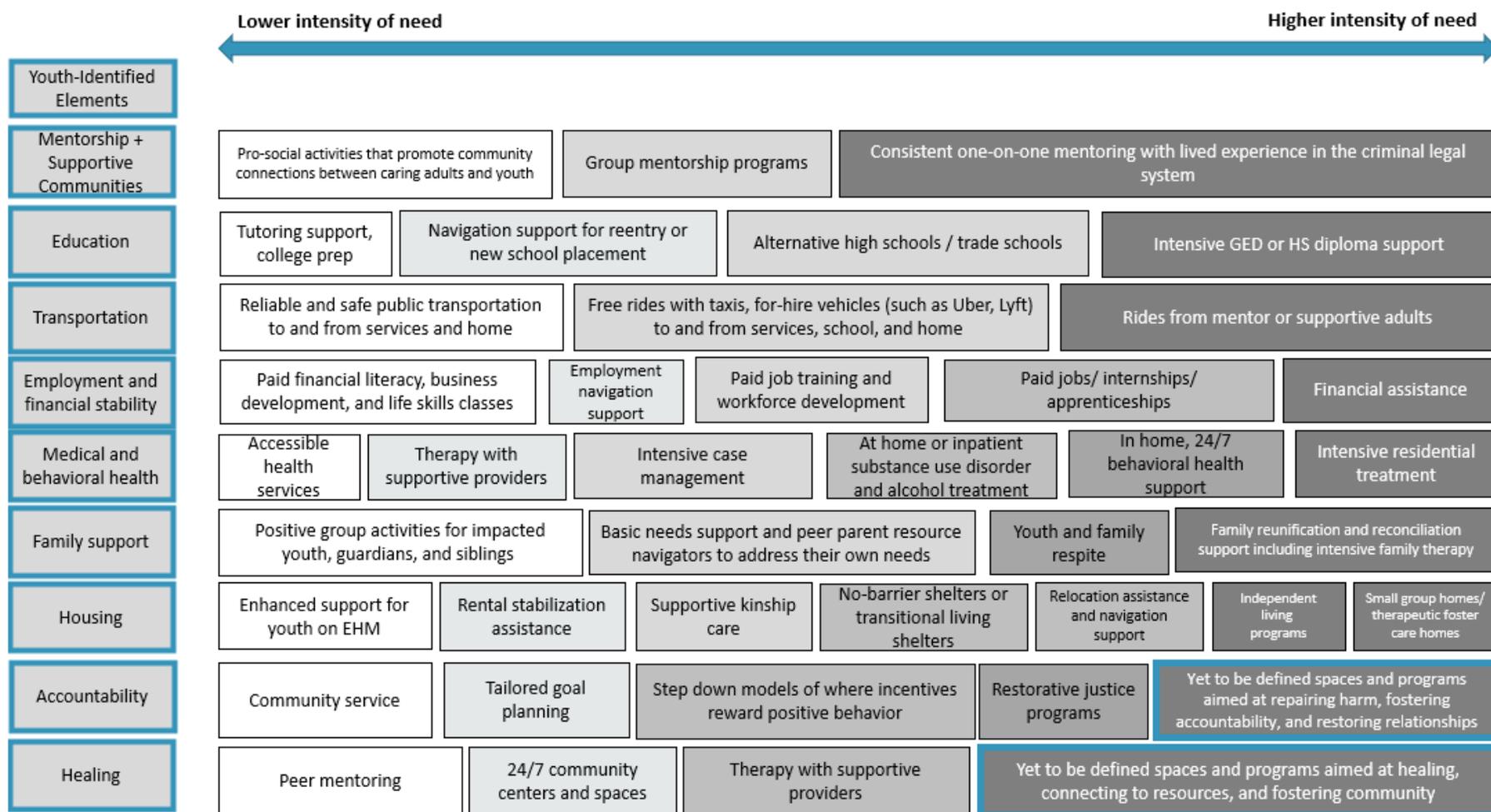
- **Housing** -- highlights the importance of safe and stable placements for impacted youth, especially those who may not be able to return home or may have been experiencing unstable housing or homelessness before their involvement with the legal system.
- **Accountability** -- reinforces the desire of impacted youth to take responsibility for their actions, learn from their mistakes, and repair the harm they have caused in their communities. Accountability is centered on restoration of relationships and development of skills to cope with stress and trauma. It differs from punishment which is focused on adhering to a set of rules and does not focus on restoring harm.
- **Healing** -- centers the dignity of all people, including impacted youth, and recognizes the inherent possibilities for impacted youth, families, and harmed community members to be healthy and well.

Specific support needs identified by impacted youth and community members are organized across the nine elements. For example, within the housing element, youth and community members identified the need for no-barrier shelter facilities for youth who are unable to return home, but who need a temporary housing placement to leave youth detention. Often youth with certain offenses such as sexual violence offenses or assault offenses, face barriers in accessing shelters for youth experiencing homelessness due to shelter requirements or shelter staffing challenges. Other youth with such offenses and their families can face difficulty in maintaining current housing and can even be evicted from their homes, creating further instability for both the youth and their family members. These families may need relocation assistance or alternative residential housing options, such as small group homes, for their youth.

Guide to reading the holistic continuum of care in Figure 7:

- Vertically, the continuum of care image categorizes the supports identified by impacted community members into different elements (such as mentorship and supportive communities, behavioral health, housing, accountability, and healing).
- Horizontally, supports within each element are ordered from level of intensity or level of need for the individual young person. The least intensive supports are located on the left-hand side while the most intensive supports are located on the right-hand side.
- The size of the box of the specific supports listed refers to the frequency the support was mentioned in the engagement activities with impacted community members.
- The boxes that are outlined in blue are those that the Advisory Committee and subcommittees will focus on defining and identifying in the next phase of the project. These supports do not yet exist in King County or have not yet been used as community-based alternatives to secure detention for youth involved in the legal system.

Figure 6: Initial Continuum of Care for Impacted Youth



## Examples of Supports

The continuum of care includes many supports across several of the nine elements that already exist for youth and families in King County. For example, the Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline strategy funds several mentorship programs for youth involved or at-risk for youth legal system involvement where mentors with lived experience help youth navigate challenges, identify their strengths, and grow into their potential.<sup>144</sup> In medical and behavioral health, the MIDD Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund supports the Family Intervention and Restorative Services (FIRS) initiative. Through FIRS, youth and families involved in domestic violence incidences receive short-term respite care and intensive family counseling to address challenges at home without the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office charging the youth through the legal system.<sup>145</sup> Additionally, the recently voter-approved Crisis Care Centers Levy will support the development of a crisis care center for youth to help them stabilize when they experience a behavioral health crisis.<sup>146</sup> There are examples across the entire continuum of supports that already exist or will exist in King County and that the County will need to leverage to better support the community-based alternatives needed to close the youth detention center.

Core Advisory Committee and Impacted Community Insight: While many supports identified in the continuum of care already exist, greater awareness of and accessibility to those supports is needed to ensure youth in the legal system can benefit from the provided services.

Other supports, however, do not yet exist in King County and will require the Advisory Committee to further define and identify what is needed to establish those supports. These supports include the need for “yet to be defined spaces and programs aimed at healing, repairing harm, connecting to resources, community safety, and accountability,” outlined in blue in Figure 6’s depiction of the continuum of care. The Advisory Committee, through its subcommittees and informed by impacted community members, will focus next on further defining those supports, specifically for youth who have the most complex needs and present the highest risks to safety for the community and themselves. The Advisory Committee intends to ensure that such supports satisfy the need for youth healing, accountability, and community safety. The Advisory Committee recognizes that providing the level of support that the draft framework and continuum of care call for is a transformation of service delivery to youth and requires significant investment and community partner engagement.

Core Advisory Committee Insight: While all youth involved in the legal system can benefit from the supports identified in the continuum of care, specific and intensive services will be needed for youth who have complex needs and present the highest risks to community safety.

## Next Steps for the Draft Framework

Although the draft framework does not yet reflect the specific recommendations that the Advisory Committee and subcommittees will develop by the end of the year, it does support important next steps

<sup>144</sup> King County Best Starts for Kids (2022). Announcing 10 Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline Awardees [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>145</sup> King County Prosecuting Attorney Juvenile Division. Family Intervention and Restorative Services [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>146</sup> King County Executive Office (2023). Voter approve Crisis Care Centers Levy – a generational investment to transform the behavioral health system in King County [\[LINK\]](#)

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for recommendation development. The Advisory Committee and three subcommittees will continue to build on and refine this draft framework, including the initial guiding principles and holistic continuum of care, in the coming months to inform their development of recommendations by the end of the year:

- The *Identifying Alternatives to Secure Detention and Placements* subcommittee will focus on developing recommendations for the immediate and short-term response to when youth cause serious harm, the policies and practices that need to be in place for those alternatives, and the existing alternatives in King County and other jurisdictions that can be scaled and adapted to meet the needs of youth with the most complex needs and who present the highest risks to community safety.
- The *Strengthening Community Infrastructure* subcommittee will focus on developing recommendations that identify where existing elements in the continuum of care need to be strengthened and expanded for youth with the most complex needs and highest risk levels, how community partners and systems partners can better collaborate to ensure youth and families are receiving and aware of tailored services, and how to strengthen infrastructure of community partners to meet the needs of youth, families, and harmed community members.
- The *Engaging Impacted Communities* subcommittee will focus on ensuring community voices, including youth, families, and harmed community members, and their experiences are incorporated and centered throughout the recommendation process. Together, these three subcommittees and their specific areas of focus will inform the Advisory Committee and support the evolution of the draft framework outlined above into a set of specific recommendations.

#### ***D. A discussion of state law requirements for juvenile detention in King County, and how those requirements interact with CCFJC strategic planning***<sup>147</sup>

King County will need to address several existing Washington state laws requiring juvenile detention before it can close the youth detention center. These state requirements fall into three major categories: 1) laws requiring the maintenance and operation of youth detention centers; 2) laws requiring the use of detention to confine young people; and 3) laws allowing the use of detention to confine young people.

The discussion section below discusses the three categories of state requirements and outlines anticipated next steps for King County to address those requirements and close the youth detention center as part of the strategic planning process.

#### **Legislation requiring the maintenance and operation of youth detention centers**

Two state statutes require the maintenance and operation of a physically secure facility where juveniles may be confined for 24 hours a day and where staff is present to maintain such confinement. First, RCW 13.04.135 requires counties containing more than 50,000 inhabitants to “provide and maintain at public expense, a detention room or house of detention, separated or removed from any jail, or police station, to be in charge of a matron, or other person of good character, wherein all children within the provisions of this chapter shall, when necessary, be sheltered.”<sup>148</sup> Second, RCW 13.16.030 states that “the construction, acquisition and maintenance of juvenile detention facilities for dependent, wayward and delinquent children, separate and apart from the detention facilities for adults, is hereby declared to be a mandatory function of the several counties of the state.”<sup>149</sup> <sup>150</sup> RCW 13.16.030 was enacted in 1945 in response to a lack of detention facilities in various counties and the Washington State Legislature considering such absence an emergency.<sup>151</sup> Currently, King County complies with these statutes through operation of the CCFJC. Alternate facility space would be needed to comply with these statutes if the CCFJC is closed.

At the same time, Washington State law promotes community-based interventions for youth, especially for those whose cases have not yet been adjudicated. RCW 13.40.038 outlines the statutory purpose of detention to “provide a humane, safe, and rehabilitative environment and that unadjudicated youth remain in the community whenever possible, consistent with public safety and the provisions of chapter

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<sup>147</sup> The Executive Department identified state law requirements for juvenile detention and created an initial list of statutes that require detention for youth. The PAO Criminal Division and the Department of Public Defense reviewed and expanded upon the initial list of state law requirements. The Executive Department then developed the summary discussion below of the key state laws. As a result, Appendix M is the most comprehensive list compiled thus far by the County related to state requirements for juvenile detention.

<sup>148</sup> RCW 13.04.135. Establishment of house or room of detention [[LINK](#)]

<sup>149</sup> “Juvenile delinquent” refers to “juvenile offenders or the commitment of an offense by juveniles as defined by this chapter.” RCW 13.40.240.

<sup>150</sup> RCW 13.16.030. Mandatory function of counties [[LINK](#)]

<sup>151</sup> RCW 13.16.020. Lack of detention facilities constitutes emergency [[LINK](#)]

13.40 RCW.”<sup>152</sup> By committing to expanding community-based alternatives to secure youth detention and closing the youth detention center, King County is expanding the range of opportunities for unadjudicated youth to have the supports and accountability they need to remain in their communities while minimizing the impact to community safety.<sup>153</sup>

### **Legislation requiring the use of detention to confine young people**

Several state statutes require the use of detention to confine young people prior to any court involvement. For example, pursuant to RCW 9.41.280 requires youth between the ages of 12 and 21 who are arrested for bringing a firearm to school to be detained or confined in a juvenile or adult facility for up to 72 hours.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, RCW 13.40.040(3) requires a youth who is found guilty of rape in the first or second degree or rape of a child in the first degree to be detained pending disposition.

Lastly, King County is also required to abide by the rules of the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ), codified in Chapter 13.24 RCW.<sup>155</sup> The Compact requires Washington State to work with the Interstate Commission for Juveniles to ensure the safe interstate movement of juveniles subject to the compact, to include the safe return of juveniles who may have run away from their home state.<sup>156</sup> <sup>157</sup> ICJ requires the detention of certain juveniles in secured facilities until returned by the home/demanding state. RCW 13.24.060 requires King County to enforce the Compact and do all things appropriate to the effectuation of its purposes and intent.<sup>158</sup>

The Executive anticipates significant legislative changes to these statutes listed above and in Appendix M will be necessary to align with King County closing the youth detention center and implementing the Advisory Committee’s recommendations.

### **Legislation allowing the use of detention to confine young people**

Other state statutes allow, but do not require, the use of detention to confine young people prior to any court involvement. These requirements, as noted in Appendix M, pertain to the Court’s ability to place a youth in detention depending on different circumstances.

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<sup>152</sup> RCW 13.40.038. County juvenile detention facilities – Policy – Detention and risk assessment standards. [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>153</sup> RCW 13.40.038. County juvenile detention facilities – Policy – Detention and risk assessment standards. [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>154</sup> RCW 9.41.280(2). Possessing dangerous weapons on school facilities—Penalty—Exceptions [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>155</sup> Chapter 13.24 RCW. Interstate Compact for Juveniles [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>156</sup> RCW 13.24.011. Execution of compact [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>157</sup> The Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) is the only legal means to transfer a juvenile’s supervision from one state to another and to return youth who have voluntarily left their residence without permission of their legal guardian. A Commissioner in each member state administers the Compact and collectively forms the Interstate Commission for Juveniles. Interstate Commission for Juveniles. Compact Statute [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>158</sup> RCW 13.24.060. Responsibilities of state departments, agencies and officers [\[LINK\]](#)

## Interactions of State Requirements with the Planning Process

The Executive’s goal to close the youth detention center requires significant changes to existing state law. However, the Executive can expand the community-based alternatives identified through this process that support youth and work to reduce the use of secure youth detention before the state statute is addressed.

King County is building toward a future without a youth detention center, but Washington State law currently requires King County to operate and use a youth detention center to detain youth for certain offenses.<sup>159</sup> <sup>160</sup> Therefore, the identified statutes in Appendix M may need to be repealed or amended so that King County is not obligated to have a youth detention center or detain young people in a youth detention center, unless an alternative facility can be used to comply with statutory requirements.<sup>161</sup> Because state and local laws prohibit youth from being confined in adult jails, housing youth in one of DAJD’s adult facilities would not be an option.<sup>162</sup> However, those statutes could be amended to authorize community-based alternatives as suitable placements for young people for certain offenses.

As part of the recommendation development process, the Executive and the Advisory Committee expect to consider different strategies to repeal or amend the identified state statutes. For example, regarding the two statutes requiring the operation and maintenance of a youth detention center, King County may want to minimize the impact of a repealed statute on other counties. Instead, the County could propose amendments to those statutes that allow counties with robust community-based alternatives that address public safety and support youth rehabilitation to cease operating a youth detention center.

The Executive intends to work with state legislators, the public, and the King County Council to propose and adopt state legislative priorities to make needed changes to existing state statutes, and then partner with state legislators and the Governor to achieve those legislative priorities.

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<sup>159</sup> The King County Executive Office has stated that the goals for youth legal system transformation do not include scenarios where youth in King County who cause harm are sent to detention in a neighboring county or to adult facilities. This vision also does not include building a smaller detention center to detain youth who cause harm. King County Care and Closure. Advisory Committee. February 27, 2023 Meeting Notes [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>160</sup> Washington State legislation prohibits youth under 18 years old to be confined at adult facilities, with some exceptions. RCW 13.04.116 [\[LINK\]](#). A 2017 King County Executive Order also prohibited the use of adult facilities for youth including declined youth who are charged as adults for certain offenses. King County Executive Order JJS-8-1-EO [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>161</sup> Without state law changes, alternative facilities would need to fulfill the statutory requirement of being a physically secure facility where juveniles may be confined for 24 hours a day and where staff is present to maintain such confinement. RCW 13.04.135. Establishment of house or room of detention. [\[LINK\]](#). RCW 13.16.030. Mandatory function of counties. [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>162</sup> RCW 13.04.116 does allow a court to house a juvenile charged as an adult in an adult jail under specific circumstances. RCW 13.04.116. Juvenile not to be confined in jail or holding facility for adults, exceptions— Enforcement [\[LINK\]](#).

## ***E. A discussion of applicable labor laws that interact with CCFJC strategic planning<sup>163</sup>***

King County staff at the youth detention center are dedicated to the youth that they serve and play an important role in the current youth legal system. The commitment to close the youth detention center at the CCFJC will be a major organizational change for Juvenile Division staff. The Executive is committed to supporting staff and respecting their needs, rights, and concerns throughout the Care and Closure process and implementation. The Executive recognizes and values the critical work these staff do every day in service to the young people and is committed to supporting staff for potential transitions to various career pathways.

The section below highlights the applicable labor laws involved in operation of the youth detention center and important labor considerations King County will need to address before it can close the youth detention center. It also outlines how the Executive is preparing to support detention staff with a variety of future pathways, including both within DAJD and other opportunities available within the County.

### **Overview**

The closure or service restructure of youth detention services at the CCFJC represents a major organizational change for the County and impacts staff that support the current services and operations in DAJD and in other County departments such as Superior Court. The Executive will need to allow sufficient time for the various labor groups to become informed about the decisions that will result in organizational change. Specifically, the timeline for the closure or restructure, and what County services will be eliminated, modified, or expanded at the CCFJC that result in changes to staffing levels, operations, and assigned work to Union represented employees need to be addressed. In some cases, labor groups and the Executive may have an opportunity to jointly develop creative mitigation measures to avoid adverse impacts to bargaining unit employees, such as transitions to other types of King County employment. Ultimately, the scope of the County's obligation to negotiate these changes with the affected unions, including notice requirements, will depend on the specific changes ultimately implemented to services and staffing at the CCFJC.

### **Labor Groups**

There are five represented bargaining units at the DAJD Juvenile Division, with a total of 142 represented employees that may be directly impacted by the closure of the detention center or restructuring of youth detention operations. (See Appendix N for more details on the bargaining units.) In addition, there are several represented bargaining units in Superior Court and Juvenile Court Services consisting of more than 80 represented positions (such as but not limited to juvenile probation counselors and social workers) that may be affected by these changes.

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<sup>163</sup> The Office of Labor Relations (OLR) prepared the narrative in this section of the report, in partnership with DCHS. OLR identified the applicable labor laws related to the closure of the youth detention center and developed a response. The Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) then reviewed the response and provided feedback.

## Labor Laws

The Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act, Chapter 41.56 RCW, requires the Executive to negotiate with labor representatives over changes to mandatory subjects of bargaining, which may involve changes to employee wages, hours, and working conditions.<sup>164</sup> Depending on the details concerning the closure of the youth detention center or services restructure, the Executive may have to discharge both decisional bargaining obligations and effects bargaining obligations, and some degree of bargaining will be required if requested by labor.<sup>165</sup> The Executive is also required to provide information related to the Care and Closure work to labor groups upon request. As the Advisory Committee and the Executive develop more specific recommendations about the Care and Closure work, the Office of Labor Relations will be able to advise on the bargaining obligations triggered by different actions.

Of note, two bargaining units, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) #297 (Detention Officers) and CBA #276 (Supervisors), have interest arbitration status.<sup>166 167</sup> Interest arbitration status allows the labor groups to request interest arbitration with a neutral arbitrator to resolve disputes that arise during collective bargaining negotiations.<sup>168</sup> This arbitration status may be significant if the parties are at an impasse over a mandatory subject of bargaining. This may require a substantial interest arbitration process to be completed before the County could implement a change to a mandatory subject of bargaining, such as deciding to contract out bargaining unit work. CBA #276 (Supervisors) also currently has a contract provision that significantly restricts the County's ability to contract out work, such as allowing community organizations to supervise youth in detention or youth on electronic home monitoring.

## Expected Process

In implementing Advisory Committee recommendations, the County will need to take several steps to comply with the notice and labor bargaining obligations under RCW 41.56.

- The County will first need to address any potential legal compliance barriers associated with the proposed change at the youth detention center and resolve those issues prior to engaging with labor groups.

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<sup>164</sup> RCW 41.56. Public Employees' Collective Bargaining [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>165</sup> Decisional bargaining is the process of an employer bargaining with labor before a implementing a change to the terms and conditions of employment. Effects bargaining is the process of an employer bargaining with labor about the effects of decisions that have been made. The County is obligated to conduct both types of bargaining. King County Office of Labor Relations. King County and King County Coalitions of Unions Coalition Labor Agreement [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>166</sup> King County Office of Labor Relations. King County and King County Coalitions of Unions Coalition Labor Agreement [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>167</sup> King County Office of Labor Relations. Agreement between King County and King County Juvenile Detention Guild [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>168</sup> Interest arbitration is a process whereby the issues not resolved in bargaining between the employer and the union may be presented to an impartial arbitrator for final resolution. Washington State Office of Financial Management. Labor Relations [\[LINK\]](#)

- After the potential legal issues have been addressed, the County will need to give advance notice to representatives of the impacted bargaining units allowing them an opportunity to request the County bargain in good faith with each impacted bargaining unit.
- In the case that layoffs need to be made, the County will need to give advance notice to employees. Even with seniority-based layoff procedures already negotiated for each collective bargaining agreement, unions may request to bargain the effects on the impacted employees of a reduction in force. Similarly, if there are significant changes to jobs or services, the County will have some bargaining obligations to address the effects of those changes.

### **Opportunities for Staff Transitions**

In addition to adhering to the labor framework outlined above, the Executive is committed to preparing detention staff for transitions to a variety of career pathways.

Detention staff may be interested in staying with DAJD and working in the County's adult facilities. DAJD Human Resources has already adjusted its recruitment practices to provide closer alignment of requirements for Corrections Officers and Juvenile Detention Officers. The streamlined process will ensure that staff who elect to move to the Adult Division will not be held up by additional background check requirements. In addition, some positions within the Juvenile Division are being reviewed for reclassification to further align them with similar positions in the adult division. This change may allow for reassignment of a group of employees to the Community Corrections Division to continue their work with youth under different supervision.

Detention staff may be interested in staying with the County and working to support youth and families affected by the youth legal system. DAJD Human Resources is researching, identifying, and creating career pathways for detention staff within other County departments serving youth and communities, such as DCHS and Public Health. These efforts include researching how previous detention staff have transitioned into other positions in the County; identifying open and future positions in other departments and the required qualifications for those positions; and documenting existing and potential professional development and training opportunities available across County departments to prepare facility staff for those positions and required qualifications. Once DAJD's Human Resources team identifies those pathways in partnership with staff, DAJD Human Resources will identify, develop, tailor, and implement existing training opportunities to support facility staff in meeting their career goals and preparing for roles within those other departments. DAJD Human Resources will continue to engage facility staff throughout the process of pathway development to allow them to review these plans and provide feedback into the process.

Detention staff may be interested in changing careers entirely. For these staff, DAJD Human Resources will work with staff to make sure that they are aware of existing professional development opportunities

for which they are eligible, including the Professional Development Scholarship Fund and tuition assistance, as well as special duty assignments.<sup>169</sup>

For all detention staff, regardless of the pathways they are interested in pursuing, the County will leverage the existing career support services and resources provided by the Department of Human Resources.<sup>170</sup> These resources may include career planning and exploration, resume and interviewing workshops, and development of individual development plans for detention staff interested in greater supports.

### ***F. Identification of King County Council involvement and any legislative actions that are anticipated to be part of project implementation***

The King County Council continues to have opportunities to engage in this planning initiative and support project implementation. This section outlines opportunities for the Council’s participation during the remainder of the planning process and implementation. The Council’s support is critical to establishing new responses to youth in crisis.

#### **Continued Council Involvement in the Process**

DCHS and the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) have presented to the Council during the discussions of previous Proviso reports, in November 2021 and September 2022.<sup>171 172</sup> Since November 2022, DCHS has provided individual briefings to interested Council members and their staff and will continue to offer and provide them at their request throughout the project. Councilmembers have identified community organizations and individuals in their respective districts for DCHS to engage as key interested parties in the process. Council central staff have occasionally attended the Advisory Committee meetings, and all Council staff are invited to join these public meetings.<sup>173</sup>

#### **Council Partnership in Community Engagement**

The Council will also have opportunities to support continued community and public engagement throughout the planning process. The Executive plans to create educational and engagement events such as town halls for the broader King County public to provide feedback on recommendations. Those events will be planned throughout the County after the Executive submits the recommendations to the

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<sup>169</sup> The Professional Development Scholarship Fund is a benefit offered as part of the 2022 – 2024 Coalition Labor Agreement (CLA) and is only open to employees represented by one of the unions in the Coalition. The maximum amount an employee can be awarded is \$3,000 per calendar year. King County Department of Human Resources. Professional Development Scholarship Fund [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>170</sup> King County Department of Human Resources. Career Support Services [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>171</sup> The King County Law, Justice, and Health and Human Services Committee discussed the September 2021 proviso report and recommended do pass on November 2, 2021. King County Council [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>172</sup> The King County Law, Justice, and Health and Human Services Committee discussed the June 2022 proviso report and recommended do pass on September 6, 2022. King County Council [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>173</sup> The Care and Closure Advisory Committee meets monthly on the fourth Monday from 4 pm to 5:30 pm. More information can be found on the project website. King County Care and Closure Advisory Committee [\[LINK\]](#).

Council. Councilmembers will have the opportunity to share information with their constituents about these town halls.

### **Future Council Involvement in State and Local Policy Changes**

The Council will have opportunities to support upcoming potential changes to state legislation and engage in the legislative environment, as discussed further in Section D.<sup>174</sup> Once state legislators amend or repeal legislation, the Council can then propose and enact legislative changes in the King County Code to align with state legislation and emphasize local support.

Among the opportunities for the Council is supporting efforts to bring greater state and local investment to impacted communities. The Council can partner with the Executive to lobby the state for greater investment in key elements of the draft framework, such as housing, medical and behavioral health support, and mentorship. The Council also can continue supporting existing local youth-centered services focused on healing, accountability, and community safety such as youth homelessness, behavioral health, diversion programs such as RCP, and prevention and promotion efforts such as BSK.

### **Council Involvement through Budget Review and Adoption**

The Council's support is essential to implementing this vision of a more just, supportive, and community-based response for young people in crisis, their families, and harmed community members. As recommendations for programming changes to implement Care and Closure are provided in the forthcoming report that will be transmitted to the Council, the Executive may also propose expansion of community-based alternatives through the County's budget process. Through its consideration of a proposed budget, the Council will review, adjust, reject, or adopt proposed investments. The Executive intends to proceed with closure of the youth detention center only when sufficient resources and support are in place to expand the community-based alternatives to secure youth detention.

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<sup>174</sup> As outlined in section D, there are several state requirements that may need to be addressed, including RCW 13.16.030 Mandatory function of counties [\[LINK\]](#) and RCW 13.04.135 Establishment of house or room of detention [\[LINK\]](#). In addition, the Council may help support necessary changes to state requirements for secure detention for youth with specific offenses, such as RCW 9.41.280(2) Possessing dangerous weapons on school facilities—Penalty—Exceptions [\[LINK\]](#). Additional specific legislation is included in Appendix M.

## VI. Conclusion and Next Actions

Working with community, labor, and system partners, the Executive is continuing to transform the response to young people experiencing crises and responsible for harm in their communities, including eliminating secure detention for youth. Expanding the range of community-based alternatives needed to support young people and their healing, accountability, and community safety and closing the youth detention center advances King County’s commitment to becoming an anti-racist, pro-equity government.<sup>175</sup>

It is clear from the Care and Closure planning process that the County needs expanded community-based responses to youth in crisis that better meet the needs of impacted youth, families, and harmed community members. Informed by decades of research on the harms of detention and community perspectives, the Executive is committed to partnering with Council to expand community-based alternatives and eliminate the use of secure youth detention.

Consistent with Ordinance 19546, in late 2023 the Executive expects to provide the Advisory Committee’s recommendations for the future of secure youth detention. The Advisory Committee and subcommittees will use the draft framework outlined here to develop specific recommendations on community-based alternatives to secure youth detention, community infrastructure, and continued involvement with impacted communities. These recommendations are expected to include a pathway to transition sustainably toward community-based alternatives that reflects the framework in this report and advances racial equity, improves outcomes for youth, and supports safer communities in King County.

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<sup>175</sup> King County Ordinance 16948 [\[LINK\]](#)

## VII. Appendices

Appendix A: September 2021 Proviso Report Executive Summary

Appendix B: June 2022 Proviso Report Executive Summary

Appendix C: Care and Closure Advisory Committee Composition

Appendix D: Youth Legal System: Violence Prevention and Community Safety and Wellbeing Continuum

Appendix E: Findings from Listening Sessions with Youth in Detention

Appendix F: Findings from Interviews with Youth on EHM

Appendix G: Compiled Community-Led Engagement Findings

Appendix H: Compiled Additional Listening Sessions with Impacted Youth

Appendix I: Compiled Findings from Community Awareness Building Events

Appendix J: Compiled Findings from Organizational Engagement

Appendix K: Summary of July 2022 Detention Staff Engagement

Appendix L: Summary of October and November 2022 Detention Staff Engagement

Appendix M: Washington State Legislation Requiring Youth Detention

Appendix N: DAJD, Juvenile Division Bargaining Units

**Proviso Response:**  
**Children and Family Justice Center – Strategic Planning Project: 2022-2025**  
**September 30, 2021**

### III. Executive Summary

The King County Executive oversees the secure detention facility located within the Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center (PHCCFJC) at the request of Superior Court, which has statutory authority for juvenile detention under state law.<sup>1</sup> Under the county executive, the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention’s (DAJD) Juvenile Division is responsible for the care and custody of all youth in detention. The DAJD Juvenile Division is committed to providing quality, innovative, and comprehensive services to youth, families, and their communities.<sup>2</sup>

Between the years of 2010 and 2020, the average number of youth in secure detention per day declined by 70 percent, from a daily population of 89 to 27 youth. A variety of initiatives have collectively contributed to this reduction, including legal system reform efforts by community members and system stakeholders. While King County now has one of the lowest detention rates in the State of Washington,<sup>3</sup> youth of color continue to be overrepresented in secure detention.

In June 2020, the King County Executive committed to converting youth detention units at the Children and Family Justice Center to other uses no later than 2025, stating, “Phasing out centralized youth detention is no longer a goal in the far distance. We have made extraordinary progress and we have evolved to believe that even more can be done.”

As called for by [Ordinance 19210](#), and [Ordinance 19307](#), this report outlines the process and timeline that will be utilized by the Executive to select the external consultants to help guide this historic initiative, in partnership with community. Consultants must bring exceptional skills and expertise to this work, particularly expert knowledge of juvenile legal system reform and experience assisting jurisdictions to challenge traditional and longstanding juvenile detention practices. Demonstrable experience working with community stakeholders, particularly those from historically marginalized communities and those who have experienced the juvenile legal system, are essential. They must also understand and reflect King County’s commitment to becoming an anti-racist, pro-equity organization. Ultimately, community and system stakeholders will play a key role in shaping the final selection criteria for the team of external consultants.

To set the stage for gathering critical input from community stakeholders about the strategic planning process and selection of consultants, initial outreach has started by DAJD. Since fall of 2020, collaborative conversations have been held with community-based service providers, advocates who work with youth referred to the legal system, elected officials, legal system representatives, and youth currently detained in King County. One of the critical next steps in the strategic planning process is to establish an advisory board that will provide an authentic path for community to be involved in each step of the process, including in the selection of the external consultants. The advisory committee will provide oversight and guidance throughout the duration of the strategic planning process and implementation.

The scope of work for the selected consultants will include the development of a clear path to close the juvenile detention facility located within the PHCCFJC by 2025, including how to serve those youth who would otherwise be referred to secure detention. It will also identify recommendations for the

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 13.20.010 ([LINK](#))

<sup>2</sup> About King County Juvenile Detention ([LINK](#))

<sup>3</sup> Washington State 2019 Juvenile Detention Annual Report ([LINK](#))

repurposing and reuse of the juvenile detention facility to meet community-identified needs. Required written deliverables will include a detailed project plan to achieve these objectives.

This report also includes a project plan with key milestones that lead toward the Executive’s goal of closing the juvenile detention facility within the PHCCFJC by 2025 and reinvesting in community programs, services, and interventions that serve the needs of youth who would otherwise be at risk of juvenile detention. The following table outlines the projected timeline to achieve key milestones during the four phases of the project.

<b>PHCCFJC Strategic Planning Key Project Milestones: Phase 1</b> <i>Information and dates subject to change</i>	<b>Projected Timeline</b> <i>Dates shown are estimated completion dates</i>
Hire and on board project manager	October 31
Develop public facing communication approach (website) and initial content about the process and timeline	November 30
Identify PHCCFJC Strategic Planning Advisory Committee	December 31
Convene first meeting of the PHCCFJC Strategic Planning Advisory Committee; determine meeting cadence	January 30, 2022
Develop materials for competitive process with Committee	March 1
Open competitive process for consultant	March 30
Consultant selection process	April 1-30
Consultant Advisory Committee work sessions	
Consultant conducts initial key stakeholder interviews	May 1-31
Review consultant project plan, communication plan, outreach plan with Advisory Committee; revise as needed	
Develop and submit Proviso response to the Council	June 30
Conduct first phase of community engagement	July 2022– January 2023
<b>Key Project Milestones: Phase 2</b>	January – May 2023
Review and synthesize community input with Advisory Committee and community	
Develop options	
Conduct second phase of community engagement	
Review options with community	
Revise options with Advisory Committee	
<b>Key Project Milestones: Phase 3</b>	May – September 2023
Develop final report & recommendations	
Conduct third phase of community engagement	
Finalize report & recommendations	
Submit final report to community and stakeholders	
<b>Key Project Milestones: Phase 4</b>	2024
Implementation of recommendations & actions (subject to labor negotiations)	

The PHCCFJC Strategic Planning Project and its focus on closing the juvenile detention facility reflect the commitment of King County to break the cycle of disenfranchisement, suffering, and reliance on incarceration, while reinvesting in community-based alternatives that are therapeutic, trauma-informed, youth and family centered.

### **III. Executive Summary**

The King County Executive oversees the secure detention facility located within the Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center at the request of Superior Court, which has statutory authority for juvenile detention under state law.<sup>1</sup> Under the County Executive, the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention’s (DAJD) Juvenile Division is responsible for the care and custody of all youth in detention. The DAJD Juvenile Division is committed to providing quality, innovative, and comprehensive services to youth, families, and their communities.<sup>2</sup>

In July 2020, the King County Executive committed to converting youth detention units at the Children and Family Justice Center to other uses no later than 2025, stating, “phasing out centralized youth detention is no longer a goal in the far distance. We have made extraordinary progress and we have evolved to believe that even more can be done.”

Between the years of 2010 and 2021, the average number of youth in secure detention per day declined by 75 percent, from a daily population of 89 to 22 youth.<sup>3</sup> A variety of initiatives have collectively contributed to this reduction, including legal system reform efforts by community members and systems partners. Youth of color continue to be overrepresented in secure detention despite the reduction in the overall daily population.<sup>4</sup>

As called for by [Ordinance 19210](#) and [Ordinance 19307](#), this report is the second Proviso response submitted to the King County Council on the strategic planning effort to close the youth detention facility at the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CFJC) by 2025 and repurpose it for other community-identified uses. The Executive submitted the first Proviso report on September 30, 2021.

The September 2021 report included an overview of key historical context relative to the strategic planning work and documented previous and ongoing efforts to reduce the number of young people in detention over the past two decades.<sup>5</sup> The September 2021 report identified previous engagement with interested parties and outlined an approach for soliciting project consultants for this effort.

#### **Key Changes Since September 2021**

The strategic planning approach has progressed and evolved since the September 2021 report. It is clear that closing the County’s youth detention facility requires a holistic continuum of community-based alternatives to address the complex needs of young people who would otherwise be in detention. Based on feedback from community and input from interdepartmental staff, management of this strategic planning project is planned to shift to the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) to enable a holistic continuum of community-based alternatives and services for youth and their families. DCHS will lead the strategic planning effort and DAJD will remain a closely involved partner, continuing to bring its expertise and knowledge to the strategic planning work.

<sup>1</sup> RCW 13.20.010 [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> King County Juvenile Detention [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> King County DAJD Detention and Alternatives Statistical Reports [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> Zero Youth Detention Data Dashboard [\[LINK\]](#).

<sup>5</sup> These efforts include the Road Map to Zero Youth Detention [\[LINK\]](#), Restorative Community Pathways [\[LINK\]](#), and the efforts led by Zero Youth Detention to curb gun violence in the region. These include Regional Community Safety and Well-Being Plan [\[LINK\]](#), Regional Peacekeepers King County [\[LINK\]](#), and Beloved King County [\[LINK\]](#).

In addition, the project phases are modified to reflect additional planning since the September 2021 report, delineating between the necessary components of the plan, and clearly communicating the phases to interested parties. A fifth phase, “transition to closure,” was added to reflect the need for transition planning and implementation in phase 4 before successful closure can occur. The modifications to the phases have not impacted the sequence or composition of project milestones.

Utilizing a sole-source waiver, the County has contracted with the W. Haywood Burns Institute (Burns Institute) as the initial project consultant.<sup>6</sup> Extensive research, conversations with national experts, and planning efforts led the project staff to identify the Burns Institute as the only organization with the experience, expertise, and capacity to execute the strategic planning project in a jurisdiction of this size. It is expected that further consulting resources will be necessary, particularly consultants with specific local knowledge and experience.

The project’s Advisory Committee, comprised of 14 community representatives, impacted young people and families, and systems partners, guides and shapes the project.<sup>7</sup> The first Advisory Committee meeting occurred in March 2022; the committee continues to meet every other week.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, the Advisory Committee will create the recommendations to successfully close the youth detention facility and repurpose the space, which will be informed by significant community engagement with impacted young people and families.

As called for by the King County Council, this report outlines the proposed community engagement process for centering young people and their families who have lived experience in the youth legal system. Project staff, the Burns Institute, and the Advisory Committee are designing a multifaceted community engagement approach with several avenues for impacted young people, families, and communities to participate in and inform the strategic planning project. Subcommittees will be established to focus on specific topics. Because these subcommittees will be comprised of more individuals than the Advisory Committee alone, it is another avenue for community participation. It is expected that the subcommittees will expand the number and diversity of organizations and community members who can directly inform the plan.

Another critical avenue for engagement will be community engagement activities intentionally designed to connect with impacted young people and their families. These engagement activities will include listening circles, focus groups, and interviews, among other approaches, to hear from community and interested parties, planned to take place in phase 2, starting in July 2022 to December 2022. Project staff will work with the Burns Institute and the Advisory Committee to design and host engagement activities. The County will fund local community organizations working with impacted young people and families to lead engagement activities. Project staff will synthesize and share the findings from the engagement activities with the participants of those activities, the Advisory Committee, and members of the public via the project website.

<sup>6</sup> The Burns Institute is a Black-led, national nonprofit with a diverse team working to transform the administration of justice.

<sup>7</sup> Out of the current 14 members, seven members represent community perspectives and impacted communities, including three representatives under 25 years old and one parent. Recruitment is underway for additional community members including impacted young people and family members.

<sup>8</sup> The Advisory Committee’s meeting agendas, slides, and notes are posted to the project website [\[LINK\]](#).

Findings from the community-centered engagement process will inform the Advisory Committee’s recommendations. Beginning in early 2023, the community engagement activities will shift to solicit input on engagement findings and proposed strategies. Project staff, the Burns Institute, and local community organizations will plan community town halls to share findings from the community engagement activities from phase 2 and solicit input from community members on the Advisory Committee’s draft recommendations. The community town halls will facilitate broader engagement from members of the public in addition to impacted populations, and will be planned throughout the region to ensure adequate geographic engagement. Additional engagement activities, such as strategy development workshops and online surveys, may be implemented to solicit further collaboration with impacted populations and members of the public.

With support from project staff and the Burns Institute, the Advisory Committee will then finalize the recommendations and options. The Executive will review the final report developed by the project staff and the Burns Institute and move forward on actions needed to implement the recommendations in partnership with the King County Council. Transition planning and implementation will take place in phase 4. A fifth phase has been added to the milestones since transmittal of the September 2021 report. The added Phase 5 includes transition to closure by 2025.

This report also includes a project plan with key milestones that contribute to the Executive’s goal of closing the youth detention facility and reinvesting in a continuum of community-based alternatives needed to support youth who would otherwise be in detention. The following table outlines the projected timeline to achieve important milestones during the five phases of the project.

<b>Key Milestones</b> <i>Information and dates subject to change</i>	<b>Estimated completion dates</b>
<b>Phase 1: Project Roll-Out (January – June 2022)</b>	
Establish composition of Advisory Committee and recruit members	Feb. 2022
Procure strategic project support and facilitation support for the Advisory Committee	Feb. 2022
Convene Advisory Committee	March 2022
Complete community mapping	June 2022
Submit Proviso response to Council	June 2022
<b>Phase 2: Community Listening and Learning (July – December 2022)</b>	
Launch engagement activities for impacted young people and families	July 1, 2022
Launch funding opportunity for local community organizations to design and host engagement activities.	July 31, 2022
Launch subcommittees	July 31, 2022
Synthesize findings and report on community engagement activities in July, August, and September 2022. Adjust activities as needed.	Sept. 30, 2022
Design, plan, and identify dates for community townhalls for early 2023.	Dec. 15, 2022
Complete Phase 2 community engagement activities.	Dec. 15, 2022
Synthesize findings and report on community engagement activities in October, November, and December 2022.	Dec. 31, 2022
<b>Phase 3: Community Strategy Development (January – September 2023)</b>	
<b>Review synthesized community input from engagement findings with the Advisory Committee and subcommittees.</b>	Jan. 31, 2023
Develop draft recommendations framework with the Advisory Committee.	March 1, 2023
Host community engagement to get feedback on draft recommendations framework.	April 30, 2023
Synthesize and review feedback from community engagement with the Advisory Committee.	May 15, 2023

Incorporate community feedback into draft recommendations framework and develop detailed recommendations with the Advisory Committee.	June 30, 2023
Finalize recommendations and review final report with Advisory Committee.	July 31, 2023
Review final recommendations and final report internally.	Aug. 31, 2023
Submit final report to the Executive, community, and interested parties.	Sept. 30, 2023
<b>Phase 4: Transition Planning and Preparation (October 2023 to 2024)</b>	
Convene transition teams and create transition plans for the recommendations.	Dec. 31, 2023
Identify and formulate additional budget requests for 25-26 budget in transition plans	Jan. 30, 2024
Implementation of transition plans. Continued engagement with impacted communities to get feedback on the implementation. Create modifications as needed to adjust to needs.	Dec. 2024
<b>NEW - Phase 5: Transition to Closure (2025)</b>	
Continued implementation of transition plans.	Dec. 2025

Finally, the County’s 2020 adopted budget included a Proviso directing the King County Facilities and Management Division (FMD), in coordination with the Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ) to develop and propose uses and ownership structures of the County-owned land at 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and East Alder Street (Alder Complex). This land is adjacent to the CFJC where the detention facility is located. The Proviso requires FMD to conduct a community-driven process to propose uses and ownership of the undeveloped parcels of land at the Alder Complex, centering adults and youth impacted by the criminal legal system in the process; and submit a report detailing the community engagement process and outcomes of the process to the Council.<sup>9</sup> The project team is coordinating outreach and community engagement across both projects in partnership with FMD. This coordination enables the County to leverage engagement findings and ensure that land-use and repurposing recommendations and options are aligned and informed by one another.

<sup>9</sup> Ordinance 19210 [\[LINK\]](#).

## Appendix C:

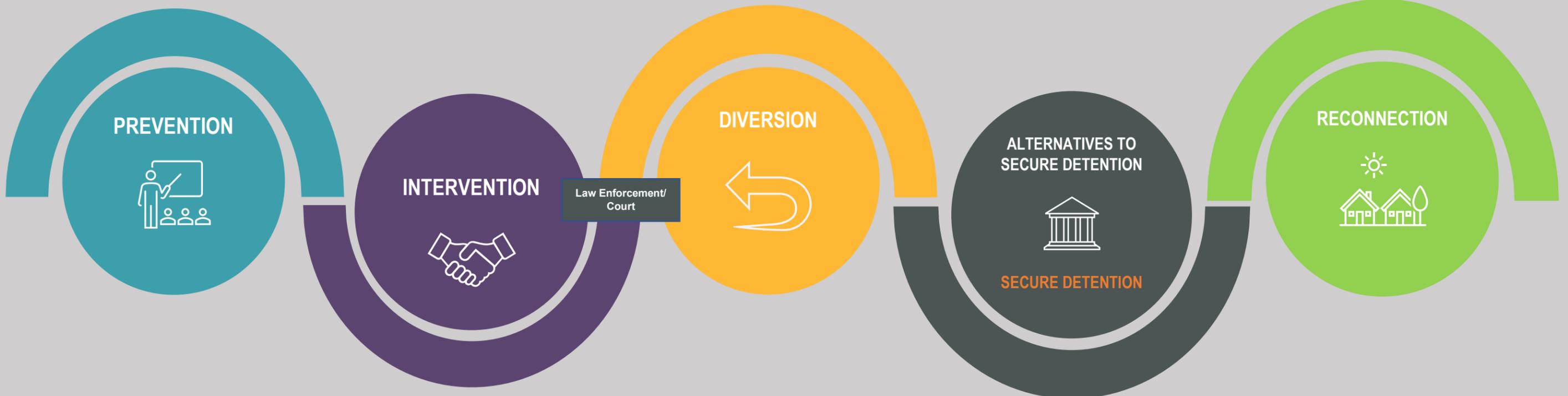
## Care and Closure Advisory Committee

<b>Position</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Community partner	Benjamin Danielson	Allies for Healthier Systems for Health and Abundance in Youth (AHSHAY)
Community partner	Gloria Hoxsie	Children and Youth Advisory Board
Systems partner	Jason Smith	Juvenile Detention Guild
Systems partner	Jimmy Hung	Prosecuting Attorney's Office
Systems partner	Katherine Hurley	Department of Public Defense
Systems partner	Melinda Young	Juvenile Court
Community partner	Noah Collier	Student and young person impacted by the youth legal system
Community partner	Paulette Makela	Parent impacted by the youth legal system
Systems partner	Paul Daniels	Juvenile Court Services
Systems partner	Patrick Oishi	Superior Court
Community partner	Roman Nova	Artist and young person impacted by the youth legal system
Community partner	Tahonishi Bell	Multi-Service Center
Community partner	Rhea Yo	Legal Counsel for Youth and Children
Systems partner	Wendell Shirley	King County Sheriff and Police Chiefs Association

\* This list of Advisory Committee members is current as of June 1, 2023.



**YOUTH CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM:**  
**VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLBEING CONTINUUM**





# VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLBEING CONTINUUM: DEFINITIONS

## Promotion

Supporting the development of factors that promote well-being and determinants of health, allowing people to thrive and enjoy a positive development.

## PROMOTION

## Intervention

Efforts that change knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors after a problem has been identified. These efforts minimize exposure to harm and/or systems involvement and provide connection to community supports.

## Secure Detention

Secure juvenile detention or incarceration refers to a county-operated facility for detaining youth while awaiting completion of legal proceedings or serving sentences ordered by the juvenile or the adult court. Alternatives to Secure Detention refers to electronic home monitoring.

## PREVENTION



## Prevention

Efforts that support the development of factors that help protect and promote wellbeing, prevent problems before they happen, and stop (or protect) youth from acute risk of harm and/or systems involvement.

## INTERVENTION



Law Enforcement/  
Court

## DIVERSION



## Diversion

Diversion directs youths who commit offenses away from more formal juvenile legal system involvement and helps address their specific needs. For the purposes of the continuum outlined above, diversion includes programs that divert system-involved youth from secure detention, after law enforcement involvement.

Pre-filing diversion programs divert youth before criminal charges are filed against them in juvenile court. Post-filing diversion programs divert youth after criminal charges are filed by the Prosecutor Attorney's Office.

## ALTERNATIVES TO SECURE DETENTION



## SECURE DETENTION

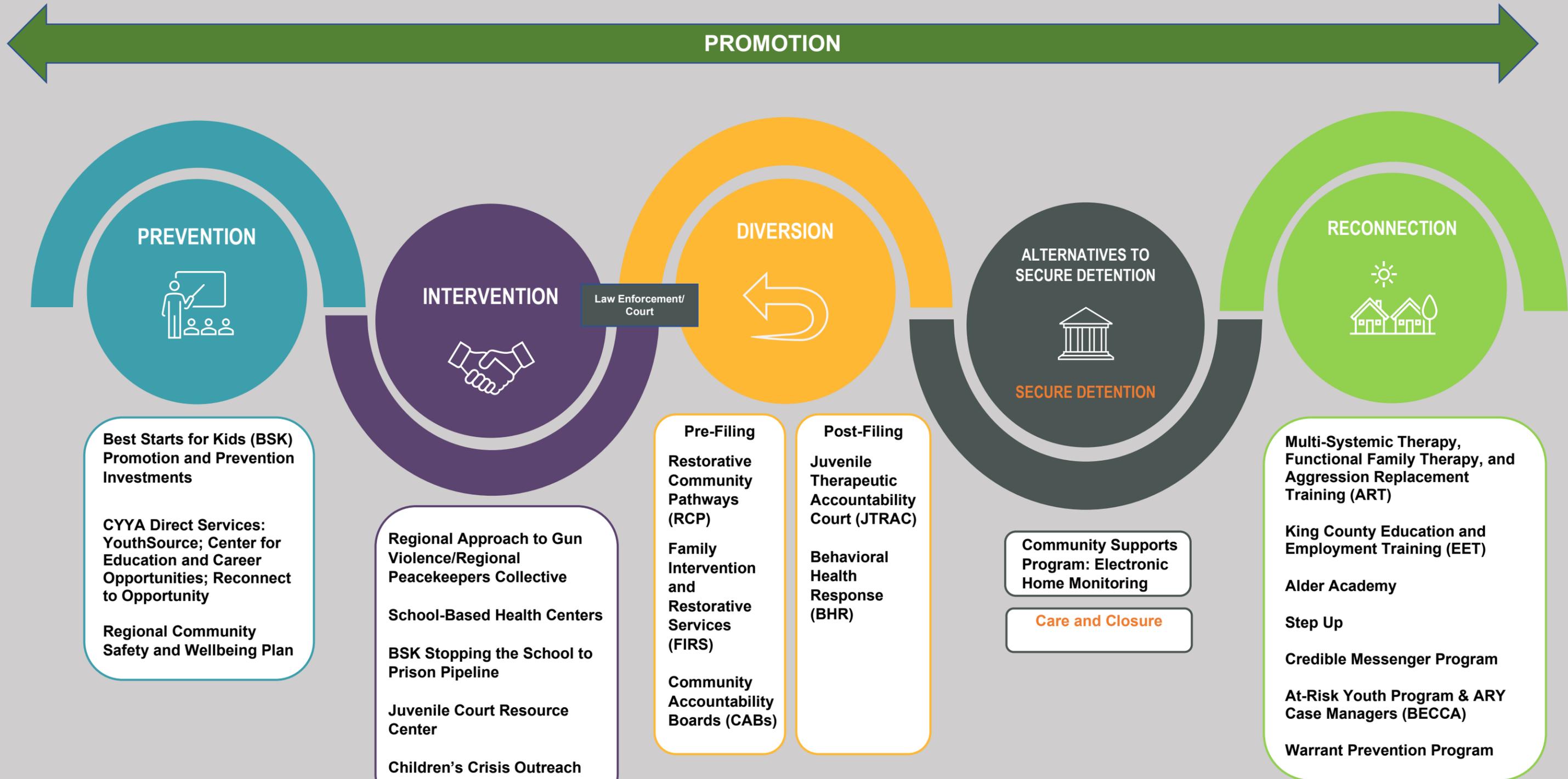
## RECONNECTION



## Reconnection

Efforts that help youth re-engage with their communities after they leave confinement, enable youth to assume responsibility for their actions, prevent any further harm or future systems involvement, and promote wellbeing.

**VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLBEING CONTINUUM:**  
**YOUTH PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES**



April 2023

## Summary of Care & Closure Listening Sessions with Youth in Detention

### Overview

Between November 2022 and April 2023, King County hosted listening sessions with young people in secure youth detention to capture critical feedback on what is needed to expand community-based alternatives that promote youth healing, accountability, and community safety. King County hosted 12 one-hour listening sessions with a total of 33 unique young people in detention. Youth in each living hall participated for two weeks at a time, and DCHS gave participating youth snacks and a \$50 VISA cash-value gift card in their personal belongings in appreciation for their time and input. See the Appendix on page 9 for more information about the structure of the listening sessions.

### Summary

Youth in detention were honest and open about what they need to be supported and repair harm in their communities. As mostly youth of color, the youth were keenly aware of how systemic racism, historic disinvestment, and community violence shape their lives and their involvement in the youth legal system. They wanted to learn from their mistakes, be held accountable, and have opportunities to grow and succeed. Most of them believed that the support they needed could be provided outside of the youth detention center and in their communities. Below is a summary of what the youth identified.

### Youth-identified elements needed to support youth healing, accountability, and community safety:

- Spaces and opportunities other than detention to reflect on mistakes made, get resources to address basic needs, be held accountable, and repair harm through actions;
- Greater structure and stability;
- Consistent and supportive adults, especially mentors with similar lived experiences;
- Transformation and stabilization of their home environments;
- Greater connection to and awareness of supportive community-based programs and resources;
- Alternative education opportunities and programs to support educational and employment goals;
- Support for their families, including therapy, job opportunities, and basic needs support;
- Individualized goal setting and resources to achieve their unique goals and address their needs;
- Positive activities to keep them engaged and occupied, including opportunities to make money, such as jobs and internships, sports, and art and music programs;
- Opportunities to mentor younger youth and prevent them from being involved in the legal system;
- While detention still exists, greater programming to teach life skills and connect them to community resources, mentors, and transition support.

## Findings

### I. Young people want structure, positive adults and mentors with shared experiences, basic needs support for them and their families, and pathways to opportunity.

**Young people in detention want structure and stability.** Many youth shared that they had general instability in their households growing up, including a lack of basic needs, experience with the child welfare system or foster care, gang involvement, community violence, and negative experiences or disconnections with the education system. Young people identified several factors that helped them make positive decisions: sports and afterschool programs; encouraging teachers or coaches who elevated their self-esteem and saw them as individuals with potential; and extra support like tutoring. Many reflected that the COVID-19 pandemic was difficult because their normal structures of school, sports, and afterschool activities were interrupted, and they did not have their usual support networks.

Some youth identified that they will need structure to make positive choices in the future. One young person defined the structure as predictability: when “you know what you are doing the day before: you know where you are eating, you know where you are sleeping...” Another young person defined it as a function of time: “if you are already doing something, you can’t do something bad; you need something to occupy your time.” Another young person defined structure as a purpose: “people need a reason to stop what they are doing.” Several young people reflected that detention provides structure and a routine, and their time in detention can be the first time they have real structure. One young person thought that detention can provide some structure and stability but also believed that support can exist in other places in their community.

Young people shared that it is not enough to just fill their time and schedules to create structure. Several youth highlighted that they need support from caring adults in their lives to help them make positive choices. When asked about who has provided structure and stability in their lives, the young people highlighted a variety of people: their mothers and their older siblings, their extended family such as aunts and grandmothers, mentors including from the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, and adults in their community and schools including teachers and coaches. Others mentioned that they did not have anyone who provided that stability, and still others mentioned that they looked to their friends or gangs to provide that support and stability.

**Young people in detention want consistent, positive, and strong mentors with similar lived experiences.** When describing ideal mentors, they highlighted the need for shared lived experiences or backgrounds, consistency and reliability, and positive communication. They highlighted the need for mentors both in detention and detention to help the young person navigate challenges, overcome negative peer pressure, or resist boredom. One youth said: “I want someone who has been through it, who has served time... I am not going to listen to you if you haven’t.” They stressed that the connection should be as consistent as possible; one group said they would like to connect with a mentor every day, even if the engagement is brief such as a check-in over text. Several young people shared their own previous disappointment and loss of trust when previous mentors abruptly stopped meeting with them or when they were switched to another mentor without any notice.

Young people in detention also wanted to give back to their community and help mentor to prevent other youth like them from getting involved in the legal system. One group of older boys reflected on the desire to mentor younger kids and highlighted that they have already many skills needed to be

effective mentors. They shared that they had lived experience, good listening skills, positive encouragement, and empathy, and they would be consistently there for the younger people to help them. They pointed out, however, that they would need training and professional development to help gain additional skills like patience or anger management. One youth said they “just want to see kids like me do better than I did growing up. I want them to do something else and do better than other people.” They believed young people should begin to have mentors as early as 10 years old to ensure they feel supported and to prevent their involvement in the youth legal system.

**Young people in detention want their environments and conditions to be transformed and stabilized to prevent their future involvement in the legal system.** The young people were quick to point out that it does not matter what happens in detention if they are put back into the same situation and face the same challenges that they faced before. They urged broad support is needed – like job training and employment, consistent and intensive mental health support, substance use disorder treatment, connection to supportive and alternative education opportunities, community-based programs to develop life skills such as budgeting, and incentives for maintaining positive behavior – to support them as they worked to change their mindset and make positive decisions.

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*“None of us woke up and wanted to do this and be here. Our parents are crucial: either they were too forceful and abusive or did not have enough structure... we are a product of our environment and the way we are raised.”*

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When asked about counseling support, one group of young people shared that they would like more consistent counseling such as once a week. One youth reflected on their own experience in intensive behavioral health treatment facilities and said that while that support is important, those facilities are not themselves rehabilitative and often provide only short-term solutions. They wanted greater connection and training across providers to weave support for youth, whether they are receiving supports while they live at home, in an alternative housing placement, or in a specialized facility.

Notably, many youth highlighted the importance of having a job and making money. They shared the challenges of getting a job at 14 years old or 15 years old, and they shared that many of them want to make money to support their families that might be struggling. One youth shared: “for a lot of kids, they get into this life because they want to get some money; to get a job, you have to be 16 years old; we need jobs or apprenticeships.” Many youth were concerned about the future barriers they may face if they have a criminal record. Several young people wanted to pursue trade school and self-employment because of those future barriers, but they stressed they need training to set them up for success.

**Young people want their families to be supported more while they are in the legal system.** Youth want to make sure that parents and family members do not feel punished or shamed while they are involved in the youth legal system. One youth said: we should have “a place where parents don’t feel shame and guilt for what happened to me; [where we] create opportunities for hanging out with parents and kids and have bonding time like art classes, just ways to have fun.” Several young people shared that their parents and families struggled with financial stability and faced their own challenges including previous and current involvement in the legal system, unemployment, and housing instability. The young people recognized that these issues were connected with each other. One youth shared that they were

homeless and lived in a car with their mother who was unable to find a job because of her own involvement in the legal system, and they felt like they needed to support their family from a young age.

## II. Young people believe alternatives to secure youth detention can provide greater youth healing, accountability, and community safety.

Many young people identified the need for opportunities and physical spaces other than detention for young people to go when they caused serious harm in their communities. They highlighted several elements that these alternative programs and places should focus on.

**First, young people in detention want to connect with and see their families more frequently.** Several young people shared that while they were in detention, they were only able to stay connected to their parents and not their younger siblings or their grandparents. Some youth pointed out, however, that not all young people have supportive families and sometimes their homes are not safe places. They shared that there needs to be additional supports and caring adults for those young people if they need it.

**Second, young people in detention want individualized goal setting, needs assessments, and support from caring adults to help achieve those goals and address their needs.** They shared that detention does not provide individual support or allow youth to pursue their own interests. Others focused on the opportunities for supportive programs, with one youth reflecting that “we should be doing something every day that leads you to being a better person.” Other young people pointed out that getting connected to resources would be the most important element. One group of young people shared that they want to be connected to a resource navigator regularly, at least once a month, to understand all the different resources they may need at any given time. They wanted to work with that person during their entire time in a program to make sure that the resources helped them.

**Third, young people in detention want these alternatives and resources to be available 24/7, barrier-free, and safe.** They pointed to public spaces like McDonald’s and Denny’s as places where they previously found that type of all-hours safety in the community. Some youth pointed out that more community centers are needed and should be barrier-free, especially for youth with previous involvement in the legal system, and cost-free. One group of young people discussed the possibility for more community centers throughout King County to be safe and neutral spaces for young people from the community to go and what they need, whether it be tutors, sports, or access to food. They believed the spaces would need to be neutral spaces where neighborhood conflict would not be tolerated. One youth said: “people need to feel safe; maybe you can bring boxing gloves instead of guns.”

**Fourth, young people in detention want trauma-informed and restorative programming that addresses their needs.** Several youth highlighted that too often, their offense (“the what”) is given greater importance than their needs (“the why”). They shared that when young people are responsible for harm, supportive adults should first try to understand what is going on. One youth said: “if you do have an issue, you should get into a program that works for you...The programs should focus on: how do you like to work? What do you want to do? What do you need?” Several young people highlighted more programs to support youth and their growth instead of detention. One youth said: “I want to do stuff to better myself; besides jail or downtime, I want things to help me grow; here [in detention] we just play games and wait and chill. I don’t learn anything.” Other youth highlighted skills-based programs such as anger management and intensive behavioral health supports.

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*“In here, [detention] makes you turn out worse. You never get right, you are always in trouble. You need to get right – you should be sent to a place to sit for a minute, but [it should be] some place that benefits you.”*

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**However, it is somewhat difficult for the young people to say specifics about what alternatives to detention might look like.** One youth said: “we need a place where people can make mistakes without getting punished for it.” Another youth said: “whatever it is—it shouldn’t be like this [detention]; everyone should be held accountable, but no one should be stuck here.” Another youth shared: “it should be secure, you still have to give time, and you still need be accountable.”

Several young people mentioned that other institutions, such as supportive and structured group homes or camps, might be better alternatives. These young people shared that they liked a small home environment with extra support of staff like counselors. They liked external structure that some group homes provided, including the expectation to go to school and participate in chores. However, some young people also mentioned that some group homes or camps were not as supportive as they wanted. One group discussed the idea of camps where youth could go. They discussed that it should not have concrete walls or detention officers, but rather counselors. Another youth reflected that if they had a camp, “kids would be a lot less aggravated” because they would be more active.

One group discussed the idea of step-down models where a young person would initially start in an intensive space like detention for a brief period to get connected to resources and then into the community with positive behavior. They thought that a young person should be able to move to a group home or go on electronic home monitoring (EHM) by setting personal goals and achieving milestones. If they made a mistake, the young person would not return to detention but would be supported to continue moving forward on their goals. One youth said “ [you should have] a good goal to have something to work through and work towards... Each privilege should be earned to rehabilitate you. It should start here and then when you participate in the activities, you look like you are being serious.”

### III. Young people envision opportunities for accountability and growth outside of detention.

Most young people defined accountability as being held responsible for the harm they created. They highlighted that it is “more than just saying sorry” and should include steps or actions made to address the issue. Many young people shared the importance of self-accountability and holding themselves accountable to make better decisions and address harm created. Several young people in one group shared that accountability is a situation to learn and grow to do something different in the future.

They also highlighted the importance of external accountability from people who care about them. Some young people pointed to people in their family, previous mentors, or coaches as people who have helped create that external accountability for them in the past. The youth shared they are more likely to want to be accountable if the environment is a supportive one where caring adults are encouraging them to take responsibility and do the work they need to do. One young person emphasized that accountability is about “respecting the person who you harmed and being in relationship with them and others” so they can see how you are addressing the issue. Another young person said that accountability comes from talking with someone, reflecting on the harm you caused, and owning up to that and making amends. They highlighted that it is difficult for that process to take place in detention where they are separated from the supports that they need.

Many young people shared the idea of different responses for different actions, although most of the young people did not think the response should be focused on punishment. While some youth focused on the consequences or punitive nature of the system, others stressed the importance of learning and opportunities to improve their behavior and decision-making. When discussing responses, most young people shared that responses should match the level of the harm that occurred. For example, hurting someone would require greater accountability and actions than damaging property.

Youth in detention felt differently about the use of secure youth detention. Several youth said that jail or detention would be the best response to a young person who seriously harmed another person, at least for some period of time, ranging from a few weeks to two years. However, other youth said that all young people, regardless of the offense they committed, should be able to access alternatives to secure youth detention. Others highlighted more nuances in their responses including the considerations of whether someone had disabilities, if the act was made in self-defense, and if the act was retributive because someone else was killed first. Later in the sessions, however, several of the same young people who identified jail as a response to serious harm shared that they did not believe that detention provides adequate accountability and agreed that accountability and addressing harm could and should exist outside of the detention facility.

**Many young people in detention believe detention does not provide adequate accountability and instead delays their personal growth.** Several young people said that they do not need to be locked up to deal with their behaviors and that being confined does not change behavior. One young person said: “We need a lot more than detention. Detention helps us with a routine, and that’s it. What else does it teach us?” Some young people expressed that detention deters future offenses only because that they would not want to be in detention again because it is too confining and such a negative experience. Some young people shared that because they are surrounded by young people who have caused serious harm, they cannot learn from positive peers and that the overall environment made it difficult to make good decisions.

Several young people highlighted that elements of detention help them be accountable because it allows them to take a break from their normal lives. They shared that being removed from their normal environment gives them a time to reflect and work towards being responsible for their actions. One youth shared that detention helped them changed their behavior, and another youth shared that it allowed them to think about their situation from a “third person” perspective. They said: “I write goals in my room, I pray, I take time to think about the big picture. I don’t have the same opportunities to take that time outside of detention.” Several young people shared that whether detention works to provide accountability depends entirely on the person and emphasized the importance of “self-accountability.”

Other young people said that detention may hold them accountable in the moment, but that it does not actually help them make better decisions or have better future outcomes. One youth said: “you don’t see a change in the future when you are in detention.” Another youth admitted that they would want someone to go to jail if they created serious harm, but that “jail doesn’t fix their mindset. Jail doesn’t do anything for you.” Another youth shared that: “you aren’t getting the help you need here” and instead “you think about everything in your cell, what you could have done better, sometimes you get the rage, and you get out of your cell, and you just want to fight.”

Many young people mentioned that time spent in detention should be shorter and that long stays in detention are not helpful. They reflected that detention is not designed to be a long-term facility and

does not have the adequate supports and programming for long stays. They thought the judges should speed up cases to allow for young people to get to their next step, either their return to community or their transfer to a state Juvenile Rehabilitation facility. They stated their time in detention was a “waste of time” because detention does not have programs needed for long stays. One youth said: “the process is so slow; your lawyers give you false hope about when change will happen; they will say that ‘we’ll consider house arrest’ but then nothing happens.”

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*“No disrespect to you all for coming here, but we should have stuff like this before you come to jail; this is all preventable. If I had these resources when I was 10 or 11 years old, I wouldn’t be here.”*

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IV. Young people distrust the legal system and do not believe it supports healing and restoration for youth or harmed community members.

**Young people in detention express the idea that the legal system sets young people of color up to fail.** One young person said: “they [the system] just let you out to see what you are going to and then they bring you back again. They don’t change anything that is happening with you.” One young person said that

the legal system does not really help people who are harmed; “it just hurts other people in the process.” Others doubted the sincerity and effectiveness of the system in helping young people involved in the legal system. They shared that help and resources came only after a young person was involved in the legal system. One youth shared that their mother had reached out repeated to get services to address their behavior before they were involved in the legal system but did not get connected to resources. The youth said: “they don’t help you until you are in deep.”

One group of youth in detention said that because greater attention is paid to you when you are in the legal system, you get in significant trouble for acting like a normal teenager. They mentioned things like being drug tested or getting into a fight on EHM and how those consequences are greater for youth on EHM than young people not involved in the youth legal system.

V. Youth in detention want more programming and opportunities to learn and grow while they are in detention.

**Every group of young people in detention highlighted the current need for more programs in detention focused on reflection, discussion, growth, and action.** They pointed to productively using their time in detention to help build the skills they need to be successful outside of detention and make positive decisions. Some young people wanted more activity-based programming for hobbies, personal strength development, life skill classes like budgeting and paying rent, gender-specific programming focused on positive youth development, and workforce development or technical training programs like cosmetology and coding.

Youth in detention also wanted more community providers in detention to connect with after they leave detention. They shared that it is difficult to get connected to community providers on the outside quickly and efficiently which can make it difficult for young people to avoid pressure from others to engage in negative behaviors. One person highlighted that they would need to be immediately engaged with community providers when they left detention to prevent them from coming back into detention.

Several young people highlighted that participation in programming should help benefit their cases and be used to show to the judge that they are making progress on goals. One youth said: “right now, we

have some programs that don't actually help your case." Another youth said: "every second in here should count towards your time... [we need] something that looks good on your behalf; the court only hears about the bad." Some youth highlighted that they would want programming to show their family how they were holding themselves accountable; one youth shared that they would be proud of showing their family that they are "doing all these things and trying to be better."

Some young people shared that they would rather be in a state facility like Echo Glen or Green Hill because those facilities have greater programming, open outdoor spaces, regular sports programs, and more freedom for youth there. Another young person reflected on that sentiment and shared that it "baffles" them that "people can't wait to go to juvenile prison from here because it is so much better than detention."

#### VI. Most of the young people in detention support the goals of expanding community-based alternatives and closing the youth detention center.

One youth said: "in here, it [detention] makes you turn out worse. You never get right, you are always in trouble. You need to get right – you should be sent to a place to sit for a minute, but [it should be] some place that benefits you." This young person and others like them believed that the services that detention provides can and should be provided in other settings that are more supportive and effective for youth healing, accountability, and community safety.

However, some young people were against the idea of closing the youth detention center. One young person said, "I am thankful I am here; this place saved me. I know a lot of people are saying that we deserve to be out, but we need to know that there are long-term consequences to those actions." This youth believed that detention needed to evolve to provide more programming focused on positive youth development. Several young people focused on the opportunity to make detention a better, more productive environment for young people rather than closing it.

Other young people shared that they thought closing detention was a good idea but that there needed to be something to replace detention with to support young people who needed a lot of help. Some young people mentioned that detention can sometimes be safer than other places youth have available to them including their homes or the streets. They were skeptical that some young people would be able to be held accountable without another physical place where a young person could go to calm down and get the resources they needed before they could back to their community.

## Appendix: Methodology

### *Structure of the listening sessions*

Before the listening sessions, DAJD staff met with the young people to invite them to participate in the session and shared information about the purpose of the sessions. DAJD staff also informed youth that participation was completely voluntary and the decision to participate or not participate would not impact their cases in court or their time in detention.

At the beginning of the first session, the group created ground rules such as “respect the speaker” and “what is said here, stays here.” DAJD staff asked youth to not share specifics about what led them to detention or matters pending in court. DCHS staff shared a summary of the session’s purpose, how youth’s input would be used to inform the project, and how everyone was interested in centering their input. Then the DCHS staff used a set of standardized questions to guide the conversation. When the session was almost finished, the DCHS staff summarized what was shared and asked what the group wanted to discuss in the next session.

At the beginning of the second session, DAJD staff and DCHS staff reviewed same set of ground rules from the first session and asked if the youth if they wanted to add any ground rules. DCHS staff asked youth to summarize what the group discussed in the previous session and then asked the remaining questions from the standardized list. Towards the end of the session, DCHS staff asked what else the youth wanted to talk about and share about their experiences of detention or the legal system.

### *Notes*

DCHS staff took handwritten notes during the listening sessions. No names were included as part of the notes. DCHS staff transcribed, coded, and analyzed the notes for themes.

### *Questions*

#### **1. Safety and resources category**

- a. What resources or support did your family use growing up?
- b. What resources or support would have been more helpful for your family?
- c. At what age, did you start to see yourself getting in trouble? What was happening in your life during that time?

#### **2. Accountability category**

- a. What do you think should happen when a teenager creates serious harm, like a violent robbery or hurts someone?
- b. Same question, but this time think about yourself: If a teenager creates serious harm, like conducts a violent robbery or hurts your family member, how would you want that person to be accountable for their actions?

#### **3. Future resources category**

- a. What resources and supports would help you make better decisions in the future?
- b. What supports do you have in place now to be safe in your community when you leave here?
- c. What resources and support will you need after you leave here to make sure you do not come back to detention or get involved in the legal system?

April 2023

## Summary of Interviews with Youth on Electronic Home Monitoring

### Overview

Beginning in November 2022, DCHS partnered with the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (Urban League) to solicit input and feedback from youth on Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM) on community-based alternatives needed to close the youth detention center.

Urban League manages the Community Supports program for youth on EHM and provides supportive services including case management, resource navigation, and mentoring. Urban League conducted 20 interviews with young people on EHM from December 2022 to March 2023 using semi-structured interview questions. DCHS met with Urban League staff to discuss the findings from the interviews and their reflections from working with youth. The findings from the interviews with the youth and the discussion with staff are below.

### Care & Closure Findings

- Most youth on EHM believe in expanding community-based programs for young people, including when a young person causes serious harm in their community. They mentioned home counseling, group homes, and community service. Most of the youth suggested that specific programs focused on teaching young people to make better decisions and community service will help youth give back to their community and take responsibility for their actions.
- Several youth highlighted that the response to harm should match the severity of the harm that was caused. One youth highlighted that youth who commit harm for the first time should be diverted to programs while youth who have repeated that harm should have a short stay in detention. About a quarter of the youth believed jail or detention is an appropriate response to very serious harm.
- When asked where youth should go if they do not have a home, most youth said that young people should live with family members, live with friends, or live in supportive group homes. Other youth said that they should go to supportive programs, facilities with trained people, foster care, shelter, camps, or alternative living arrangements.
- All young people on EHM believed youth should be held accountable for the harm they have caused. When discussing accountability, youth shared ideas about restoring what was damaged, taking responsibility for their actions, and connecting with a mentor or group of supportive people to encourage them to do better and provide guidance to make positive decisions in the future.
- Most youth thought that effective ways of creating accountability including making amends for the harm caused and focusing on rehabilitation, restoration, and community involvement. Young people also highlighted the importance of having supportive people around them to help them do better. Some youth also noted that responses should be based on the severity of the harm caused.
- Youth on EHM wanted more job opportunities, sports camps, trade schools, mental health services, and mentoring programs. Nearly all the youth emphasized the importance of having a mentor with shared lived experiences. The youth also expressed a desire for more facilities in the community, such as supportive group homes and community centers, or programs that help young people with their specific needs and challenges, with a focus on culturally specific resources for youth of color. Several youth mentioned Urban League as a specific provider.

- When reflecting on what resources they and their families need to be successful, youth recommended existing services such as the Urban League, mental health services and counseling, and job opportunities. They suggested more opportunities for youth to engage in, such as basketball camps and mentorship programs. Some youth expressed their need for positive male figures or consistent mentors to work with them and their family. Some youth emphasized the importance of personal responsibility and mindset change before accepting resources and services.
- Youth on EHM highlighted mostly negative experiences in detention. Many youth expressed frustration with the criminal legal system and the lack of respect they felt in it, including a lack of mental health support and adequate nutrition while in detention. Several youth also shared that they felt like animals in a cage while on EHM; one youth said they feel like they are “just stuck in a box”. Another youth said that “[EHM] plays with your mental health... it’s like a responsibility test – to see if you can hold yourself accountable.”
- Youth on EHM shared that they wanted more opportunities to mentor and engage with younger kids. The youth wanted other kids to know that being a part of the system can change one's life and is not worth it.

#### EHM Program Findings

- Youth on EHM also shared ideas on how to improve the EHM program. When asked about ways that the EHM program could better support young people on EHM, many of the youth wanted more freedom and time to be outside of the house. Some youth wanted improved ways for getting passes such as scheduled times or easier processes. Other youth highlighted more supportive mental health services and job opportunities to learn skills and trades. Some youth also mentioned that staff should be more mindful of their time and not take away from their free time. There was a general sentiment that the restrictions placed on them should be loosened when they demonstrate positive behavior, particularly for those who did not commit serious offenses.
- When asked about ways that the EHM program could better support parents and family members, most youth wanted more freedom and time outside of the house. Many of the youth expressed frustration with being confined to their homes and suggested that they and their families should have more opportunities to engage in positive activities outside of the house. Several youth mentioned the importance of mental health services, both for themselves and their families. Most youth mentioned that EHM and its restrictions have a negative impact on their parents and family members. One youth said: “parents shouldn’t have to stop their life because of EHM” and another said: “I would make sure parents have more freedom as well by not keeping them tied down at home.” Some youth shared that their families needed more resources and support, and others recommended that court staff involved in the process should communicate more effectively with families.

#### Urban League Staff Discussion

- Urban League staff shared that although the interviews provided helpful information, future engagement with the youth on EHM should focus more on broader conversations rather than asking specific questions. The staff shared that the youth had difficulty answering the questions, especially if they were recently put on EHM, but they still had more to say. Staff wanted to make the questions easier to understand and give the youth more time to transition to EHM before interviewing them. Staff also wanted to give the youth some time to process the situation and let some time settle in

before the interviews. They also wanted to include other youth that get off EHM in the interview process.

- The staff suggested that future engagement could involve focus groups or round table conversations with the young people on EHM, allowing them to design the questions and direct the conversations. Staff also highlighted the importance of opportunities for youth on EHM to mentor and support each other through the process. The staff noted that youth are eager to give back to their communities and help other youth avoid detention and EHM, and peer mentorship and supportive conversations could be valuable for leadership development of those youth.
- Staff emphasized the significant strain that EHM has on the family and how it restricts family members as well as the youth. Staff also highlighted for these young people on EHM including greater parent support, more consistent mentorship opportunities and wraparound resources, and more group opportunities for youth and families on EHM. Staff also shared that the youth need resources longer than just the duration of the program.
- When asked how they would improve the program, staff shared that they would change the size and appearance of the ankle monitor, increase opportunities outside of the home for youth and families to spend time together, create a step-down model for positive behavior, and celebrate when youth get off EHM.
- Staff also wanted greater coordination with the court, including regular meetings with the Juvenile Probation Counselor, Department of Public Defense attorney, and Alternatives to Secure Detention team. They thought there could be an initial meeting where these partners, the youth, and the family would create a goal plan for each youth, allowing them to express their needs and concerns. Then there could be a monthly meeting with the same group to discuss and review the family's progress and the safety plan. Greater coordination and connection would help build trust, increase coordination, and create quicker responses when issues arise with the young person.
- Staff also highlighted how they would like to have more connection with and work with youth while they are in detention to help them prepare for the transition. They shared that greater connection would be beneficial to youth coming out of detention and help them establish a plan before their hearing and being placed on EHM.
- Staff also wanted to have a greater presence in the courtroom and support the family in the courtroom during their hearings. They thought this additional support would providing updates, speaking about their progress, and making any adjustments.
- Staff highlighted that EHM cases have increased. While they would prefer to have a caseload of 10-15 young people that they are able to wrap around more effectively, they currently had between 20-30 young people on their caseloads.

May 2023  
Version 1



## Care & Closure Impacted Community Engagement Summaries

King County understands the importance of community feedback and partnerships. The written feedback below on community-based alternatives serves as a record of conversations to date.

The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) partnered with eight community organizations to engage young people, parents, and communities most impacted by the juvenile criminal legal system to identify community-based alternatives needed to support youth healing, accountability, and community safety and close the youth detention center.

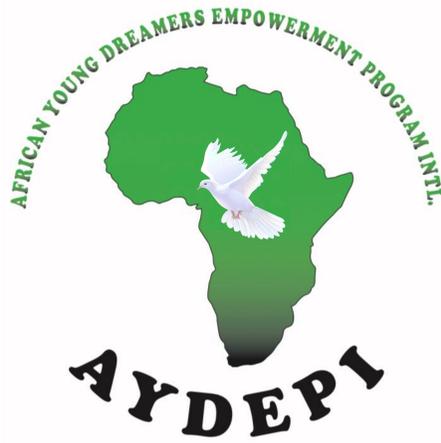
Between January and March 2023, the community partners hosted more than 50 activities and engaged more than 900 impacted youth, family members, and community members.

This document contains the summaries of findings from the community partners below:

- African Young Dreamers Empowerment Program International (AYDEPI)
- CHOOSE 180
- El Centro de la Raza
- Glover Empower Mentoring
- Pro Se Potential
- Somali Family Safety Task Force
- Victim Support Services
- Your Money Matters Mentoring

For more information on Care & Closure, visit the project website here: <https://publicinput.com/careandclosure>.

If your organization works with impacted communities and you'd like to elevate their voices in the Care & Closure project, please contact with Jawara McDuffie ([jmcduffie@kingcounty.gov](mailto:jmcduffie@kingcounty.gov)) to discuss engagement opportunities.



# AYDEPI REPORT ON ENDING YOUTH DETENTION IN KING COUNTY



March 2023

# Summary of Findings Report

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## 1: OVERVIEW OF AYDEPI

African Young Dreamers Empowerment Program International (AYDEPI) is a youth-led, not-for-profit organization located at Federal Way, Washington. AYDEPI aims to Enrich, Enhance & Empower the lives of African Descendants based in Washington State.

### Mission

AYDEPI's mission lies in creating sustainable measures to build resilience in vulnerable African, African/American Youth through holistic investment. Our key areas of operation are education, socio-economic interventions, mental health awareness, substance abuse and prevention, suicide prevention, crime, homelessness, among other psychosocial factors that significantly affect African, African/American Youth in Washington State.



Volunteers posing by an AYDEPI banner

### Goals

In 2019, we took an in-depth look at the African, African/American communities in Washington and conducted a need assessment on youth between 14 and 25 years. The issues the youth raised most included mental health, drug & alcohol abuse, suicide, engagement in gang groups, fear, youth incarceration and low or no resources to improve their lives. We mapped out a plan to include vulnerable youth, get their perspective on which areas they needed to change, and involve them in advocating for their rights.

## 2: METHODOLOGY

AYDEPI undertook some engagement activities to gather the local community's views on the closure of the juvenile detention center and seek holistic solutions to juvenile crime and incarceration. AYDEPI community Youth Leaders designed, programmed and implemented the surveys in different African Native Languages. The methods used to collect data included:

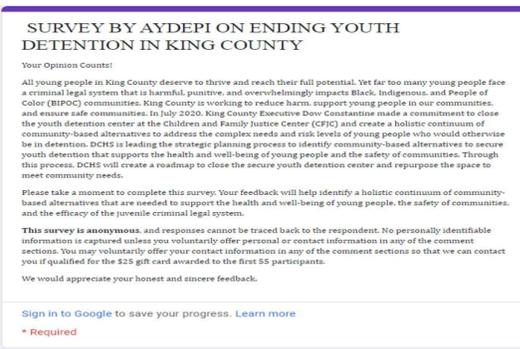
- Two focus groups with community leaders and youth;
- Three youth-led video/podcast discussions;
- An online survey available in five languages, including four different native African languages;
- One-on-one interviews with victims harmed by young people in juvenile detention centers;
- One community meeting on findings.



AYDEPI focus group sessions with community leaders and youth leaders (Photo: AYDEPI)



A screengrab from a youth-only broadcast/podcast on the topic of juvenile incarceration (left) and a screenshot of the online survey.



## Participant Details

AYDEPI engaged 376 participants across all of their engagement activities. Nearly all the participants in the focus groups and the surveys identified as Black or African/American.

	Focus Group Participants	Final reporting Participants	Interviews with victims	Survey Participants	Total
<b>Age</b>					
14-17	1	3		29	33
18-25	9	9	4	141	163
25+	18	18		127	163
Preferred not to say				17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>376</b>

AYDEPI mainly used social media, including the website, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, to raise awareness of and recruit participants for the surveys, podcasts, and focus group sessions. In the two focus groups with community members, the organization wanted diverse people to gain different perspectives and broaden our impact. Therefore, we included AYDEPI youth peer leaders, community leaders, representatives from Federal Way Public Schools, City of Federal Way, and DCHC. To incentivize people to participate, AYDEPI offered \$25 Amazon Gift Cards to the first 55 participants who completed the survey. AYDEPI also provided stipends to the participants in interviews who shared their stories about their challenges during and after detention centers. AYDEPI also provided stipends to focus group participants. In all the meetings, the organizations provided refreshments.

### 3: KEY FINDINGS

AYDEPI examined the input shared by participants across the different engagement activities and summarized the key themes below.

#### Racism and Discrimination

Immigrants of color cited various **challenges and injustices** with the youth criminal legal system, including: hostile encounters with law enforcement officers; arrests for ‘petty crimes; wrongful conviction including one participant who shared that they know of several young people charged for crimes they did not commit; acts of community violence; sexual abuse; the Inordinate number of arrests of people of color, including one who participant had four brothers in jail; and the harm of being locked up and how it denies youth a chance to learn as they are barred from schools and relationships. There was a sense of discrimination amongst African American respondents. One said: ‘We (Black people) are criminalized just for existing.’ He added that African Americans have spent four hundred years trying to solve the issue of race in America.

#### Culture Shock

Participants shared that immigrants often have difficulty adjusting to new languages and cultures. Traditional family bonds in African families are not present in the US due to long working hours parents have to put in in order to make ends meet. One of the Respondents stated, “...We don’t really care about sharing time listening to our kids...we spend 90% of our time working and making money which we don't use over here and most of it we send back to Africa.” Due to this, our youth grow distant from their parents and tend to find ways to feel the void left.

#### Ignorance of Law

Participants, especially in focus groups with community leaders and youth, shared that there is a lack of ‘awareness’ around legal matters. Most immigrants are not well versed in legal matters - be it the US Constitution, human rights, or specific laws of the land. They may not know what is legal or illegal, or the consequences of those actions. However, participants shared that ignorance of the law is no defense. Some participants highlighted that more education is needed for young people and families about laws and rights.

#### Vicious Cycles

Participants shared that youth incarceration tarnishes a person’s ‘record’, making it difficult for them to find employment. This often leads them back to a life of crime and future incarceration. Research conducted by the AYDEPI youth leaders show that many perpetrators of sexual abuse were themselves victims of such abuse in their childhood/youth. The interviews with young people who had experience in the youth legal system and the detention center highlighted these challenges. One participant interviewed who had been to the youth detention center said that their time in the center was not effective at rehabilitating them because they felt that the center was focused on what everyone needed rather than the specific help that each individual young person needed. Everyone is different and, therefore, everyone should have the different resources that they need. Another person interviewed who had been to the youth detention center said that they felt that the system is “set up for us to keep coming back and making it easy for us to do things that we shouldn’t be doing... Once you are released, you are automatically blacklisted and it makes it impossible to move on from the past and carry on to have a better future.” Another participant interviewed said that “it just worsens us as youth, they think that they are helping people but they are making it worse by keeping them in a facility with no resources or anything that could change their behavior.” Still, another said that it

“slowed me down from schooling and pushed me back from my friends... I was stuck in juvie, and I wasn’t learning anything.”

## Alternatives

Based on all the feedback, **a majority of the participants support closing the youth detention centers and directing resources to the new and existing community-based alternatives that focus more on reform than punishment.** Participants and AYDEPI youth leaders shared that these youth have an entire life ahead of them, and in most cases, the environment they grew up in and the people that raised them significantly impact their growth and actions. One person interviewed shared that the detention center should be closed because “once kids enter the facility, they are trapped in a certain mindset that even when they are released, they still have that certain mindset.” Especially for minority underrepresented groups, collective accountability should be implemented when referring them to restorative programs. Ensuring juveniles are taken to programs that understand their cultural and racial backgrounds and gender identity will ensure fewer conflicts. Also, allowing parents or guardians to be aware of the programs that the juveniles will undergo and be present throughout the process will ensure that both the guardians/parents and juveniles understand each other and learn along the way. Participants emphasized the importance of supporting parents and families while supporting the young people who created harm, especially when speaking about immigrant parents and low-income parents who face many barriers themselves.

However, some respondents expressed concerns about closing the King County youth detention center. The reservations came from people who have previously been involved in the juvenile legal system. Their main concern was that closing the youth detention center may provide a ‘lenient’ way out for youth who have committed serious crimes. This might lead to a rise in ‘youth crime’ in the long run. It is noteworthy that some contributors to the discussion said the juvenile detention centers provided more comfort than being placed in ‘other places’ (e.g., adult jails, police holding cells). One participant in the interviews said that the facility should not be closed but rather improved because “generally they have done more good than bad”. They did not think that a community-based system would be more effective. Another participant in the interviews said that they did not necessarily think that the detention center should be closed but rather resources should be provided to the young people to address why they were in the facility in the first place and help them change. However, if that could not happen, then the facility should be closed, and there should be different alternatives. Other participants, especially in the focus groups with community leaders, expressed support for the project but shared that King County does not seem prepared for the closure of the youth detention center and that more investment and community-based programs are needed to prevent young people from entering the criminal legal system. A few participants in the focus groups highlighted concerns about closing the detention center without sustained resources and the importance of community safety.

## Verbatim Quotes

**‘Culture shock is very, very big here (in the USA), especially for immigrants. You come here thinking this is the land of the free, of the great...because that’s what we thought when we were back in Africa...But no, that is not the case...There’s mental health (issues), there’s incarceration, domestic abuse...’** – Young Black girl on the AYDEPI broadcast

**‘When we talk of youth incarceration, we refer to *the detention of youths in prisons and prison-like facilities...*It’s not fair to charge a youth as an adult...The youth are in a critical process of physical, behavioral, cognitive and emotional growth and change.’** – Young Black male on the AYDEPI broadcast

**‘Black youths are not arrested more because they commit more crimes, no...We have a history of racial injustice that marks people of color as people who commit crimes...Getting stopped by the police, getting searched...Getting suspended from school, expelled, arrested, right? When you go to court, you’re harshly charged, sometimes denied bail, wrongful convictions – just because of color.’ – Young Black male on the AYDEPI broadcast**

## **4: SOLUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES**

AYDEPI’s research indicates youth incarceration or detention does not reduce recidivism- with about 70-80% of incarcerated youth likely to be rearrested within just three years of their release. Participants shared in the survey that the current juvenile systems are failing to rehabilitate youth involved in crime or effectively reducing crime. Instead, the juvenile system mostly fuels anger, confusion, hostility, aggression, and exclusion in our youth. Participants across the focus groups, interviews, and surveys and AYDEPI youth leaders shared that what the youth, and society in general needs, is a restorative community-based solution. Especially for minority underrepresented groups, **collective accountability** from the community, systems partners, and families should be implemented when referring young people to these restorative programs. Ensuring juveniles are taken to programs that understand their cultural and racial backgrounds and gender identity will ensure fewer conflicts. Also, allowing parents to be aware of the programs that the juveniles will undergo and be present throughout the process will ensure that both the guardians/parents and juveniles understand each other and learn along the way.

Participants across the focus groups, interviews, and surveys believe that youth must be accountable; this is how we learn and grow. Accountability is only fulfilled where there’s committed responsibility. Confining youth involved in crime does not mean accountability for the detained youth. There cannot be accountability- with a 70-80% recidivism rate. Accountability is acceptance of responsibility, and this is what a restorative justice system establishes.

Ending youth detention will require in-depth community collaboration and government support. There needs to be an objectively comprehensive community-based restorative plan that deters crime and rehabilitates youth involved in crime through positive reinforcement. There needs to be a comprehensive community integration plan that involves, informs, and educates the community. We need to support jurisdictions and organizations partnering with the youth, families, and communities to develop community-based options for youth. We must end structural disparities to promote a culture that is equally all-inclusive.

Community-based programs are restorative - to support young people and their families, seeking to address the underlying causes behind delinquent behavior. These programs are preventative and rely on community resources and support networks, through therapy and education. Participants in the survey, interviews, and focus groups with community leaders and youth highlighted that young people need service-learning programs, mentors and adults that they trust, afterschool programs and youth-centered events, job skills training programs, victim awareness programs, family counseling, and rebuilding. One participant in the interviews and several survey respondents shared that greater awareness of these community resources is really important. Another participant in the interviews said that a community-based system would be more effective because “the community cares about you and wants you to do good.” King County and its community partners need standardized risk-assessment instruments that can objectively assess young people, and identify the risk they pose to society and their level of need. Rather than being exposed to the adverse effects of juvenile facilities, participants believe that youth can be accountable, and lead normal lives while participating in programs that empower them, improve their behavior, and reduce the chances of repeated offenses.

Participants shared examples such as supervised small group homes that are located near a juvenile offender's home and functional family therapy applied in a community setting. One participant in the interviews shared that camps could be established for young people who commit serious harm. Another participant shared that there could be "a house where youth could be helped one on one... they could be more focused on rather than being in a bigger group and what was the problem with their actions... this would be more effective than the centers because at least they would feel like they are home instead of being locked away... or trapped". Other examples included intensive counseling centers for youth who have created serious harm that allows them to still continue with their life and education but remain separate from the community and the persons they may have harmed. Efforts should be made to strengthen connections with family members and parents so that the young person can transition back home and into their community. For high-risk youth, there could be intensive family and community-based multi-systemic therapy that allows affected youth well-modeled clinical support in addressing chronic delinquencies- while restoring and strengthening family and community ties.

Ending youth incarceration requires both government and community involvement. All stakeholders should be engaged. Alternatives/distractions are urgently recommended in order to keep youths away from crime and possible juvenile detention or jail time. Participants in the engagement activities highlighted alternatives include income-generating activities, sports, arts, hobbies, and an emphasis on education. If the crime is not severe, an alternative to detention is Community Protection (CP) where people can go to work but they have a curfew or work under supervision.

Participants and AYDEPI youth leaders believe that these alternative programs should not be privatized. They should be funded and run by the government as well as the communities. Counseling centers should not aim to make profits. A large number of respondents were afraid 'private institutions' would replace the King County youth detention center. They cited research that 'other states have implemented for-profit prison systems' that have 'violated countless human rights.' Participants from the focus groups and surveys also highlighted that we need emphasize collective accountability e.g., reporting cases of bullying in schools and colleges and support for families to better support their young people. Individual accountability should, however, be emphasized over community accountability.

Participants also pointed out that additional support is required for people who have been harmed (i.e., 'victims'). The support may include access to services such as mental health treatment, restorative justice legal advice, vetting people who work with victims. The bottom line is that we need to support the victims and support them in the specific ways that they identify where they need support. Several participants shared that when we do not address the needs of people who have been harmed, they can become the people who harm others.

Youths who are locked up and, in the community, should be paired with a mentor (i.e., someone who can guide and advise them). Coaching young people lifts them up. The centers should be well versed in cultures, upbringing, and values. They should also ensure that the parents and young people with needs understand the programs before signing. Upon being discharged, the youths should be coached on how to be responsible members of a family and their particular community. More youth inclusion in community matters and discourse is necessary. One respondent said that youth engagement in issues pertaining to them "works magically".

## 5: CONCLUSION

AYDEPI initiated and conducted community surveys, interviews, and multiple focus group discussions aimed at gathering opinions on the specific question of **ending youth detention in King County** and prepared sets of deliverables on the need for accountability, safety, and community progression.

AYDEPI youth leaders believe that there's no fulfilled justice in detaining youth in these prisons or prison-like facilities. These are young people whose brains are still forming. There's no justice in the overrepresentation of youth of color in these detention facilities. The misperception attributing racial profiling in our legal or jurisprudential systems today is heartbreaking. Black and white youth commit crimes at similar rates, but Black youth are arrested at a rate more than twice that of white youth. Look at the residential segregation of neighborhoods that are predominantly Black, look at the policing in these areas. This is the stigmatization and dehumanization that continues to ail our society. All of us must be equal before the law. There must be equality in resource accessibility and distribution across all settings in our distinct community establishments. The law must definitely recognize whatever differences we might have and acknowledge the importance of this in a cosmopolitan setting like ours.

As one focus group participant shared, closing the juvenile detention center without addressing underlying systemic disparities is like cutting off one branch of a problematic tree instead of attacking the roots. We need to understand the root causes of the problems in our community and not just deal with the symptoms. These root causes include poverty, mental health issues and lack of legal awareness.

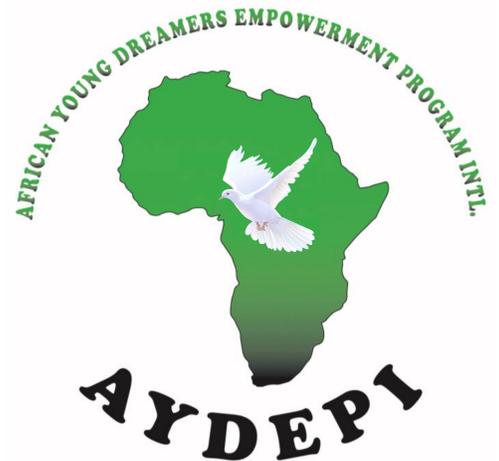
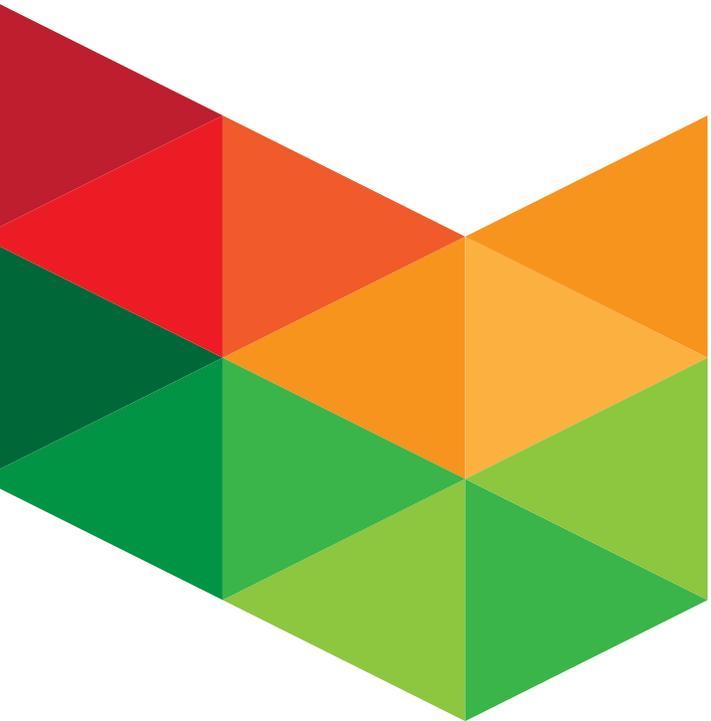
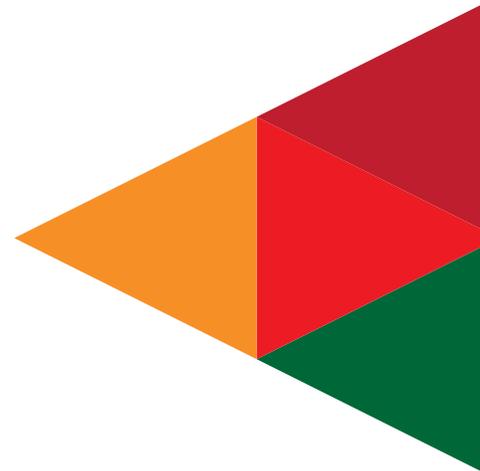
Participants also cautioned that abrupt closure of juvenile centers without sustainable investments in community-based alternatives could worsen the situation for troubled youths. For example, minors could end up in adult jails where they could suffer from depression and/low self-esteem; suffer physical or sexual abuse; be haunted with a criminal record; and lose dreams, hopes, and relationships.

In conclusion, AYDEPI youth leaders and participants expressed that confining young people - breaking family ties, disrupting their education, and often exposing them to further trauma and violence - hinders their growth, alters brain functioning and development, increases their chances of becoming victims of crimes themselves, and significantly increases rates of recidivism. A proper response mechanism is one that relies on empirical facts and not just theoretical attributions. These facts have shown that community-based alternatives to youth detention produce better results in crime deterrence and youth rehabilitation. The youth are most likely to thrive at home or in home-like settings in their own communities, with stable connections to positive adults and opportunities. Ending youth detention is our moral obligation as a society.

As an organization, AYDEPI has been working on preventive measures for over 3 1/2 years. We have seen it work. AYDEPI urgently requires a youth resource center to rehabilitate vulnerable youth and their families to enable them to access culturally responsive resources. The organization needs other resources like vans to transport these youth to outdoor activities, including but not limited to volunteer activities in their free time, and administrative resources to support other youth leaders who will be supporting youth.



**King County**



African Young Dreamers Empowerment Program Intl. (AYDEPI)  
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## 6. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Dates & Participants in Engagement Activities

#### Focus Groups

- Focus Group 1: January 21, 2023; Federal Way, WA - <https://youtu.be/93F46cjaKtc>
  - 12 total participants; 5 youth leaders
- Focus Group 2: February 21, 2023; Federal Way, WA - <https://youtu.be/Csx7rgly3iA>
  - 15 total participants; 4 youth leaders

#### Podcasts:

- Podcast 1: January 2023; [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMHA-4P\\_iTU&t=723s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMHA-4P_iTU&t=723s)
  - 4 youth leaders; over 1,300 views
- Podcast 2: January 2023; [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_peoKuLeam0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_peoKuLeam0)
  - 4 youth leaders; over 1,200 views
- Podcast 3: February 2023; [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_bx7k7Nyav4&t=108s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bx7k7Nyav4&t=108s)
  - 4 youth leaders; over 1,800 views

#### Victims Interviews

- March 20th, 2023
  - 2 young adults (18-25 years old)
- March 22nd, 2023
  - 2 young adults (18-25 years old)

Survey Participants By Age Group (N=314)						
Age	English	Swahili	Portuguese	French	Lingala	Total
14-17	22	0	1	1	5	29
18-25	60	21	14	21	25	141
25+	50	17	10	20	30	127
Preferred not to say	9	2	1	5		17
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>314</b>

### APPENDIX B: Discussion Questions, Survey Questions, and Interview Questions

#### Focus group discussion questions

##### Group 1:

- How prepared are people of color (Black people) for this process of closing the juvenile detention center? Are the systems ready? Is the community ready?
- Are policies and strategies in place to support juvenile justice systems?
- What is your opinion on whether juvenile detention should be closed or not be closed?

##### Group 2:

- What are your reflections from the introduction?
- What is needed to close the youth detention facility?
- What does accountability look like for youth who have caused serious harm in their communities?
- What are possible solutions and alternative responses for when young people cause serious harm in their communities?
- What support is needed for those who have been harmed by young people?

### Survey Questions

Note that the survey was available in five languages: English, Swahili, Lingala, Portuguese, French.

Do you live, operate or do any activities in King County?

For the following statements, please indicate your response with number 1 being strongly agree and number 5 being strongly disagree:

- Youth Crime is a major issue today.
- Youth are prone to committing crimes.
- The King County government has/is doing enough to prevent crime among the youth.
- Youth who cause harm to others or their community should be held accountable for their actions.
- The existing Juvenile Detention Facilities have been effective in reducing youth crime.
- The existing Juvenile Justice System has been effective in rehabilitating detained youth.
- A community-based system would be more effective at reducing youth crime and rehabilitating youth who have caused harm to others or their community compared to the current Juvenile Justice System.
- Will the King County Juvenile Detention Center be closed and replaced with community-based alternatives to better support young people, maintain community safety, and ensure accountability for young people?

Free response questions

- How should we hold youth accountable?
- What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?
- How can we strengthen King County's community diversion programs that are aimed at diverting youth from detention?

Multiple choice questions

- Please select the measure(s) the government and the community can implement to help ensure that young people who harm others or the community are held accountable for their actions. (Select at least five)
  - Juvenile Detention
  - Being tried as adults
  - Confinement in prisons/jail
  - Home confinement
  - Community service
  - Community-based initiatives
  - Screening and assessments
  - Counseling
  - Treatment
  - Victim awareness programs
  - Other

- Please identify the resources and support you and your family would need to prevent/avoid/stop youth crime. (Select at least five)
  - Access to affordable housing
  - Strengthen family and community ties
  - Strengthen youth skills
  - Youth mentoring programs
  - Job skills training
  - Youth employment programs
  - Access to counseling
  - Access to mental health services
  - Crisis intervention
  - Community-based violence intervention programs
  - Legal resources
  - Youth entertainment centers and programs
  - Other
- Have you or your immediate family been impacted by the youth criminal legal system? (Please check all that apply)
  - Yes, I have been involved in the youth criminal legal system
  - Yes, I have been harmed by another young person in the youth criminal legal system
  - Yes, my immediate family member has been involved in the youth criminal legal system
  - Yes, my immediate family member has been harmed by another young person in the criminal legal system
  - No
  - Other
- To which gender do you identify?
  - Female
  - Male
  - Non-binary
  - Transgender
  - Prefer not to say
  - Other
- Which of the following do you identify as?
  - Heterosexual (straight)
  - LGBTQ+ community
  - Prefer not to say
  - Other
- What is your age?
  - 14-17
  - 18-24
  - 25+
  - Prefer not to say
- Which of the following race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please check all that apply?)
  - Asian or Pacific Islander
  - Black or African American
  - Hispanic and Latino
  - Native American or Alaskan Native
  - White or Caucasian
  - Multiracial or Biracial
  - A race/ethnicity not listed here
  - Prefer not to say

### Interview Questions

- How was your experience with the juvenile justice system?
- Do you think that the juvenile justice system has been effective in helping youth rehabilitate? Please explain.
- Should the King County juvenile detention facility be closed. Please explain. If yes, what alternatives would you suggest and why?
- Do you think that a community-based system would be effective at reducing youth crime and helping rehabilitate youth?
- What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent, avoid, or stop youth crime?

### APPENDIX C: Notes from Focus Groups

Focus Group 1: January 21, 2023

12 participants: 5 youth, 7 community members

#### Introductions

- All young people deserve the chance to learn, grow, and achieve their goals
- Detention and incarceration have been proven ineffective with crime and is harmful to youth
- Youth choice: comes down to rehabilitation and deterrence
- Our system and society is currently focusing on punishment and with that model, young people are wasting their entire lives
- What we need is a structure that includes positive reinforcement and a community restoration plan with support for young people; young people have better outcomes with rehabilitation
- Youth have futures and capacity to learn from their mistakes and it is important that we reinforce this future to grow
- Prison system is built on profit; private prisons drive the profit of the mass incarceration system; in 2022, \$80B was spent on incarcerating people, and mainly people of color
- There are large disparities amongst people of color and white people in mass incarceration

#### How prepared are people of color (Black people) for this process of closing the juvenile detention center? Are the systems ready? Is the community ready?

- Everyone is supposed to know the law; do we know about the laws? We have to know the law; how the law protects the people. As immigrants, we don't have time to discuss with our kids and share time with them. We spend time at work; we send money back home; the most important thing that we have is our family. They learn bad things. Before acting, we have to talk about what is important for us. We have to prioritize what is important for our kids; our interests with kids; as parents, they must know the role of the life with kids; kids must be priority for our community
- System is not working for us.
- We are isolated. Our communities are isolated and far away from powers that be as immigrants and refugees. There are not orientations about laws; there are not certain activities with certain organizations like a DEI person to talk about laws and orientations as a person of color and discrimination. There is a history of racism in this country and that is unknown to many immigrants. There are stereotypes of Black people; we have not been educated or oriented to understand that. There is an isolation with parents; many are living to survive. Children do not have activities. We don't vote. We are distinct from power – there are resources with common understanding that we lack such as interaction with law enforcement. It's really complex. Community leaders about how to understand our kids and listen to them; funding and resources; our children are helpless; parents need to come together and engage the systems and understand the barriers to move this forward.

- What is the budget for this project? We need to channel resources into reform and restoring communities. From different laws and angles, how are you going to guide youth with laws. You can feel the disconnect; if we can have discussions with youth, we can share what the social things are that get you in trouble; we find our youth getting influenced by the media. We need to prepare our homes first.
- We are not prepared. There are cultural barriers and even language barriers. We need to identify what we are not communicating yet; we need to engage our communities and provide resources
- More information needs to be out in the community and the system needs to be informed. Law enforcement and systems people need to be reformed. There needs to be a fair distribution of resources and that includes budgets and budgeting. Those budgets need to be distributed down and priorities down
- What is the benefit of the detention center? Prioritize the benefit of the people
- There are church groups without money who are supporting people getting out of prisons with group homes; but King County decided that they were no longer getting money with rehabilitation centers.
- There is no way to get it done; we can't have private centers; half of these kids are in prison because of crime or poverty; ignorance of law doesn't matter; we have policing and law enforcement that doesn't value our kids and see and treat them as humans. We have to change the whole system. Policing has to change. Having folks who are veterans come back and be police officers with training to kill depending on training for how they deal with an offender; getting you how you feel; there is discrimination in the system. For example, in Federal Way, there are crimes – they have arrested people who take carts from the grocery store even if they are older and need it to go to their homes. We have to look at the foster care system and how they take kids from families into foster care; if we can't address homelessness, mental health, law enforcement, etc., we can't close detention. We need real money to address homelessness, create businesses, pay rent

Are policies and strategies in place to support juvenile justice systems?

- Unless law enforcement is retrained, you need to be respectful. Youth are acting in the short term, police need to be retrained. There are places that require police officers to live in the neighborhoods and be friends with the people they are policing. There is discrimination against our young people wearing hoods, their hair, and having backpacks. There is a fear of African Americans in America. Need support for legislative changes and system reform.

What is your opinion on whether juvenile detention should be closed or not be closed?

- Best place for kids is the family. Some youth break the law and should go somewhere. Detention is the alternative to the family. Convention on Child – adopted 33 years ago by the world except the US and Somalia – articles with young people that outlines restrictions on jail for children. Recidivism with people who repeat the same crime; all the state can be somewhere closed. For some cases – they might need to be locked in an alternative place with alternative structure and isolated from the community. When is a young person considered a youth? Civil age versus criminal age? In Congo, if you are over 16 years old, you are responsible for the crime. When you are under 16 years old, you are not responsible for what you did.
- Under 18 years here, you are considered a child and should be considered as a child. The day you turn 18 years old, you are considered an adult. There are some places that are expanding the understanding of children in the legal system as 26 years old.
- I believe there will always need to be a place to hold people. There have been massive changes to the childcare system and foster care system (from Clintons). Growing up, my mom was an unlicensed child care provider and took friends in if they were having issues with their parents; there has always been an informal network of care in African American communities. Now with changes to foster care and childcare, if your parent is a felon, the state will not allow you to go back. If you go to prison and have a record, you can't be in public housing. Families need real resources to be a real family; they need jobs, how are you helping make people self-sufficient?

- It's not a short-term solution; it needs to be a long-term solution to ensure the safety of our communities. Alternatives and provision of alternatives will need to be functional, jobs, and record acquisition. There need to be long-term alternatives.
- There might be a need for alternatives. Something is working for many young people if the numbers have gone down significantly and how did the youth even get in there? If we keep the focus on the wellbeing of youth, we will find the solutions.
- What are the intellectual property rights of this conversation?
- If the law can be broken, we cannot have justice. Youth must be held accountable. Closing the detention center does not excuse accountability, might wind up with the right approach and right setting. We have to be empirical and rational. Accountability has been punishment for too long; but punishment does not mean that they feel responsible. Community-based restorative justice system that helps youth acknowledge harmful behaviors and acknowledge that their harm and actions are harmful. We need a proper response mechanism – better results in crime and recidivism with rehabilitation. Ending youth detention is a moral obligation – we must understand that youth are worth our time and dedication. There is a mandate for fairness and equality of youth. Community based programs seeking to address – therapy, education. We need a standardized risk assessment with leading normal lives; supervised small group homes near their homes and functional systems; family therapy for entire families; multisystemic therapy; everyone has the ability and capacity to change
- Video games and violent crimes; what responsibility do we have to a culture and a community?
- I agree with closing detention and not charging youth as adults. But I also want to share the cases in South Korea where they completely disregard incarcerating youth. The youth are committing a lot of crimes to a degree where it is concerning because they are protected by law until they are 16 years old. Cases are dismissed even with murder. Where do we draw the line? Youth are still growing and still developing, and we should rehabilitate them instead of punishing them.
- The youth are expected to return to the prison and jail system; the system is so profitable; prison guards are not paid well; the system is built so that firms are so profit oriented with being human beings. They don't see us as human beings. Concerned that there would be a private system that would replace it; a system to contain the juvenile system; harder to see what they are doing with hate crimes and human rights violations. The system is just corrupt.

Focus Group #2: February 21, 2023

15 participants: 4 youth, 11 community members

### Introduction

- Shared experience of interacting with police officers in Pullman (mostly white students) and how young immigrants of color do not know how to talk to police officers and are often arrested for petty crimes that escalate. “Why do I have to hold myself in those interactions? We can form alternatives to ensure our youth don't go to detention.” Then shared the community-based alternatives to detention provided including Restorative Community Pathways, Community Accountability Boards, Family Intervention and Restorative Services, and Juvenile Therapeutic Response and Accountability Court.

### Discussion from the introduction

- Law enforcement needs more training and equitable policing; shared experience of white people being afraid to call Black people Black; how people are taught about race and products of their environment and their families
- Need immigration orientation; used to work in a refugee resettling organization. If you are an immigrant, you don't receive an orientation. If you are a refugee, you get an orientation on the rules and laws and warning about things that you shouldn't do. Need to partner to make sure that young people, young immigrants know the laws.

- Federal Way School District doesn't do an orientation for immigrants, but we partner with the IRC when we have families that need it; an orientation at school sites; need to have specific information for communities and partners to create one offs. Sometimes the events cover laws, but it all depends on what the family is looking to learn about; it's a case-by-case process, not a systemic process
- People experience culture shock: not understanding the language can be challenging; there should be an orientation to folks given in their language, help them get accustomed
- Law enforcement: ignorance of the law does not matter; training is specific on how you get hired; there is a psych evaluation to determine what you will do in specific situations, but it doesn't cover it all; law enforcement recruits military, not the social workers you want to respond to those types of situations.
- We get calls from kids who have been in shootings, sexual assaults; when you think about when young people go to detention, I don't think they should go for 20-30 years, but they should not be out in the community. What does it look like when someone commits multiple murders if the detention center is closed?
- Let's talk about wrongful conviction; know of several young people who did not commit crime, but they were charged with it
- Shared experience of having 9 siblings, 4 brothers in prison and there are some with young people – we have more kids running around with guns and crimes over social media like beatings; they were fighting other kids. I think we should be focusing on prevention; I want King County to increase transportation of young people to sports. I am nervous about the infrastructure and the ability for the community to be able to support young people if the detention center is closed. We need things like universal preschool, mental health structure in place, place for kids to go if not detention; increase community centers for free and SYEP; why don't kids want to make money; let's give them something to lose when they are talking with police officers; that's why their behavior escalates, because they have nothing to lose.
- I was a former correction officer; you still have to have a place to hold people; there are people with mental illness who will commit horrible crimes and you need a place to hold them accountable; kids are bullying each other and molesting each other because someone is hurting them; you have to get to the root causes because there is no band-aid; interventions are so important. As a community mentor, asked for \$100K from the Federal Way budget from police department because they keep 90% of the budget; they had received \$19M in ARPA funds; there was just a big push to support our young people and programming like \$4M for transportation and youth development
- School board meeting – you do have community members who want to increase detention centers and increase prisons; there is a whole group of folks who want to increase the presence of police officers; saying that we are only focusing on one side of safety
- Not enough awareness in the community; AYDEPI has discovered the gap for youth development; lack of awareness – more representation by other groups to highlight that we don't want prisons and jails for our young people; more groups: we have something else to help our young people to be more productive; we need to increase alternatives for our young people
- Federal Way Public Schools – we are here to help the gap; we lost a number of youth in 2018; parents are so busy working and did a need assessment at least and talk and come to an agreement. If the gatekeepers are keeping the door closed, we know the culture. We need to slow down the young people; the system is not on their side. We need to give them the space that they need. I am a mother, don't want to see all these lost people, we need to be at the table for decision-making
- People ask us to serve and need community to serve; I can get folks to the door and open the door, but I can't make people walk through it. We need people to show up. If not, they (white people) come because they know the system/ they wrote the system, they make the same laws and they don't care if you are new; immigrants have the same health outcomes and Black people by 3 years of living here
- Back in Kenya, we didn't know we were Black. When I come here, we all tick one box, unless we show one voice, we will be ignored. Everything connects in one way; schools and extracurriculars with no support; you have so much energy, that's why we have identified a lack of afterschool programs

- Solving and breaking the barriers into community, interested in helping with kids; when I do outreach, but it's not people who are most struggling who are active; most people don't vote and aren't engaged in politics. What are the incentives to get them active? Retired people have the time to come to the space; it would take a lot to bring our communities to the table
- All the cases with major serious harm: go full circle, someone harmed them; the systems fail to acknowledge that harm too; cases are treated as one offense all on the children and could have been prevented by people who could have intervened. With the kid who brought the gun to school and shot his 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher – what is the reason this kid had a gun? The system is unfair; we have to hold everyone accountable. People say that it is above my pay grade or not in their area; that is unfair and does not respect the people; it all comes full circle and people wait for the serious crimes to happen; issue of recidivism – people who commit serious crimes have background; it's just not a straight-line, so many gaps and unfair symptoms
- We are talking about juvenile facilities, but what are the resources we are putting in place that can support mental health? How are we advocating for the things we need? When you are poor, it is easier for you to get in trouble. We see an increase, also having conversation to support the needs of scholars and funding.
- We are putting the cart before the horse here – we can't close the detention center without the alternatives
- Need incentives: parents are so busy and have several jobs so they don't have time to go to community; if we can try to reach these kids, these are our families. We have so many churches, we could try to do partnerships (this can be tricky with some religions) and push this message – what spaces are there to protect the community?
- What we are doing is attacking the branches instead of the roots; the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment with guns and what someone can do; 13<sup>th</sup> amendment with abolition of slavery; is everyone equal in the United States? No. The big problem is not juvenile detention. We need to address the roots. We need resources and most African immigrants don't care about their kids; they care about their jobs, how much money they make; we never think about the roots. The family is the roots. The family roots are destroyed by the system and the system is built to keep people in slavery except if you commit a crime. We must know the law; everyone is supposed to know the law; the judge knows the law and puts you in jail or a path forward.
- Back to the question of preparedness, I don't think we are prepared.
- I can give an example; looking for job to DSHS; they said to my wife that she could get more benefits if we got a divorce; if you have kids, they want you to break up the family; we have to think about our families; we don't love our kids, we love our money more.
- African Americans have been spending 400 years trying to solve this issue; trying to make a legacy and the problem is that white people change the rules when we get any power; we are getting the PAC center renamed for a former slave, first African American in Federal Way and it's been impossible. It's the same fight that we are fighting today. This is the progress we have made in 400 years; learned about this person with the Federal Way Black History time capsule; gave 150 acres to Federal Way that is currently being used for many things; asked to do the work and they asked us to jump through all these hoops. They created processes for us because of this task. Immigrants don't have low self-esteem like African Americans do; try to think it is wrong; it all comes down to the branches. Root causes are policies, processes. We hired a DEI person but underfunded her and she works really hard but is part-time, and there is no staff to do the work. Another example is Jesse Johnson with the legislature; help start the conversation about defunding the police but then it went national and was called Jesse's law and he was slandered; they slander your name which affects your money and community connections; there's a price to go along with progress. I ran for office because our State Senator didn't care about Black people; I ran as a disruptor with no funders; didn't get public funding; didn't get on a roster at a debate; helped split the vote for someone else; we have to show up at diversity and budget conversations; we have to support these things; Clinton and Biden with money and breaking up families; you kids are left along and then are taken to foster care; my concerns – is there a deadline – the real goal of this effort is to back private prisons and boarding schools. I hope that they are wrong;

we have to build our building to support our young people; we have to do our work to support our young people because other people won't

- That is my concern – the initiative is not going to go well, and it will be the kids who suffer the worst. You would be spending my tax dollars to let these kids in my community; they say we are doing it to help Black people, but they will just leave us to deal with it. Where is the infrastructure? It may be 2030, five years is too short. If this goes poorly, it will be destructive to Black families. We do not need white saviors – we do have to come up with a plan; we need a reentry space; people say that incarceration takes them 2-5 years to change their lives; we need mental health evaluations; what do you do for significant cases? What do we do with capital crimes? You have to go back to the same spot
- The question is how can you close up without causing other problems? This focus group believes that we are not ready for closure.
- I don't believe in Community Pathways or Community Pathways. Black people don't believe in Community Passageways. I would never let my kid go to that program, they let a kid get shot and killed and they should be lucky that only one kid got hurt. We have to do something about the organizations that put our young people in danger.
- I agree that this is about the destruction of Black families. We need credit restoration programs, save the family, foster parents who care for young people and where the goal is to restore the family; adoption of people out of Black families.

#### Discussion about the closure of the detention facility

- This is just the consequence; now we need to attack the system, the roots: change the system radically
- Everything depends on detention; a place to pick on Black people; we are criminalized just for existing
- Young people should not be tried as adults; I think they need to be tried as juveniles
- What are the reasons that a young person would be tried as an adult?
- What is the plan? We have the school to prison pipeline: we know by third grade who will be targeted by the criminal legal system. Part of the problem is that we give the same money to the same organizations. The structure of the funding is not there and not effective; we need to be able to give more funds to churches and profit businesses; can't just exclude the faith community; the city and state and county need to give them real resources to do their work

#### Accountability

- Law must be retroactive if we change the law about juveniles and detention
- It comes down to individual accountability versus community accountability.
- It's about knowing that your actions have consequences, incarcerated youth should get second chances but also be held accountable for their actions; just know your actions will have consequences
- Observing young people on how they should be held accountable – should be held accountable without being built on punishment but rather reform and restoration
- They should hold other people accountable; parents with guns, avoid negligence with those who do have the development with certain decisions; short-term memory; having accountability
- We need to move towards **collective accountability**; at school, report it by reporting a bully; college students with bullying; rare to report with parent and trigger behavior; hold everyone accountable; collective responsibility for our people; especially pertaining to youth; care of other systems; umbrella: schools didn't work

#### Solutions and alternatives

- Involving the young people; what are the things that they like to do? We are going to have young people participating in their own will especially in African community; soccer and accessible with harm; we have a higher percentage of females with males involved in youth development efforts;

there is something that we need to appeal to Black young males; need to have those activities be more masculine; that doesn't sound masculine to them; I've been in situations where the activities don't sound masculine

- Let's think of a young man who commits a mass shooting; what alternatives do we have in the community? We have his future and safety of the community at stake
- We do have alternatives but there should be a better alternative; approach in compassionate approach, when you approach them as criminal and not human being; need to be more compassionate
- 16 year old young man with crime: about getting second chance and earn livelihood; put in detention taking away life; counseling center should not open to the public not in the same community; the counseling center not able to make money or be privately run; taken there in the name of counseling; still continue with their life and education; live a normal life away from community with the ends and set free for community; about long-term – prepare for the long-term
- Still away from home; present whatever triggered action; if we responded with holding harm with compassion – treat them, give them a second chance
- Do you think we fail our kids? The students are smart. I visited our kids in Spokane to get a legal attorney to represent them; our kids cost more to bury than to support; our community has failed. Our point of interest is directed elsewhere
- Change the narrative with the young people; they are enlightened with rising power; I know where we are failing them; I hear youth speak to those held without resources and are allowed to represent themselves and accused with police encounters. It's about resources and knowledge and resources about prevention
- Depends on the severity of the crime; we have Community Protection (CPs) where people can go to work, but they have a curfew, they have to be in the home and can go wherever they want but are accompanied by an employee; go to work/ not being disconnected from their homes and community; why do we have people disconnected. Freedom to be included in society and have a second chance; still live like a human being which is a contrast to being dumped and left in a cell; you have completely disconnected with money, education, and having relationships; you can't go to the gym.
- I was working with an agency who did that; there was one Black person was in the program; everyone else was white; the program had a positive impact in their lives
- The people I was talking about went to the YMCA for work; all about them developing skills to be a human being
- Who would fund that?
- The government. We don't want the alternatives to be privatized; the government has to fund the centers; if we can have our own people run the centers, that's even better
- Still think that the resources are there; how many people are being funded?
- We don't feel as much; the self-esteem has been taken away
- Funding depends – you apply and we have to hold each other accountable; we are a youth organization, and we decide to empower young people; ask people with working in programs; resources to keep on pushing/ where are our young people to go to?
- When thinking about the counseling center, they would provide counseling, don't have detention in the name; it could have branches with counseling, recreation, and it's a big center with all these resources; provides jobs and support centers
- Does this involvement confinement transition from detention center to the support center?
- We are still talking about a child's culture; remorse is rooted in them; we are choosing the word confinement; where you are not with family, you are confined. System with terminology; we want language to echo compassion, counseling, and support; continue living the life with their families; control: not being punished with resources

- Most people locked up in a mentor; someone who can guide them; no point in putting them in a center without a mentor; being locked up is denying them a chance to learn; taken from schools and then relationships
- Many want revenge; they go back to the same circumstances with the crime; we need continuation of education, enrolled in colleges, functional support center; stopping with life disconnecting
- Would we create this supportive center for everyone or just kids in detention? Just prevention or intervention too? What can we do for the innocent with what is illegal or legal? Talking about closing youth detention is a system; we need to dismantle a system; it is a system; it will take us a long way; history – will we be the ones to end the system? America is a system with eagle with a bird to face the crow; the crow will pick the neck of the eagle; that is what we are trying to do here; the eagle will fly even higher, and crow will fall off; if we try to close detention, they will implement a new system; there are other people. What do we have to do to try to save young people? They don't know what is legal or illegal. 5 years ago, with young man in jail, he was accused for prostitution but tried to help the person and was pulled over by the cop; need to provide information to new immigrants
- We all have human behavior; law started a long time ago, once someone has broken the law, we are trying to figure out where to go; but we agree that there needs to be exclusive training on the law
- Resources with community centers; exclusively in schools with people in law; here are the consequences
- Mentorship
- Youth accountability, career accountable partner; next time to take a breath and connect with mentors and have useful conversations and educate with the ones who are useful
- Being locked up and coming up: you are told you are useless; you are trying to catch up; ineffective to society; everyone comes down to meet you; someone to mentor
- Inclusiveness with youth works magically; when you use behavior with young person to coach someone else; others will lift them up; community support centers with time spent; there would be a specific time and then they could graduate and mentor with their peers and still looking at young brain; they don't strategize
- Here is where we should start; if there is no trouble, find the problem and peaceful way instead of fighting the system
- We can take a lot with conversations; inviting someone who is there to be part of those conversations
- Mentality to give incarceration; they end up living long good lives; they can still have livelihoods with giving them the right support

#### Support for people who have been harmed

- Case with community meeting: 19-year-old accused of raping 7-year-old; training with sexual assault; the victim has shame, low self-esteem; how we do support the victim; with the alternative center, they should be able to access resources
- We should put as much energy with victims as much as with our young people; advocating with victims; they should get services, mental health
- Justice is when the young person is in the alternative; as much as the current system: we need to support the victim
- Transition center between detention center and family; activity to combine life in detention and family; way to become more prepared for society; detention center with wellbeing of the guy and better of transition center; parent, counseling, transition; better place for kids is with their family; try to work with family; bring back to family; before that work a lot with families, don't have time with family; better place is in the family; family is responsible; we need a bill or law to change the system; give families the resources and lot of services and money; support family and school where we are committed and already working with kids; work with surrounding communities

- Use the framework of social work: individual (work with just the person); group (family), and community social work; we live more in community; right to discipline here and there; work with families
- Justice with victims means something different depends on justice; there needs to be reconciliation and perpetrator and victims; don't need to be best friends but everyone should feel settled; needs to be reconciliation of the two parties; victims with being perpetrator
- Did you ask the young people in detention what they think?
- I was listening to solutions and liked them; one reason is that they place restorative justice rather than follow up with them; people placed in restorative justice; it ends up being backed up system but they are not getting to be people themselves; employees and volunteers with trained and consistently trained and injustice with human rights violations and utmost respect and checked to continued work; many people in detention are offered resources up to a certain time; programs should be set up to be kept longer and evaluated with checking up with young people for a longer time; they are put in diversion programs to certain time; mental health evaluation – only certain time, you can healed of mental health and reevaluated
- Vetting people with functional, systems to work with them
- What are the alternatives in a broader perspective? Our future is bright when we talk about our youth. We need immigrant youth; there is no way you can leave your country and go to a new continent to make things worse for people; best for us and people here
- To provide education to parents and go through the young people
- Big on what we can do with young people individually; we can talk about systems, but I look at myself as an example; very possible to create a path for yourself; despite everything that is happening; end of the day focus on you and try to rise above that with oppression; if we can push the laws, you need to well as an individual
- Pointing accusing finger at neighbor means that there are three pointing back at you
- Need to give space with each other

## Community Engagement Summary of Findings

To: DCHS  
From: CHOOSE 180

### Who We Are

CHOOSE 180 is a nonprofit organization led by communities most impacted by the injustice of the criminal legal system and driven by the belief that young people are possibilities to be developed and not problems to be solved. We off-ramp young people disproportionately affected by punitive practices to a continuum of care and transform systems that criminalize youth with a restorative response to harm.

### Our Work

Our work is guided by the belief that by seeing all young people through the lens of possibility, they have an opportunity to build an unassailable sense of self, make positive choices, and have access to the tools, resources, and community support needed to thrive. Therefore, the central goal at CHOOSE 180 is to build a future where adolescent behavior is not criminalized, and where young people are offered restorative practices and support to envision and choose their future path.

Our primary objectives in support of this goal are to reduce:

1. the total number of incarcerated young people in King County,
2. the disproportionality of BIPOC young people in the legal system,
3. the recidivism rates for young people upon release, and
4. the frequency of youth-involved gun violence in South King County.

As we work towards our organizational objectives and as systems that currently cause harm no longer adversely affect communities of color, we envision our current scope of work to diminish over time. Through our work, youth will have increased connection with and access to community support, providing them with the tools necessary to achieve their goals.

### Programming

Through our core diversion programming, we have helped nearly 4,000 youth avoid criminalization, and 92% of young adult participants have not received a new criminal charge since we launched programming in 2017. Our programs combine triage for youth in crisis with holistic aftercare that connects them with the support necessary for continued healing.

1. Youth and Young Adult Advocacy
2. CHOOSE Freedom
3. Court-Based Diversion
4. Restorative Community Pathways
5. Aftercare
6. Counseling

We partner with systems leaders, including the City and County Prosecuting Attorney’s Offices and School Districts, to provide trauma-informed, culturally competent services to young people either at risk of engagement or currently engaged in the criminal legal system.

**Engagement Activities**

**Surveys:** From February 13th - February 22nd, 2023, CHOOSE180 sent community engagement surveys via email and text from program leaders to program participants and young people in the King County community ages 12-24 impacted by the criminal legal system seeking their expertise on the closure of the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Justice Center. The survey consisted of 17 questions, 5 multiple choice and 12 open ended questions designed to better understand their vision of what a world would be like without youth detention centers. A total of 150 surveys were received, with an original goal of 25. In order to ensure privacy and confidentiality of survey responders, names were not required. Age, gender were not asked in order to create an atmosphere of confidentiality that promotes feedback and opinions without repercussions for youth survey responders. Out of 150 responders who were between the ages 14-25, 88 were personally impacted by the criminal legal system and the remaining 66 knew someone who had been impacted by the criminal legal system. Outreach was conducted four ways for both Surveys and Listening Sessions:

1. *Word of Mouth from CHOOSE180 staff*
2. *Community Centers and Public Schools via signage*
3. *Social Media Posts via Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn*
4. *Email and Text Notifications from CHOOSE180 staff*

**Listening Sessions:** February 27th, 2023 and February 28th, 2023, CHOOSE180 conducted two Virtual 1.5 hr. long Community Engagement Listening Sessions for program participants and King County youth ages 12-24 impacted by the criminal legal system, seeking their opinion of what a world looks like without youth detention centers. The listening sessions were facilitated by a lead facilitator and three program staff that facilitated one 10-minute breakout room session each day to provide intimacy for increased feedback from participants. Listening Session questions were designed to prompt feedback in an organic way that sparked conversational responses and promoted comfortability.

**Engagement Challenges:** Virtual Listening Session Participants seemed to be a majority of spammers that were not a part of the targeted demographic of King County youth. We believe this is due to an extremely large number of responses via our social media outreach motivated by the advertised compensation. Seeing the large number of RSVPs, we closed the portal, believing we reached capacity. Youth participation for both days are described in the following categories:

Opening Attendees - Initial # of participants	Non-Participatory Attendees	Full-Participatory Attendees
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2/27: 22	2/27: 13	2/27: 9
2/28: 14	2/28: 9	2/28: 5

Key Findings (Survey)

**1. Government response to harm committed by youth**

Of the 150 responses, more than 75% felt that the government should not be first responders when dealing with harm to the community perpetuated by youth. Instead, there should be *community programmatic* responses that addressed the following needs:

- Mental Health/Substance abuse disorders
- Economic Hardships leading to community harm
- Positive Community Mentoring
- Restorative actions for harmed parties
- Second chance opportunities through community service
- Diversion programs
- Dismantling societal structures i.e poverty, educational disparities that contribute to harm in the community

82 out of 150 respondents believed harm can be fixed without government involvement, 58 felt it depended on the situation. This shows that the majority of youth believe in the power of community solving their own issues of harm, however the youth are considering the brevity of the harm and are not completely against government involvement. 99% of respondents indicate that the needs of youth who are currently involved in the criminal legal system can be satisfied through access to holistic support systems that cater to not only the youth that has done the harm, but their families as well. Key findings from responses support the belief that community harm perpetuated by their peers is not always the youth’s fault and all things should be considered, such as survival crimes due to lack of family stability caused by systematic and structural racism - poverty, education, mental health supports and lack of culturally responsive leadership within learning and enrichment opportunities.

Interestingly enough, the majority of surveyed participants believe the youth detention center should not be closed. 89 out of 150 surveyed believe it should stay open, leading to the conclusion from their lived experience, they feel there is a need for a youth detention center for certain populations of youth. However, the advisory committee and King County staff should know that the majority of youth surveyed believe in the capacity for their peers to not commit harms against their community if given an environment to flourish in that is equitable to the white majority. It is also important to know that youth believe that their peers have the ability to be an asset to their community after engaging in the criminal legal system if given:

1. Restorative justice programs aimed to repair harm and rebuild relationships

2. Reentry programs that assist with transition back into society, including job placement, housing assistance and peer support
3. Peer support to build mutual aid groups to build connections and reduce isolation

Due to the fact that we did not ask for gender or age in those surveyed, it is not possible to get an accurate answer if responses differ by these specific sub-groups. However, the answers from the sub-group of formerly incarcerated did not differ from those who had not been incarcerated, but knew a peer that had.

### Surveyed Participant Quotes

1. "Focus on prevention and early intervention to address issues before they escalate."
2. "They need some gentle way to teach them, also need people's care, they are also very fragile in the heart."
3. "Community helping (closing the youth jail) and proof it doesn't work well and that it causes problems for kids in the future."

### Key Findings (Listening Sessions)

1. Harm: Listening Session findings showed that participants believed that harm in the community should be addressed by the community because they "know more about the people, circumstances and the area." Government intervention, whether violent or non-violent harm has been committed by youth, should be the responsibility of the community. Participants expressed the need for community programming such as mental health facilities, community centers, teen centers and overall, "a positive place to go."
2. Accountability: Respondents showed a thorough understanding of the concept of accountability. Young people in the listening sessions believe accountability is "taking responsibility for what you did and own(ing) up to it."
3. Should the youth jail be closed? Results of the Listening Session showed that it was 50/50, young people believe some people should be disciplined. A question that did come up with the possibility of youth taking advantage of the absence of youth jail due to the fact most juvenile charges are dropped when youth turn 19. Also, participants felt that yes, it should be closed, however there should be (positive) something to replace it.
4. What would it take to close the youth jail? Youth participants suggested parameters to close the youth jail would be based on prevention mechanisms,

such as “increased 1:1 mentoring, weekly, possibly alternating in person and virtual options.”

#### Listening Session Participant Quotes

1. “Counseling may not be a perfect solution for everything, but it is better than current forms of punishment, which often worsens the reason why harm was committed in the first place.”
2. “Government should fund/support families, especially struggling parents so they can be at home, have more time with their kids - or support childcare so parents are (not) working so many jobs and paying for daycare.”
3. “There is a cause and effect relationship of harm and why someone committed harm, identifying the cause is part of the accountability.”
4. “Young people commit harm for a REASON.” (They are put in a position that exacerbates their living conditions, and they get desperate in times of need.)
5. “Find out the root issue of the problem and why harm was committed, instead of punishing a young person and creating more barriers for them to be successful.”

#### Recommendations on Community Based Alternatives to youth detention

1. Ideas shared and recommendations for community-based alternatives to youth detention are making it into alternative structures such as “a teen center, where kids can hang out supervised, an older boys and girls club that is recreational and useful to develop the brain - keep kids busy with activities and even build skills and stay (to) out of trouble.”
2. Youth stated they would like to see:
  - “Parks, community center, teen center, youth mental health facilities, athletic facility, a safe place for youth, youth shelter. Something to help benefit our community. It is a big place, so we could have more than one of these”
  - “Repurposed for the ethnic minority like having a community for that and also being a library would be good.”
  - “Culturally relevant space. Somewhere not just for white people to feel comfortable there. Somewhere to combat gentrification.”

Youth in the listening session overwhelmingly felt that the detention center should be repurposed, not just for youth enrichment - mental health supports, health and wellness, but also that it be culturally responsive where Black youth and their needs are not just considered, but actually valued and space is created to answer those needs. If those needs were met, this would ultimately minimize youthful crimes of survival putting less of a burden on King county’s juvenile justice system.

## Appendix

### Engagement Activities

1. Surveys to target population delivered to participants via email/text message, social media and flyers in community centers and schools

- 150 responses received

2. Virtual Community Engagement Listening Sessions

Opening Attendees - Initial # of participants	Non-Participatory Attendees	Full-Participatory Attendees
2/27: 22	2/27: 13	2/27: 9
2/28: 14	2/28: 9	2/28: 5

### Guiding Questions for Engagement Activities

- *How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities? How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities?*
  - *I will give the definition of harm*
  - *What does harm mean to you?*
  - *How should the government respond when a young person commits harm in their community?*
  - *How should the community respond when a young person commits harm in their community?*
  - *When it comes to violent harm or serious harm, what are some ways that the government and local community can respond that would be beneficial to the entire community?*
- *What does accountability mean to you? What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?*
  - *What does accountability mean to you?*
  - *For young people that have caused minor harm, what are some effective ways we can create opportunities for true accountability?*
  - *For young people that have caused serious harm, what are some effective ways we can create opportunities for true accountability?*

- *How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?*
  - *How can we strengthen the existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention?*
- *What do you think about the idea of expanding community-based alternatives to meet the needs of young people in detention and closing the youth detention center at the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center?*
  - *What do you think about the idea of expanding community-based programs to meet the needs of young people in detention centers?*
  - *What kind of needs do young people have that are in detention centers?*
  - *How can the youth detention center better meet those needs?*
  - *Should the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Justice Center be closed?*
- *What do you think it would take to close the youth detention center? What alternatives or structures need to be in place so that the youth detention center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?*
  - *What do you think it would take to close the youth detention center?*
  - *What are the needs of youth that are at risk for criminal legal involvement?*
  - *What alternatives or structures could be put in place so that youth detention centers are no longer needed to meet the needs and risks of young people in their communities?*
- *What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent your future involvement in the criminal legal system?*
  - *What resources or support would someone and their family need to prevent future involvement in the criminal legal system?*
- *How would you like see the space used and/or repurposed if the youth detention center is closed?*

## 2/27 Listening Session Notes

How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their community?

- there's something going on at home
- they don't have a positive role model in their life
  - they are looking for attention
- mental health did not become a thing until now in the black community
- instead of detention centers, more community centers, or teen health centers (a positive place to go)

- more mental health facilities so that communities have access to that instead of being desperate and committing harm

What about serious and violent harm?

- community should be first to reach out to person that commits harm, before the government
- find out the root issue of the problem and why harm is committed, instead of punishing a young person and creating more barriers for them to be successful

What does accountability mean to you?

- taking responsibility of your actions
- There is a cause and effect relationship of harm and why someone committed harm, identifying the cause is part of accountability

What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?

- take accountability for the fact that we caused the circumstances of harm to happen (systems need to take accountability first)
- young people commit harm for a REASON (they are put in a position that exacerbates their living conditions, and they get desperate in times of need).
- schools play a part in perpetuating these circumstances for people (young people who need the most care are not getting it, which makes them “act out” which is labeled as a behavioral issue, but it’s not).

What do you think about the idea of expanding community based alternatives to meet the needs of young people in detention?

- community are best positioned for solutions but need funding
- Community center
  - Teen center
  - A park
  - Mental health resources

1. What are some ways the youth jail can be repurposed in the community?

- Park, community center, teen center, Youth mental health facilities, athletic facility, library, a safe place for youth and structure, youth shelter. Something to help benefit our community. It is a big space so we could do more than 1 of these!
- I would love if it was repurposed for also those in the ethnic minority like having a community for that and also being a library would be good.

- Culturally relevant space. Somewhere not just for white people to feel comfortable, but for everyone including minorities to feel comfortable there. Somewhere to combat gentrification.
- Since the harm from detention is disproportionately impacting POC we should make a space for healing those same people.
- a facility that can have multiple resources (family/parental support, youth support, teen support, DAY CARE)
- Financing mental health support
- resources that teach young adults HOW to be adults (financial literacy, building credit, etc operating in the real world as an adult) rotation of classes and workshops?

## 2/28 Listening Session Notes

### 02/28 LISTENING SESSION NOTES

HARM: How should the gov and community respond when a young person commits a non-violent harm in their communities?

- Gov and police should stay out of it until a particular point, the community should deal with it. Until there is a point where there is no other point. It should be elders, parents, community should be the first point of contact, not law enforcement
- Community should handle it because they know more about the people, circumstances, and the area

How should the gov and community respond when it is a serious or violent harm?

- get counseling to see what's going on in their life and why they did what they did
- everyone should have a second chance, and have the opportunity to be understood
- but if counseling doesn't work then what should we do as a community?
  - → counseling may not be a perfect solution for everything, but it is better than current forms of punishment, which often worsens the reason why harm was committed in the first place

## ACCOUNTABILITY

What does accountability mean to you?

- taking responsibility for what you did, own up to it

What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?

- therapy or some sort of help to see what happened in life that led them to do what they did
- community service hours
- government should fund/support families especially struggling parents so they can be at home, have more time with their kids - or support with child care so parents are working so many jobs and also paying for day care

What do you think about the idea of closing the youth jail?

- 50/50, some people should be “disciplined”
- if young people know there is no youth jail, would that mean they feel more okay with committing harm or being reckless? (if there is no “threat” of being locked up)
- Can youth take advantage of the absence of youth jail? (but what advantage is there? most juvenile charges are dropped when youth turn 19 anyway)
- youth jail should be closed but have something ready to replace it - that will disrupt the detention center model

What would it take to close the youth detention center?

What alternatives or structures should be in place so that the youth center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?

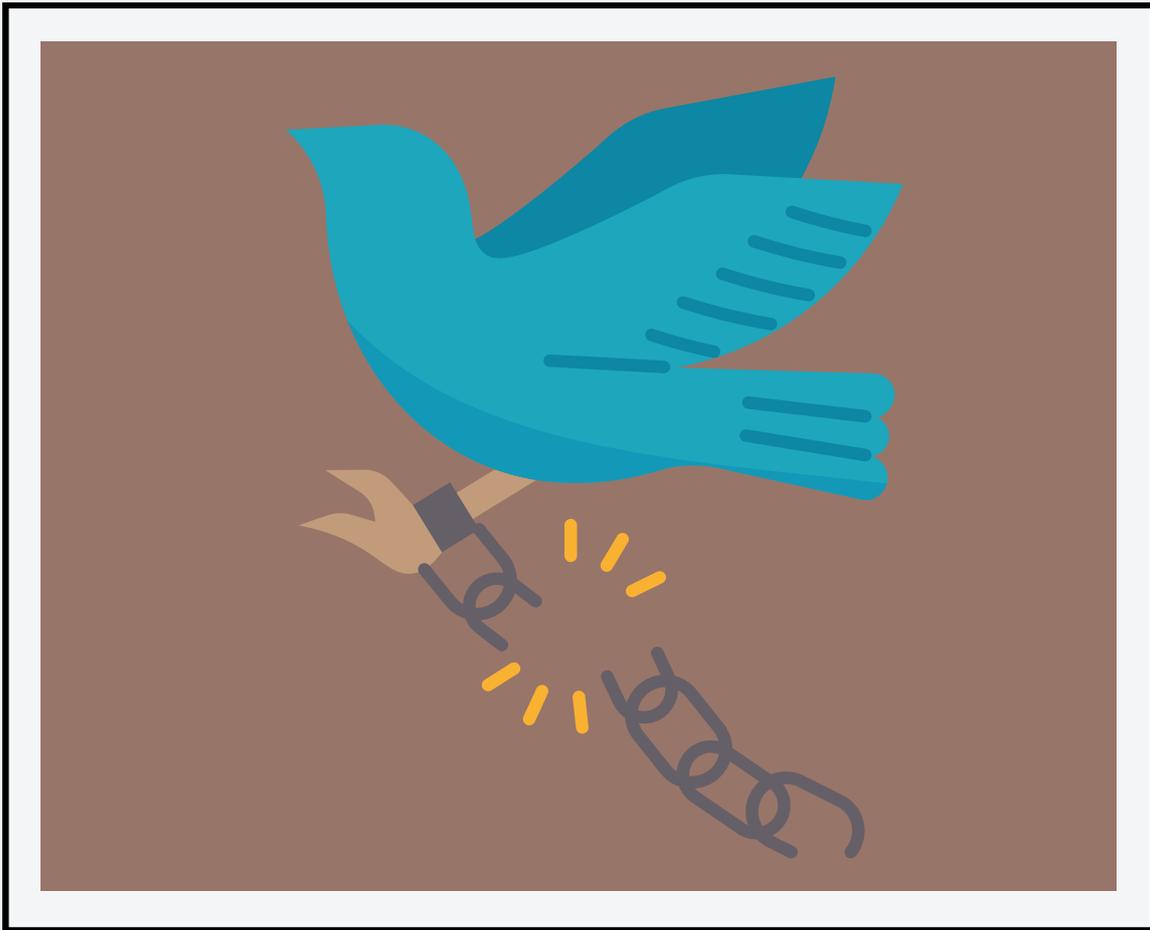
How could existing community diversion orgs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?

- More 1:1 mentoring. Weekly, possibly alternating in person and virtual options
- make into a teen center, where kids can hang out supervised (community center?)
  - some kind of older boys and girls club?
  - should be recreational and also useful (just having things to do) to develop brain - keep kids busy with activities and even build skills and stay out of trouble
  - team building activities (working together, group)
  - build community
  - depending on how it's phrased, make it more appealing for young people to WANT to go
  - have internship or job experience opportunities for young people who want to enter the work force

### Summary of Survey Responses

Responses correlated to the majority of youth wanting a community-based approach to dealing with harm committed by young people. A slight majority believed that for some young people, youth detention centers were necessary, however systemic and structural inequity due to racism are a result of survival crimes committed by youth. These inequitable factors resulted in crimes due to familial poverty, educational and healthcare inequality that do not properly address the needs of Black youth, who are the victims of these social structures designed to sustain a hierarchy that keeps White people in positions of power. Even with current systemic structures in power, youth believed in the community's power to address their needs and handle non-violent and violent harm external to the King County Government, given the right tools. Only in certain situations (depends) is government intervention necessary.

# COMMUNITY CHARLAS



*Conversations 'Para Un Futuro Mejor': Findings  
for Care & Closure of Detention Facilities*

**PRESENTED TO**

King County Dept  
of Community &  
Human Services

**COMPLETED BY**

Liz Huizar, M.A.  
Ruby Vigo, MSW



# Executive Summary

*"Let's provide second chance opportunities for youth that won't impact their personal records..."*

## Introduction

Luchadores y Guerreros. (\* Fighters & Warriors) The Latina/o community is one that cultivates resilience as a mechanism of survival in a country continuously trying to exclude us from the narrative. As a community collectively affected by mass incarceration, Latin@ are navigating a number of structural barriers unique to our community. Yet despite barriers, we, like so many other communities of color, are the flowers that grow from the concrete

El Centro De La Raza recognizes systemic racism as a factor undermining the potential of young people in King County, thus we work collaboratively to find solutions to the social issues that directly affect those we serve.

The following pages bring to light the wisdom, creativity and strength our community applies when re-envisioning structures that create historical harm. Youth and their families offer solutions from the heart. Our role was only to facilitate the conversations; their insight

rings of hope for the future.

## SECTION I: Overview

As an organization grounded in the Latin@ community of Washington State, it is the mission of El Centro de la Raza (The Center for People of All Races) to build the Beloved Community through unifying all racial and economic sectors; to organize, empower, and defend the basic human rights of our most vulnerable and marginalized populations; and to bring critical consciousness, justice, dignity, and equity to all the peoples of the world.



El Centro De La Raza is deeply committed to uplifting the Latin@ community of King County. Such has been the case for the past 50 years. Our programs embed a spirit of collectivism that purposely counter harmful institutions. We provide youth and their families the resources to navigate these systems alongside a village. We recognize the potential of our young people and through our culturally relevant support, communities are able to build 'un futuro poderoso' that validates, heals, and celebrates Latin@s of King County.

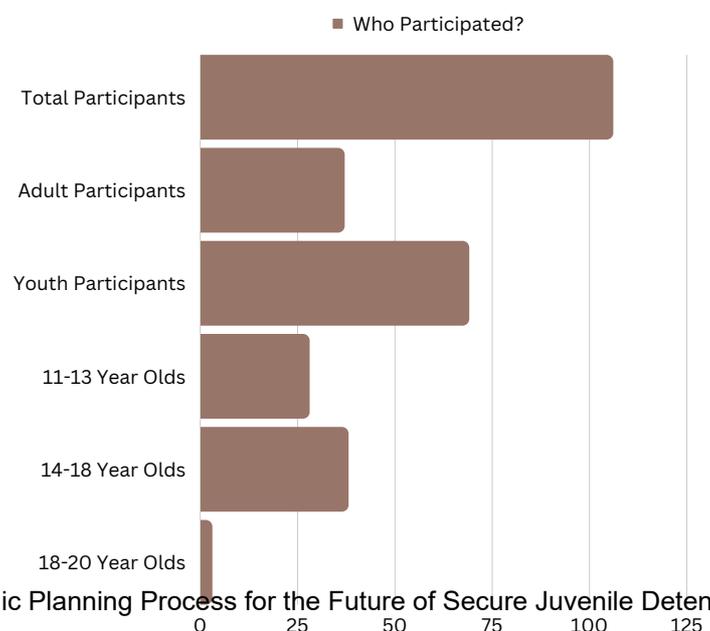
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*"We (parents) need to understand how to teach our youth preemptively the rights and responsibilities of policing, authority, and their responsibility as a dutiful citizen here in the states, there must be resources to teach us the rights we all have."*

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From January to March, we held eight "Community Charlas" to gather feedback from youth and their families. Charla is a Spanish word that translates to a chat between friends. By applying this framework, rapport was established even before entry into the space. Seven of the eight 'Community Charlas' were held in person and only one was held virtually via the Zoom platform. We also summarized our findings to share via radio broadcast our overall findings. Listeners from El Rey 1530 AM had an opportunity to engage in conversations on our summary findings.

Outreach and invitation to participants of Community Charla were offered to participants of our programming.



## SECTION II: Key Findings

Once more, we must recognize the wisdom of those we engaged during Community Charlas. Youth and adult participants alike have extensive knowledge of issues of incarceration. Almost all who participated had experience with a member of their family either previously incarcerated or currently dealing with criminal legal systems. Because so many of our participants are immigrants from Latin American countries, they also hold a global perspective on detention center practices. While participants of Community Charlas hold trust and rapport with members of El Centro De La Raza, because of issues around language and legal status there are deep issues of trust with any legal institutions. Nonetheless, participants offered critical solutions regarding what should occur as detention centers close.

Through the leading question, “If someone in our community commits a crime, how should we respond?”, conversations with the various groups went in multiple directions. Among our youth groups, we saw an initial jump toward reinforcing punitive punishments. This provided an opportunity to share with scholars what different responses to crime look like. Through our conversation, we were able to provide definitions of restorative practices that can be integrated. This opened a new possibility for our youth to reflect on what could happen if someone commits a crime. From then on the main idea that youth vocalized was institutions doing the work to understand the root reason why someone committed a crime. In this way, rather than just jailing, resources to prevent crime from happening over and over again could be addressed.

This could be done by simply having conversations once a crime is committed to truly listen to the needs of individuals. Youth shared examples of how they’ve seen this in practice within their schools; when teachers stop to check in in a way that allows them to express themselves any disruptive behavior in class is actually solved. If teachers just punish students, they end up not trusting them, and the real reason for their misbehavior is not addressed. Scholars felt this was the case with just placing students in detention centers. They are separated from their families and without listening to them, they become disillusioned with society. Scholars felt that an additional solution would be the opportunity to talk to peers and not just adults who can be intimidating.

For our adult participants, feedback was collected in Spanish. For our adult participants, one of the main ideas that resonated from Community Charlas was the reinforcement that, protections must be widely provided to all people regardless of legal status. Participants highlighted the need to inform the community of their rights as a preventative measure. They shared that those involved in the criminal legal system need to undergo training to be more compassionate and sensitive towards communities of color. Many times, instead of being a trusted source of support (referred to police, attorney, and judges), situations are further escalated. Thus, when detention centers close, there must be a shift to heal as well as hold accountable those committing crimes. It must also be understood, that there are real reasons that drive people forward to commit crimes and separating from society without proper reintegration resources will create cynical patterns of crime repetition.



It is essential that Advisory Committee members understand communities are ready and willing to co-collaborate in instituting these solutions. Both students and adult participants want to be listened to, but also want better communities. They care about the areas they live in and they can understand individuals who commit crimes are often dealing with traumas, shortages, and needs that position them to make poor decisions. That's why instituting a village-oriented approach to responding to crime will be the best solution. This means bringing in non-traditional members to heal, listen and support our young people.

## SECTION III: Reccomendations

1. **Peer Intervention** can be instrumental in providing guidance in helping those who committed a crime reintegrate into society. Youth expressed feeling inadequate when adults who were supposed to care approached them in a way that was not compassionate. This furthers distrust and though practices may be intended to support, when they don't come from peers interventions might not be received in the way they were intended.
2. **Collectivism and village-minded** approaches to reintegrating after crimes have happened will disrupt patterns of cyclical crime. Parents expressed wanting to be supportive in ensuring family members are held accountable but wanted to be brought on as trusted co-facilitators instead of also being reprimanded. Oftentimes, families felt scared of the very same systems that were supposed to help them stay safe. Thus building trust will be essential.
3. **Trust** that communities have the love to keep their communities safe. Not only are interventions needed in the form of preventative programs, but additional measures to circulate information on rights available to all people in the United States must also be widely shared.

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*“Ocupan mejor entrenamiento de como tratar a las personas. Hay mucho racismo porque a veces juzgan que somos latinos o personas de color y piensan que somos criminal-- they need more training on how to treat people. Sometimes they judge us just because we are Latinos or people of color they think we are ciminals.”*

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## SECTION IV: Appendix – Work Plan with Total Attendees

Work Plan		
Community Charla 1: Plaza Roberto Maestas After School Program - SEA	Feb 6, El Centro De La Raza Beacon Hill, 5:00pm-6:00pm	Total Attendees, 12
Community Charla 2: ELEVAR Program, HS	Feb 9, Thomas Jefferson High School 2:00-3:00pm	Total Attendees, 16
Community Charla 3: Plaza Roberto Maestas After School Program - FW	Feb 13, Evergreen Middle School 4:30- 5:30pm	Total Attendees, 16
Community Charla 4: Si Se Puede Academy	Feb 17, Si Se Puede Academy 4:30-5:30pm	Total Attendees, 3
Community Charla 5: 'La Escuelita' MS Parent Group	Feb 22, MS Parents, 'La Escuelita' 6:15-7:30pm <i>virtually</i>	Total Attendees, 13
Community Charla 6: Corazoncito Parent Group	Feb 23, Elementary Parents 6:00-7:00pm <i>virtually</i>	Total Attendees, 12
Community Charla 7: All El Centro Participants **	March 1, IN PERSON 6-7pm	Total Attendees, 12
Community Charla 8: J.O.B. Program	March 3, El Centro De La Raza Beacon Hill, 5:00pm-6:00pm	Total Attendees, 22
Radio Summary and Commentary (El Rey 1530AM)	March 7, 3:15-4:00pm	

**Grand Total Participants: 106**

Glover Empower Mentoring  
 Summary of Findings

Section 1: Overview

**1) Organization Overview**

Glover Empower Mentoring-GEM is a community based non-profit 501 c (3) organization headquartered in the City of Kent, WA. GEM has been working with youth and young adults affected by the criminal legal system through our diversion programs with a focus on the City of Kent (Kent Police Department Diversion) and King County (Theft 3 and Mall Safety). The intent of both programs is to foster youth and young adult-empowerment and divert them from the criminal legal system into positive pathways of education, employment, and healthy relationships.

**2) Engagement Activities**

GEM hosted three different engagement activities with impacted youth and adults to inform the Care & Closure project. Two activities were in-person, and one was virtual via Zoom.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
January 16, 2023	In-Person: GEM, Kent	8 youth, 7 adults
February 8, 2023	Virtual via Zoom	4 youth, 2 adults
February 24, 2023	Cedar Heights Middle School, Kent	14 youth, 4 adults
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26 youth, 13 adults</b>

**3) Participants & Outreach**

Over the course of 8 weeks in 3 different environmental settings, GEM engaged with 26 youth ages 12-18. Family members, community members, and GEM team members totaled 13 across the 3 events. This totals a grand total of 39 people. Participants were youth ages 12-18 and adults. 85% of all participants were Black/African American, with the remainder mixed races.

Outreach was conducted through GEM's existing youth programs and highlighted through flyers. Please see attached flyers used for marketing and promotions.

## Section 2: Key Findings

### **1) Main ideas**

The biggest idea that came up across the engagement activities was the obvious "No Youth Jail". The young people who participated in the engagement activities felt that youth detention is not the answer. The youths were not sure on what the answer was but was sure on what it was not. One of the engagement activities was held on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and the youth wanted to talk about systemic racism. They shared that too often these issues of racism are framed as things that happen in the past, but that they saw racial injustice, including in the youth criminal legal system, happening every day.

The young people who participated in the activities shared that youth incarceration is not the answer to responding to community harm caused by young people. They highlighted how much youths miss out on when they are in detention and incarcerated in state facilities. Incarcerated youths do not have access to their normal education activities or their families and supportive networks. The young people also highlighted the challenges with making money and having financial stability once a young person goes through the system and has a record. It is difficult to come back into the community and make positive decisions when they face so many challenges and lack adequate and tangible community resources to address them.

The participating young people highlighted that youths should be able to make mistakes. Youth development is all about making mistakes, learning from them with support from their community and positive social networks, and making better choices in the future. Youth detention or jail is not the answer to those mistakes.

The young people also talked about Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM) or house arrest. They shared that even though youths are in their homes, they feel it is just another form of incarceration. The youths shared that EHM keeps young people incarcerated in their homes without the support that they need. They shared that young people are sometimes on EHM too long with impacts them and their families. They also highlighted that families must pay a fee for participating in EHM. The young people saw this as another opportunity for the system to make money on youths of color making a mistake.

The young people wanted to discuss concrete resources and how youth would be supported if the detention center closes. They agreed with the idea of not locking up young people but were concerned about the resources to adequately support young people in their communities. They questioned why the County would use resources to build a youth detention center to then close it shortly after. The youths discussed an article about the No New Youth Jail movement active during the construction of the

youth detention center to understand the broader context of the Care & Closure project, and they wanted to focus on the need for significant resources in communities to support youths.

Lastly, the young people also wanted to talk about how the adult criminal legal system and the juvenile system are structured so similarly and with the same goals but that kids should not be in the adult system. While this conversation was not the main topic of the engagement activities, the facilitators let the youths share their opinions about young people going through the adult system instead of the juvenile system.

## **2) Participant Quotes**

- “No Youth Jail”
- “Jail is just not the answer”

## **3) Common Responses**

When asked what young people need to be supported, they shared job training, counseling, therapy, money, and more robust relationship building.

## **4) Differences in Responses**

Across the 3 different settings, GEM engaged with 26 youth ages 12-18. The responses were very similar across the board in all 3 separate locations and groups. This showed GEM facilitators that the youths are paying attention to their surroundings and what is taking place in their communities.

## **5) What You Should Know**

Young people would like their voices to be heard and their faces to be seen. Youth would like to have direct contact and conversations with King County leadership, staff, and the Advisory Committee.

### **Section 3: Recommendations on Community-Based Alternatives**

All youth mentioned anything is better than secured detention. A start would be increasing access to more community centers and community-based programs that are within their individual communities/walking distance. They also shared locally based internships and youth job opportunities related to their skill sets that can help them make money and gain experience. They highlighted social and digital media skills and influencers are top of their lists.

## Section 4: Required Information

### **Engagement activities**

Date	Location	Number of Participants
January 16, 2023	In-Person: GloverEmpowerMentoring- GEM	8 Youth 7 Adults
February 8, 2023	Virtual via Zoom	4 Youth 2 Adults
February 24, 2023	Cedar Heights Middle School	14 Youth 4 Adults

### **Questions for the Engagement Activities**

- Q1: How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities? How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities?
- Q2: What does accountability mean to you? What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?
- Q3: How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?
- Q4: What do you think about the idea of expanding community-based alternatives to meet the needs of young people in detention and closing the youth detention center?
- Q5: What do you think it would take to close the youth detention center? What alternatives or structures need to be in place so that the youth detention center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?
- Q6: What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent future involvement with the criminal legal system?

## Notes for the Engagement Activities

January 17, 2023 Notes

Attendees: 8 youth

Q1: How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities? How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities.

- Go to jail for week/scared straight warning.
- Giving resources/mental health therapy/find the problem and get help.
- Community service to the community they harmed.
- Counseling

Q2: What does accountability mean to you? What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?

- Loss of privileges
- Apologize

Q3: How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?

- More money
- Relationship building w/ kids.
- Diversity of staff and volunteers
- Influential people in the community
- Kraken/Storm Games
- Speakers like Head of Kent School Board
- Guest speakers like Richard Sherman when he spoke at GEM last summer.

Q5: What do you think it would take to close the youth detention center? What alternatives or structures need to be in place so that the youth detention center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?

- 8/8 kids (in office) know someone who has been involved in the criminal system.

Kids should go to jail for:

- First degree murder
  - 6 y.o who shot teacher—Parents.
  - 10 y.o who shot mom—Kid.
  - 14 y.o who shot dad—Kid.
- Kids shouldn't go to jail for
  - Shoplifting (might need item)
- If the crime is serious enough, should a kid be tried as an adult.
  - Yes, for gang activity, murder, and armed robbery/theft.

## February 8, 2023 Notes

Attendees: 8 youth

Q1: How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities? How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities?

- Steps: 1) Warning/Diversion program 2) Counseling/Community service 3) Serve time/Jail
- Community service to the community they harmed.
- Counseling

Q2: What does accountability mean to you? What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?

- Nonserious crime: Community service or house arrest
- Serious Crime: Jail

Q3: How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?

- Fines or fees
- Support from mentors, relatives, and community members.

Q6: What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent future involvement with the criminal legal system?

- Job Training
- Counseling
- More opportunities for young people to make money.

Q5: What do you think it would take to close the youth detention center? What alternatives or structures need to be in place so that the youth detention center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?

- Increase funding for counseling services, community base organizations, and more outlets for mental health services for the community.
- Harsher punishments for repeat offenders.

## February 24, 2023 Notes

Attendees: 14 youth

Q1: How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities? How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities? Go to juvenile detention.

- Sue the parent/child.
- Restraining order
- Community service
- Therapy
- Probation
- Apology letter
- Rehabilitation
- Send to community service.
- Restorative justice

Q2: What does accountability mean to you? What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?

- Taking responsibility for your actions
- Holding up your end
- Apologies

Q3: How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?

- Adding incentives for your work
- Foods; funds; rewards

## Pro Se Potential Voice Sessions

### Summary of Findings

#### Section 1: Overview

##### **Pro Se Potential Organization**

What makes our program unique is that the Pro Se Potential's executive director, De'Vonte' Parson, grew up in the same communities and cultural backgrounds as the young people Pro Se serves. De'Vonte' found himself on the school-to-prison pipeline because of a lack of guidance and a poor environment. This lack of mentorship and resources led him to the streets where he fell heavily into gangbanging and recidivism in the criminal justice system for the better portion of his life. While in jail he started paying the young men coming in for various charges with honey buns, top ramen soups, and candy to keep out of fights and develop release plans. While doing "community" work from the jail cell, he also fired his attorney and went "Pro Se", which legally means to represent yourself in court, going up against a life sentence. Going to trial, beating the life sentence, and walking away with six years he dedicated the rest of that time inside to self-development and steering the youth and young adults out of the system.

That is the true origin of Pro Se Potential. It was a twenty two year old bumping his head enough times to end up in a situation he could possibly never get out of then taking that moment to change and help others in the same situation. At 30 years old, the ED is young enough to relate to these young people, yet experienced enough to meet them where they are, listen, and impart wisdom from what he has been through.

Pro Se Potential is about empowerment. It is not our practice to DO anything for our young people. It has been recognized that the best approach is to do WITH your young people in order for them to learn how to one day do things for themselves in order to build a healthy and sustainable life. Therefore, we work with our youth on building advocacy skills through vision building and goal setting. We also pride ourselves with taking a bottom-up approach when considering every program we put forth into the community. This means that many of our ideas come from the young people we serve through voice sessions, surveys, and authentic relationships we've built with them over time. In fact, three of our part time staff are youth and young adults that have graduated our program and wanted to get into the work. You can see more of our programs here: <https://prosepotential.org/events/>

##### **Alternative to Detention Methods**

For this project we hosted five listening sessions where our young people and their families could come together and share out what they thought concerning the detention center closing. Three of these sessions were one hour and a half sessions via zoom where two youth leaders guided the cohort using a PowerPoint outlining questions the county provided. The other two sessions were held in-person. One cohort was at Truman High School while the other was at the Pro Se headquarters in Federal Way. Three youth leaders guided the groups via PowerPoint and smart TV through the question the King County provided. The young people who participated in the virtual spaces were paid \$50 Visa

gift cards. The young people who participated in the in-person spaces were compensated \$50 gift cards as well as hot foods like McDonalds breakfast and Pizza Hut. All sessions except for the Truman High School were held in the evening from 6 – 7:30pm. The Truman High School was held as an assembly style presentation during the early school hours for an hour and a half.

**Total Youth: 47**

**Total Parents or Guardians of Youth: 3**

**Total Sessions: 5**

**Total Pro Se Staff in Attendance: 4**

**Total Pro Se Youth Leaders in Attendance: 5**

Pro Se Youth Leaders are young people who have already graduated from one of the programs we've held in the past. In the voice session project, they helped as follows:

- Recruited the youth.
- Put together the PowerPoint.
- Led the discussion.
- Took the notes.
- Kept attendance and focus to who participated.

Empowering youth to take the lead and build their leadership muscles is key to our culture here at Pro Se Potential. The young people we put in these positions showed great leadership ability while participating and we keep record of them for future paid leadership opportunities. We have even hired two on staff in the past. WE do this because we understand that the young people have fresh eyes and know the solutions to the problems that us as adults see through a different lens. Therefore, we include youth leaders in everything we do from program creation, implementation, to planning.

## **Demographics**

The age range was 14 – 25 years old in South King County cities such as Des Moines, Kent, Auburn, and Federal Way. 100% were BIPOC youth and young adults from low-income families that are most at risk to be impacted or have been impacted by the criminal justice system. Half of the young people were either previously incarcerated or on house arrest at the moment. Every young person has had a close family member or guardian that have been impacted by the criminal justice center.

## **Outreach for Project**

Finding the young people was not as hard as having to keep reminding them to show up in their busy lives. We partner with Federal Way Public Schools and have programs during the day in Truman

High School as well as Why Not You Academy. These partnerships gave us immediate access to the young people needed for this project. However, we intentionally did not get in the way and used our youth leaders as leverage. Youth know youth and are best at convincing their own peers to participate in whatever is going on. Therefore, we told our youth leaders who and how many we needed and they did their thing. We built a QR code that generated a light questionnaire to collect general data to identify individuals, placed them on flyers, and our young people took the flyers to the other young people.

## **Section 2: Key Findings**

### **Therapy & Mentorship**

The main ideas that emerged was there needing to be alternatives like finding therapy for youth and their families and having more mentorship programs that were available. A huge point that every youth made was that there needed to be some support for the youth and their household and not just the youth. They expressed that most of the issues that caused the behavior on the street started at home. That the reason they weren't at home in the first place and were in the streets was because things going on at home. They believed that housing, individual/family therapy, and employment access would be key resources needed to prevent crime from young people in the community.

### **Authentic Relationships**

"We need more programs like Pro Se" was a quote commonly used amongst the young people. Pro Se builds on authentic relationships and bringing resources to our young people. We connect with them in school, community, and families at home. It really wasn't about Pro Se though. They meant that they need more programs that show they really care. They all felt as if there weren't enough programs that would hang at their school, take them out to eat or have fun, and definitely didn't spend time getting to know their families at home. They stated they needed more of that.

### **Therapy & Diversion Programs**

The most common responses we got were "we want more alternatives to juvenile." The entire discourse of answers were based on that. They wanted more things to be done for them other than going to a detention center. Some of those alternatives were therapy, somewhere in another place to take a time out for life to think, and diversion programs.

### **Subgroups Agreed**

Our groups mainly consisted of youth who were black or Hispanic. They mostly agreed and responded similarly. At one of the virtual meetings we did have a young person that was twenty five and another that was twenty one. The only thing that made their answers different was that they were able to articulate the same responses better because of their age. They were also better able to reflect because they were older. Half of our young people were either previously incarcerated or on house

arrest at the moment. Those young people agreed and held the same opinions as the young people who were just at-risk. We had two parents participate and they asked for more mentors just like the youth. Therefore, there weren't really any differences in what all parties felt should be done about our young people and crime.

### **You Should Know**

The Advisory Committee and King County staff should know that these young people don't want to be out here committing crimes. If they are doing these things, it is often because something went wrong or is going wrong at home. If you get to the root cause you will be able to better solve the issue. Incarcerating them is only whacking at the leaves without the proper follow up for true rehabilitation. These young people are screaming for help at home to solve the problems in their communities. It is on all adults to pitch in and do our part. If you get into the home, you will save the child and ultimately the community.

### **Interesting Facts**

There are no really interesting or surprising facts working with these young people other than how aware they are of their lack of resources. At that age I didn't know could potentially solve my problem I just knew the problem and even that I didn't think was a problem. These young people see the issue. I believe everyone should host more of these to hear them out more and follow up with effective solutions.

### **Section 3: Recommendations on Community-Based Alternatives:**

The highest requested community-based alternatives for the replacement of the detention center were as follows:

#### **1. Hub for Mentorship Access**

- The young people felt the detention center should become a place where you can drop in and talk to a mentor or sign up for mentorship services from various organizations. They felt that having access to mentors at any time would be the most effective youth.

#### **2. Shelter for At-Risk Youth**

- These young people believe that most youth either don't have anywhere to stay or experience more danger in their own homes than anywhere else. They feel that the center should become a safe place for young people to hang, rest, and stay if needed to keep out of the streets.

#### **3. An Accountability Center**

- Not all the young people called it this. However, they felt that sometimes you do need to take a break from society and think about what you did while making atonement. They felt a cell is wrong

and jail sucks though. They wanted a space where youth who committed harm in their communities could go and stay for a little while taking behavioral classes, engaging in therapy, and focusing on transforming their mindset. They felt that this was a better use than just going to juvenile and sitting in a cell.

## **Section 4: Appendices**

### **1. List of Events**

**Virtual:** January 11, 2023, 6pm-7:30pm (7 Participants)

**Truman High School: January 24, 2023,** 10am – 11:30am (12 Participants)

**Virtual:** February 8, 2023, 6pm – 7:30pm (6 Participants)

**Pro Se Headquarters:** February 22, 2023, 6pm – 7:30pm (10 Participants)

**Virtual:** March 8, 2023, 6pm – 7pm (12 Participants)

### **2. List of Discussion Questions**

- a. How should the government or community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their community?
- b. What does accountability mean to you? What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm to their community?
- c. How could existing community diversion programs be strengthened?
- d. What do you think about the idea of expanding community-based alternatives and closing down the detention center?
- e. What do you think it would take to close the detention center and what type of resources would need to be in place to do it?
- f. What resources or support would you or your family need to prevent your future involvement in the criminal legal system?
- g. How would you like to see the detention center used if closed?

### **3. Notes from Engagement Activities**

#### **Q1: How should the government or community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their community?**

- Help them to get into another environment.
- Have a system to help guide them in life instead of punishing them severely.
- Connect them with mentors and therapists.
- Dig into the root cause of the situation and bring solutions with the roots in mind and not just the behavior.
- Provide with resources instead of juvenile hall.
- Guide them through a restorative process rather than juvenile first.
- Work harder on educating about resources and connecting youths to those resources.

**Q2: What does accountability mean to you? What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm to their community?**

- It is knowing what another person did but also taking in consideration the part you played as well.
- Putting yourself in the other person's shoes and seeing what you may have done from their perspective.
- They should make an effort to reach into the young person's life and match the consequence with their story instead of going off of one script for everyone.
- It means that your actions have consequences that follow rather good or bad.
- Calling youths out on their actions respectfully and helping them to gain a deeper understanding of what happened and how to restore the situation.
- Finding other forms of punishment outside of jail like community service, rehabilitation, and having more available mentors.

**Q3: How could existing community diversion programs be strengthened?**

- More funding to help enhance their ability to help us with all of the problems we have in our lives.
- Continuous help even after completing the program.
- They can work on building real relationships with us more.
- They can add more therapy services and access to family or kin to attend family services with the youth.
- Have advocates for us to mediate situations at home with our families.

**Q4: What do you think about the idea of expanding community-based alternatives and closing down the detention center?**

- There should be a lot more community based programs and no juvenile.
- I think it is a good idea because community members will have an easier time understanding community members and bridging the gap between communication and misunderstandings.
- We need more programs like Pro Se Potential that helps youths navigate their life and not send them to juvenile.
- Juveniles do not do a lot that these programs do and don't really help much.

**Q5: What do you think it would take to close the detention center and what type of resources would need to be in place to do it?**

- There should be level systems in place to determine who should really get arrested. There should be resources in place to fill the voids.
- We would need more community-based organizations.
- More community leaders to create more community organizations and connect with us.

**Q6: What resources or support would you or your family need to prevent your future involvement in the criminal legal system?**

- We need emotional support and someone tapping in with us consistently.
- Some sort of connections with counseling, therapy, and mentors consistently.
- Opportunity for family housing resources
- Transportation
- Steady housing
- More accessible employment opportunities even at the age of 14.

**Q7: How would you like to see the detention center used if closed?**

- Trade schools for people of all ages.
- Business hubs where you can learn things that pertain to starting or building businesses.
- A community centers.
- It should be a shelter for at-risk youth.
- It should be used as a sports center.
- It should be a hub to access mentors at one place at a time.
- A community teen center.

***Staff contact name, phone number, email, name of organization***

Organization Name: Somali Family Safety Task Force  
Website: <https://www.somalifamilysafetytaskforce.org>  
Primary Contact: CEO, Farhiya Mohamed  
Email: [farhiya@sfstf.org](mailto:farhiya@sfstf.org)  
Phone: (206) 498 - 4518

***Summary Report: Community Engagement for Strategic Planning to Identify Holistic Communities-Based Alternatives to Youth Detention Center to Support Young People with Risk-Levels.***

Somali Family Safety Task Force (SFSTF) is a non-profit community-based-organization that serves Refugee, Immigrant and their families. Our Mission is to empower Immigrant and Refugee families by providing culturally appropriate services that embody the core values of the community. Most Somali parents have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the civil war in Somalia which caused a complete breakdown of the society's social structures. The parents upon arrival in the United States have not received any post conflict mental health services for themselves. The Somali Family Safety Task Force (SFSTF) has recognized the need to create a sustainable community to address youth violence and community safety by modifying the physical and social environment. Reducing exposure to community-level risks through street outreach and community norm change.

The SFSTF team brought together twenty youths and thirteen parents from the East Africa community to engage in 5 sessions for the youths and 5 sessions for the parents which was conducted virtually through zoom to discuss in a workshops with topics centered around community-based alternatives to support young people in the community with complex needs and risk levels. 1 session each for the youth and parents was to recap and celebrate the project and it was conducted in person at our New Holly Office where food and refreshments was provided. The SFSTF team used the guided questions provided by the King County Care and Closure Project. Youth meetings were separate from parent meetings to allow youth to share their inputs freely. Having separate parent meetings also greatly benefited parents because everything was translated into their native language

(Somali), which helped increase active participation. Incentives was very crucial to this project to recruit and retain participants for the duration of the workshops. Each participant (youth, parent) received a check amounting to the total of \$100.

The social backdrop for the participants is also examined throughout the discussions. Doing so allowed mapping of how youth from the community end up in the system. Therefore, the discussions deduced comprehensive recommendations from greater societal and culturally responsive alternatives. Outreach was done through phone calls and in person consultation with the parents to convince and educate them about the significance of creating an alternative to youth incarceration in King County. Parents were able to talk to their youth to participate in the workshop because it is a very important topic. Some of the youth and parent's participants were already connected to the Somali Family Safety Task Force (SFSTF) through our diverse programs and other initiatives. Almost everyone from the youth to the parents were somehow impacted by the criminal justice system for example, a family member or family friend was killed or injured in gang related violence, or the youth themselves were jailed or given probation for minor crimes such as theft.

In the first workshop, participants and the team started to engage in a positive name alliteration introduced (e.g., I am Amina Awesome). Then, the facilitator highlighted the overview of the workshop discussion points and the following ground rules/group norms:

- *All opinions are valid. We want to hear from you. We want to know that your voice and perspective is critical to understanding how we can improve this system.*
- *We will expect that each person will respect and maintain the confidentiality of this space. What is said here stays here, what is learned leaves here. We ask that you not share individual stories that people share here.*
- *We will try to accept people, just as they are, and we will try to avoid making judgments.*
- *Everyone will have the chance to share, but you can also choose to not answer a question.*
- *One voice, one mic. We will try give supportive attention to the person who is speaking and avoid side conversations.*
- *We will try to avoid interrupting. If we do break in, we will return the conversation to the person who was speaking.'*
- *We will try to speak our truth and speak freely and truthfully. We will use "I" statements.*

**Discussion Topic:** *Ways Government and Community Entities Should Respond When Youth Commit Harm in Their Communities; Defining Accountability*

During this workshop, the discussion begins by understanding participants' depth and awareness of how government and community entities respond when a young person commits severe or violent harm in their communities and their understanding of accountabilities. When asked about what accountability means to them, the youth stated that it's "what you deserve, if you kill someone you should spend in jail forever", owning your actions, everyone should be held accountable for their actions". The parents viewed accountability as being aware of what's happening with their children looking at their homework, friends and communication from teachers/school staff and preparing the child for the understanding of consequences of actions. Youth were asked what the main crimes are committed by youth, the youth response was, engaging in drugs/activity, fights/assaults, theft/stealing from gas stations, malls and stores like Safeway. Both youth & parents were asked; are jails fair and are they effective? Majority of the participants agreed that jails are not effective/not the only solution to make communities better and safer, because it makes people worse and re-offend, sometimes someone stays in jail commits a small crime and stays in jail for a very long time thus developing mental health illness that he/she did not have at the beginning. When asked about current methods and ways government responds to youth committing crimes, both the youth and parent participants expressed unfairness and injustice toward youth in their communities because of their race, ethnicity, and religion. Both expressed that there is racial and ethnic disparities and inequities in the justice system which they see as rigid and difficult to navigate. Youth of color are overwhelmingly represented in the jails and don't 'get a fair judgement. Moreover, health indicators such as autism are not recognized. Often youth of color are wrongfully convicted, or given long sentences, or tried as an adult for crimes they committed as a child. The youth further shared that when police arrest young people that look like them, they show no compassion or support to calm angered youth; instead, the police shout and handcuff them. As a result, they permanently end up with criminal records, which causes a negative effect of getting a decent job. The youth expressed that when a young person commits harm in the

community, such a person is shamed, avoided, and judged. They get a negative reaction from the community which destroys their image and place in society. When asked about what causes youth to commit crimes or turn to drugs, the youth participants cited “peer pressure/seeing others steal, lack of pocket money, poverty, stress, bullying, stuff happening at home, pressure to do well in school, and to look cool around their peers”. Parents mainly explained that peer pressure was the leading cause. All participants agreed that theft and drugs were the predominant crimes in their neighborhood. Participants suggested that youth should receive help. They should receive support from the government by offering counseling and mental health services. Community-based organizations should advocate for them and provide them with community services. Most participants felt that accountability is owning one's actions and holding individuals accountable for what they do in supportive ways.

**Discussion Topic:** *Community Diversion Programs and Ways to Strengthen Them: Expanding Community Based Alternative That Aid Youth in Detention*

At the beginning of the workshop, participants were asked to share existing community diversion programs that help youth set them on the right pathways. Youth shared that expanding sports and culturally responsive programs are great prevention methods. Some youth participants expressed that addressing mental health can expand alternative programs in their community. Parents shared those religious programs offered at the local Mosques and their affiliated local culturally responsive organizations such as tutoring and sports, were the best diversions in preventing youth from committing harm. Since mental illness is seen as taboo, many youths don't get the proper treatment they need early on. Participants suggested mental health as an intervention is a great way to strengthen community-based programs. Parents were asked what kind of child or person is desirable and considered morally important in their community. Some parents expressed that a child/person connected to their culture and religion is valued. Others said that a person who contributes and cares for others is valuable. At the end of the discussion, parent participants discovered that well-being is the ability of a child to actively participate in activities that the society they live in thinks are important and desirable. In addition to what their country-of-origin values (social responsibility, collaborative learning, social intelligence), there are other

qualities that the greater society in which we live values, such as Democracy, Independence, and time management. Bridging between the country of origin and the current country's value, is a way to expand and strengthen community-based alternatives to meet the needs of young people and close the youth detention center at the CFJC (Children and Family Justice Center).

**Discussion Topic:** *Alternatives and Structures Substitutions for Youth Detention Center: Future Resources and Support to Prevent Youth Criminal Legal System Involvement*

Parents deliberated in a length to discuss other alternatives that can change the status quo of detaining young people. Some parents felt that there is a disconnect between the youth and parents which makes it difficult to communicate and understand where the youth are coming from. One parent mentioned that just the name “Jail” is scary for any parent let alone a youth and instead should be referred to “Youth Rehabilitation Center”, where youth can attain education and skills that will sustain them to integrate back into the community, if they serve time for major crimes. Parents felt that the justice system is difficult to navigate especially for new immigrants and those that have limited English proficiency. If a youth commits a minor crime, he or she should be given a community-based mentor/counselor/advocate instead of incarceration. Some parents reiterated that most of the Somali/East African youth are bored because there are no community needs programs such as mentoring, job skills training, counseling, after school/holiday/summer enrichment programs that can keep the youth occupied, engaged, work as a team or collaborate and help discover their roots. These programs should be culturally tailored and competent to fit the needs of the community. The parent group agreed to the idea of providing ample resources and funding to Somali community organizations to provide culturally competent programs including mental health and youth development.

Youth participants identified conflict resolutions like those implemented at school sites and local Mosques. They expressed that the girls' and boys' guide programs in their schools are helpful to their peers at school who attend these programs. However, they didn't attend these school programs because they didn't feel comfortable.

They usually participate in programs offered at culturally specific organizations because of their sense of belonging and being culturally responsive. Some youth and parents expressed that mentoring, health education/awareness for example, the effects of drugs to the body, addressing mental illness/stress/trauma, counseling/anger management, rehabs and other programs that tailor and understand the community needs and cultural perspectives are critical and serve as great substitutes for youth detention centers. Labeling and conflict theories were examined as to how these theories can help prevent youth crimes. This session started off by recapping what we had talked about last session. We reviewed what accountability was, and what it looked like to be held accountable. We shifted the conversation to different theories of why crime exists by breaking them down, thinking about types of crimes that exemplifies each, and then strategizing prevention methods.

First, we discussed labeling theory. Labeling theory predicates that telling or branding someone a criminal will lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is all people see when they look at them, so they may as well be that person. The youth then brainstormed a few examples of labeling theory, which included theft, drug use, gang involvement, and having the label of criminal following an individual through life. The conversation shifted to discussing ways in which society could pivot to prevent crime based on this theory. At the beginning of the conversation, we talked about ban the box movement where people would stop having to identify if they had ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony on housing and job applications. The youth also came up with alternative afterschool activities, mental health resources, and education programs.

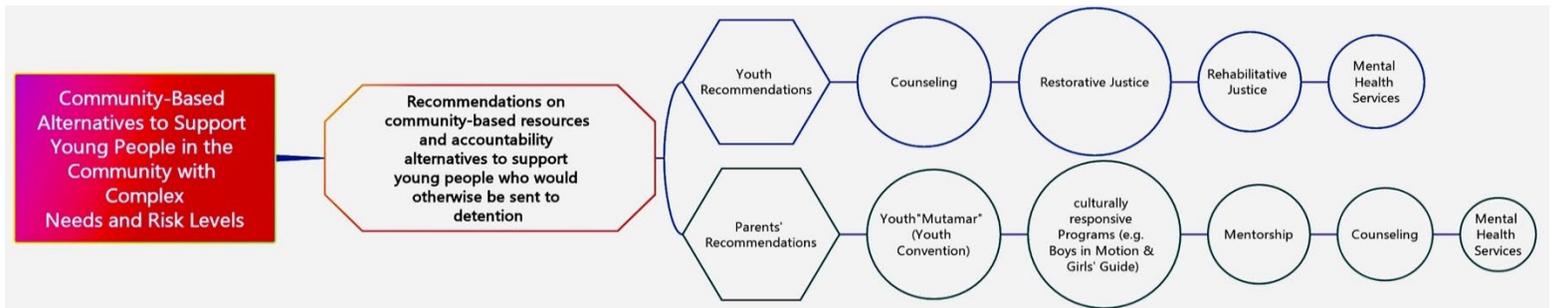
Secondly, we discussed the conflict theory of crime. This was explained to the youth by saying crime is a product of the unequal distribution of resources. We further explained the theory in terms of wealth and power, that a few in the society have a large portion of the wealth, and the remaining are fought over by the rest of the population. The main examples that youth thought of was theft, and gang involvement. The youth believed the main cause of crime is poverty which is a part of conflict theory. They were unsure of how this theory could be used to prevent crime. From their opinion, this is an issue that needs to be handled by the government or policy, they weren't sure how on a larger or smaller scale communities could fix this issue.

During this session as facilitators, we learned that the youth participated and understood concepts when they were broken down more. They appreciated focusing in on one theory and breaking it down versus asking high level questions. The youth also had a hard time thinking about local prevention methods that could be initiated but also, effective. We began a conversation of what the youth thought about potential alternatives to detention when a youth commits serious harm. In order to clarify to the youth, the gravity of harm we provided examples of the crimes such as sexual assault, rape and physical assault. This led to a drastic change in the way the youth thought about detention. The youth felt that once a person assaults another then the safety of the community would be impacted if that youth is kept in the community versus in a detention facility. But many of the youth felt that mental health resources should be available to help address root causes of crimes, and help the youth come up with healthier coping mechanisms to avoid further involvement. The youth mention that the government should work hand-in-hand with the community organizations and provide resources to prevent all these crimes happening.

Finally, the parents shared the idea of hosting Youth "Mutamar" (youth convention), which invites local and youth imams to provide and share enlightening lectures and activities that will aid and raise awareness in preventing youth crimes and creating a sustainable community. The parents mentioned and agreed that if the program/alternatives are implemented in a holistic manner/approach that is tailored to the community needs. The community will be aware of what is going on with their youths and create community owned platforms to address youth issues. Parents also expressed that there are cultural, and sometimes religious differences between the communities as compared to country of origin, although many have lived in the United States for a quite a while. Some are now able to better understand the impact of diversity on youth development. Hence developing culturally competent programming, will help the youth better understand themselves, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. It will also give them the ability to compare different cultures with their own and better understand the differences.

**Discussion Topic:** *Recommendations on community-based resources and accountability alternatives to support young people who would otherwise be sent to detention*

Below is mind map of participants' recommendations.



Both youth and parents would like to see a community driven diversion program that tailors to their needs through the services and support by the Somali and East African mentors, peer counselor, mental health/behavioral therapist and coaches. These providers like Somali Family Safety Task Force are people who have the understanding of the youth and parents background and belief system as it relates to their race, ethnicity, and other important elements that make up someone's culture and/or identity.

Counseling/mental health are a very important aspect of community's mental and social wellbeing as the youth's parents have gone through trauma from the civil war in their native country and it's often been difficult to engage positive conversation with youth who are disconnected from their culture and norms. The youth also would require culturally responsive and a community-oriented counseling/mental health program that's inclusive, culturally relevant, educative, engaging and empowering. This would require sustainable funding and resources to Community Based Organizations.

In terms of restorative justice, both youth and parents have highlighted the need for a conflict resolution mechanisms, mediation and family group meetings between the youth that committed a crime and those impacted by the crime. This process will create cohesiveness among parties and community members.

The youth have stressed on rehabilitative justice which understands the harm committed by youth but engages communities in solutions. They see a rehabilitative justice as phenomenon that restores the youth's dignity,

information, validates their opinions/ideas, protects and offers them the opportunities to participate/model Care and Closure: Progress Report on the Strategic Planning Process for the Future of Secure Juvenile Detention Page | 144

themselves as people who made mistakes and would like to get a path to succeed in life and contribute to society. The youth quoted “We want to be part of the process and solutions, not outsiders as it is right now”. The youth felt that their rights are not respected when they get into trouble, and thus they become a victim of the process.

This project provided a platform for marginalized community members to participate in a collaborative, inclusive decision-making process. They offered their input and recommendations on preventing, diverting, rehabilitating, and reducing harm – a path to zero youth detention centers. On the other hand, participants were enlightened that the well-being of youth depends on actively engaging youth in activities that center on shared desirable values and working collaboratively to successfully meet the mission of a path to zero youth detentions. Hence, as a cooperative society, we have better choices than incarceration.

## **APPENDIX ATTENDANCE**

<b>YOUTH</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PARENTS</b>	<b>DATE</b>
20	02/03/2023	13	02/04/2023
20	02/10/2023	13	02/11/2023
20	02/17/2023	13	02/18/2023
20	02/24/2023	13	02/25/2023
20	03/03/2023	13	03/04/2023



padlet

# Ways Government & Community Entities Respond When Youth Commit Harm in Their Communities!

FARDUSA SHARIF FEB 10, 2023 06:15PM UTC

## How does the government respond when a young person commits harm in their community?

Put them in juvenile, expel them from schools, community service work

Find the appropriate consequence for them that fits the crime-

Juvenile

Make them go to juvenile

Take them to a juvenile delinquency center and give punishments according to the type of crime.

**The community should respond by forcing them to community device hours and should be given a warning**

**You give them punishments but lesser than an older person that commits the crime.**

Wait until they hit 18 so they could actually go to jail for their crime

Juvenile, community service

Juvenile

## How does the community respond when a young person commits harm in their community?

Receives backlash/ may influence other peers-

Avoid them

Judge the family of the young person, keep their kids away from the young person

Inspire other people

Avoid them

**By giving a warning to the person and giving them a second chance**

Think that person can be a bad influence on others.

Goes unnoticed.

Shamed

Shame talk bad about them



Seattle Office  
7054 32nd Avenue South - Room 207 Suite 5  
Seattle, WA 98118

## How should the government respond when a young person commits harm in their community?

Ask them why they did it [redacted]

The community or government may respond by talking to the person that did the crime according to the extend

Give them help and if they refuse, they should be put in juvenile.

Counseling give them help ask them why they did it

## How should the community respond when a young person commits harm in their community?

Provide support for the family [redacted]

Try to figure out why they committed the crime and try to help/guide them

Give support to the young person

I think the government or community should consider what type of crime the adolescent committed or why they committed the crimes in the first place. One may also be unstable due to drugs or even have a mental illness which is important to consider. They may get consoled and get medical help or treatment.

[redacted]

how I think the community should respond when a young person commits harm is to do therapy, counseling, or talking to someone educated because putting a young person in juvenile can give them serious mental issues/ feel neglected. [redacted]

It depends on the crime. For example, for murder they should 100% be charged as an adult. Because if you could commit that kinda crime you could serve the time too. And if it's a minor crime

they should be left off with a warning. But if they continuously commit the crime, they should be put on community service or locked up for a couple days.

## What does accountability mean to you?

Being responsible for your actions

[redacted]

Knowing that what you did was wrong and taking action to try and fix it [redacted]

### To own up to your actions

Responsibility to your own actions

knowing what you did and responsible for ur action  
-najmo

being responsible for what you did

### It means taking reponseblity, even if you don't get caught you, you still have to take responsiblity for that crime.

Having to accept the consequences of your own actions.

Getting evaluated base on a persons actions or being responsible. Ways ones show this or for example getting punished or facing a consequence- [redacted]

## What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused severe harm in their communities?

Apologizes, consequences, Couselin [redacted]

Counseling

Communicate with them

Talk to them



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padlet

# Alternatives and Structures Substitutions for Youth Detention Center: Future Resources and Support to Prevent Youth Criminal Legal System Involvement

FARDUSA SHARIF FEB 22, 2023 12:32AM UTC

## What resources or support would youth and their family need to prevent future involvement in the criminal legal system?

### Tutoring Services

I



Talking to a counselor

### Sports programs

II

### After school programs



Community gatherings

Talk too someone



Therapist



Tutoring



After school programs



Mentoring programs



Therapy sessions or programs



Having age/gender group gatherings

Good support.



### Joining youth programs / sport teams



Counseling



Therapy

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# Care & Closure Community Engagement

## Summary of Findings

### Submitted by Victim Support Services

March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### Section 1: Overview

#### Organization Description

Victim Support Services (VSS) is a 501C3 non-profit organization that provides free services to victims of crime and their loved ones in King, Snohomish, Skagit, Island, and Whatcom counties. Established in 1975, it is the longest standing Crime Victim Service Center in the state, and is the lead agency dedicated to providing comprehensive services to victims of general crime in western Washington. The mission of the agency is to support victims of crime through advocacy, education, and awareness. Program services include crisis intervention, personal advocacy, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, assistance with Crime Victims Compensation applications, emergency financial assistance, information and referrals, outreach and awareness, courtroom support, media intervention, advocate training, and system coordination. Unlike system-based Advocacy programs, VSS is community-based, which means that VSS provides services to clients *regardless of the presence/absence of a law enforcement report, and regardless of their immigration status.*

#### Activities Completed

VSS completed three (3) listening group sessions across the project period - all of which were conducted virtually, through the Zoom platform. The goal of these sessions was to engage with persons who had been impacted by crimes committed by youth, through guided questions, active listening, and detailed documentation of participant responses and ideas. Details on the dates of each session, and number of participants are included in Appendix 1.

#### Impacted Individuals Engaged

VSS engaged 52 participants, although we did not require folks to disclose the exact nature of their impact. From the conversations that were held, we were able to determine that more than 75% of the participants (39+ group attendees) appeared to be family members of individuals who had been impacted by juvenile criminal activity. The remaining 25% (approximate) included either community members and/or individuals who had been directly impacted by crime.

#### Summarized demographic information

Due to the nature of our work, minimal demographic information was asked of participants. During the initial screening of applicants for the groups, we found that there was substantial concern about remaining anonymous throughout this project. All participants were assured that their names and identities would be kept strictly confidential. Overall, we engaged 25 males, 26 females, and 1 non-binary participant. 10 of the participants were current/former VSS clients.

# Care & Closure Community Engagement

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Submitted by Victim Support Services

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### Outreach Activities

At the inception of the program, VSS created flyers to announce the project and the planned community engagement listening sessions. The flyers were regularly distributed through our social media platforms, as well as in our quarterly newsletter, and via several mass emails that went out to our network of over 4,000 email subscribers. Additionally, the two VSS staffers working on this project created a spreadsheet with all middle and high schools, as well as Colleges and Universities throughout King County. Emails were sent to the Counseling Department of each of these institutions, with a request to share the information with students and their families. Finally, 187 personalized emails were sent to our entire professional network, which includes a number of social service agencies, other Crime Victim Service Centers, mental health professionals, Law Enforcement, Veteran's Associations, and so on. VSS also informed its current clients of the opportunity to participate in the project.

## Section 2: Key Findings

### Main Ideas that Emerged

The most common theme noted in all three listening sessions was a general agreement across the majority of participants that there is a **need to keep the Youth Detention Center**, or to at least have it as a viable option for the most violent offenders. While participants seemed to mostly agree that **there is a benefit to having and expanding community based options**, there was an obvious concern for community safety if the center closes. Participants in the listening sessions presented feedback that **there is not one clear-cut answer that will be fitting for all situations**, but that **accountability** should be a top priority and focus, when harm is committed. Other key ideas included increased support for parents and families of at-risk youth, increased community involvement and increased funding for (and collaboration between) social service agencies that can provide such support, and increased victim involvement in the criminal justice/restorative justice process.

### Quotes Relating to Key Ideas

#### Need for the Detention Center:

"Youth who do harm should be incarcerated for the safety of the community, at least until they get counseling and have the chance to earn the trust of the community before being released."

"I honestly believe that alternatives to detention are necessary, but even before it gets to that point, I think there needs to be some type of diversion programs where these troubled youth can speak to victims of crime directly and share their experiences so they can fully understand the weight of their potential actions. For example, a young person charged with driving under

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

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#### Submitted by Victim Support Services

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the influence should be made to attend a group where people who have lost loved ones to a DUI can get up in front of them to share their experiences and grief. Why not require these children or youth to go to attend victim experience sessions. It might change their future behavior”

“There is much that can be done to reduce the need for detention centers, but closing the youth detention center should only be done if there is a way to assure the community is safe from violent or repeat offenders, youth or otherwise. Identifying at-risk youth and providing early intervention including education and counseling to redirect them and show the cause-and-effect relationships is key.”

“Accountability is important and it is not realistic to think that we do not need the detention center.”

“Exhibiting that there are harsh zero-tolerance responses to crime is the only way to deter it from happening.”

#### Feelings on Expanding Community-Based Alternatives:

“This is a great concept in theory. But the diversion programs should be limited for those who can complete a matrix that will more accurately predict success for those troubled kids.”

“Programs should focus on mental health. Most of the issues start from mental health so if we can counsel and help youth with that then most of the issues will resolve themselves. Not all, I’m sure. But guidance and discipline from a mentor that can at least set them up better to start on a path to avoid incarceration down the line.”

“We need both – detention and alternatives. Not all youth criminals need to be confined, and not all youths will want or accept the alternatives. Where will youths that are so violent and hostile or aggressive go? They can’t go to an adult prison because they are youths. They can’t just be let alone in public – that’s a safety concern to others. There needs to be a place where these youths can go.”

“There needs to be alternative sources of release of energy in the form of public spaces where youth are welcome to visit, play, and interact with their counterparts. Parks, playgrounds, playing fields, recreational spaces. I am not entirely sure this precludes the need for the detention center, but it may help to offset the impact of it being closed. There will also need to be some type of monitoring for young criminals, with responsibility and reporting, and possible tracking of some kind.”

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

### Summary of Findings

#### Submitted by Victim Support Services

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“I believe these community-based alternatives need to be in place. More restorative justice-focused alternatives. The more involved and invested the community is the more chance of healing and less chance of recidivism.”

#### No Cookie-Cutter Approach:

“The key is prevention, so creating alternatives for juvenile detention centers might be a great way to get ahead of the problem, but I feel like there will always need to be some type of accountability therefore eliminating the detention center is not a good option. Is there some other option to have a center that focuses on *preventing* crimes? I don’t know what that would look like.”

“The punishment should fit the crime. I think each of these youth should be individually assessed by an appropriate professional, therapist or whatever, to determine the seriousness of their crime and figure out if they have a history of this behavior, or what their family situation has been. I really think there’s kids who can’t be helped. Maybe there’s something just wrong with them in their head and there’s no way to keep them from doing *really* bad things. Others may have just fallen in with a wrong group of kids or something.”

#### Accountability:

“I feel accountability should be the top priority and focus when harm is committed. Punishing people and not encouraging them to take accountability rarely proves effective. During my years of prison volunteering, I’ve been shown that offenders often want to take accountability. Most often, this desire to face up to their actions comes after years of incarceration, but it shows that in most humans there is a need to be forgiven.”

“Victims of crime are often forgotten and sometimes even re-victimized by the system. They should allow us to fully participate in decisions that concern us, and provide us with the assistance support, and protection we need. A fair and effective criminal justice system that respects the fundamental rights of not just victims, but also the offenders and suspects. But there is a need to protect and assist victims and keep the focus on that. These young criminals need to know how their actions affected our lives. We should have more opportunities to be able to express that to them. Maybe have a place like VSS help us facilitate those kind of conversations or mandate them to have a session or a class with the Advocates to help try to understand how their actions have affected others.”

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

### Summary of Findings

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#### Most Common Responses to Questions

*Q.1 – How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities?*

- a. There appears to be an overreliance of people on the government to fix problems that should be addressed at home.
- b. Incarceration – even if temporarily.

*Q.2 – What does accountability mean to you?*

- a. Taking responsibility for your actions - not blaming your actions on society.
- b. Understanding the weight of one's actions.

*Q3. How could existing community diversion programs for youth be strengthened?*

- a. Developing specialized resources and increasing accessibility to them.
- b. Having them focus on mental health.
- c. More funding for better programs.

*Q4: What do you think about the idea of expanding community-based alternatives to meet the needs of young people in detention and closing the detention center at the CFJC?*

- a. Good idea in theory, but unsure of the feasibility of it in practice.
- b. There is a need for both.
- c. A clear majority were not in favor of closing the center.

*Q5: What do you think it would take to close the youth center at the CFJC?*

- a. Do better at identifying at-risk youth and providing prevention/intervention activities and programs for them.
- b. Educational programs and family support for at-risk youth.
- c. More investment from the community to assist with these efforts.
- d. More restorative-justice focused alternatives.

*Q6: What resources or support would you/your family need to prevent your future involvement in the criminal legal system?*

- a. Resources such as victim services.
- b. Crime deterrents for people with limited resources – example: provide free Ring cameras to those in need to deter mail theft or home burglary.

*Q7: How would you like to see the space used and/or repurposed if the youth detention center at the CFJC is closed?*

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

### Summary of Findings

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**\*MW Note** – A full list of suggestions is provided in Section 3 of this report, however the most common responses appeared to be:

- a. An educational/mentorship center for youth with collaborative wrap-around services.
- b. A place for crime victims.

#### Sub-group trends

There was a range of opinions and observations expressed throughout the listening sessions. Interestingly enough, no immediate differences in responses were evident among sub-groups of participants. The responses varied slightly, but we found no obvious trends in responses, based on gender, age, ethnicity, etc.

#### Notes to Advisory Committee and King County Staff

It was demonstrated throughout all three listening sessions that victims generally feel that diversion programs and community-based alternatives to the detention center should be an available option, but it is not suited for every victim or every offender. It is worth noting that there appeared to be a majority opinion of the participants that the closure of the detention center is an overly ambitious goal that would ultimately be harmful to the community without some clear and comprehensive alternatives in place. There was expression that it seems the government decision would be taking it from one extreme to another.

Much of the feedback from participants emphasized a government failure to consider or to be responsive to personal and often severe (even community-wide) trauma, while on the other hand, utilizing funds to cater to the offender. One group participant was vocal about the ease with which the Juvenile Detention Center was rebuilt just a couple years ago, at the expense of over \$240 million dollars, and now there is discussion of closing it. This comment resulted in the agreement of the entire group, and multiple comments were made about that funding being better spent on services for victims, with reference to the recent closure of several Victim Advocacy Centers and programs across the state due to reduced funding. One victim commented that this type of activity is a “slap in the face” to victims and leaves victims feeling “disrespected and irrelevant” as they continue to navigate their trauma and grief with limited resources.

#### Interesting or Surprising Findings/Feedback

One interesting, but not surprising finding across the three groups, was the impact that one person could have on the climate of the entire group when they shared some of their personal experiences with the group. An example of this is provided in more detail in Appendix 3 – (*see notes on the March 23 group session*). Additionally, there was one participant who stood out across the three listening sessions as having been immediately impacted by crime committed

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

### Summary of Findings

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by youth – she shared that a group of her friends in High School had murdered her brother. She went on to explain that after some time went by, she began volunteering in prisons to try to deepen her understanding and empathy for why individuals choose to commit harm to others. In doing this, she came to form a relationship with her brother’s murderer and eventually forgave him. This participant was the only one across the three groups who shared an opinion that reflected (only) optimism about the endeavor to close the youth center. Regarding accountability, she shared the following feedback: “Some effective ways I’ve witnessed to create accountability are victim/offender dialogues, peer-led ‘accountability circles’, which encourages the tough admissions by offenders about how their crime affected their victim, and compassion circles, which offer a safe space for offenders to express their feelings about their crime.”

### **Section 3: Recommendations on Community-Based Alternatives**

There were some suggestions for potential community-based alternatives to secure detention that may prove helpful in supporting youth healing, accountability, and community safety. These included:

- a. An alternative school for youth who commit serious crimes that will keep violent offenders away from the wider community, while also assisting them in receiving an education.
- b. Empowerment Center for youth.
- c. A center to assist people with mental health, substance abuse, education, counseling, case management, social services.
- d. Keep the building for view later to know it once existed and remind offenders of what could happen if they re-offend.
- e. A community-based wellness center.
- f. Homeless shelter.
- g. Community/Recreational park with free public space for youth to meet up and expend energy in a healthful fashion (game courts, walking trails, etc.).
- h. Mental health resources and services
- i. Donate space for Crime Victim Advocacy Services or sell the building and donate the funds to them.
- j. A place for mentorship programs for youth.
- k. Use it as a place where the youth have mandated daily/weekly check-in visits with a caseworker.
- l. An additional Police Department or a specialized Task Force for dealing with youth crimes.
- m. Vocational training and educational programs.
- n. Youth shelter.

# Care & Closure Community Engagement

## Summary of Findings

Submitted by Victim Support Services

March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### APPENDIX 1: Engagement Activities

#### Listening sessions:

March 01, 2023 – Listening Session # 1

Zoom platform

20 attendees plus two (2) VSS Facilitators

March 22, 2023 – Listening Session # 2

Zoom platform

17 attendees, plus two (2) VSS Facilitators

March 23, 2023 – Listening Session # 3

Zoom platform

15 attendees, plus two (2) VSS Facilitators

**Total hours spent on the project:** 123 hours

#### **VSS staff involved in the project:**

Dr. Michaela Weber

Executive Director

Leslie McPherson, NCA

Programs Administrator

#### **Engagement:**

Across the duration of the project, we had 64 total interested participants. Upon further screening, we engaged the participants who we felt best fit the desired criteria, and who were able to attend the planned listening sessions.

While we originally planned for 50 total project participants, we engaged 52. Since we used electronic incentive cards, we saved \$100 in funds toward postage, and thus decided to include two additional participants for added community engagement and feedback.

# Care & Closure Community Engagement

## Summary of Findings

Submitted by Victim Support Services

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### APPENDIX 2 - Engagement Questions

1. How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities?

Sub Q: By comparison, how should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities?

2. What does accountability mean to you?

Sub Q: What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?

3. Does anyone here have experience with current community diversion programs?

Sub Q: How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?

Sub Q2: Is there a way to equitably direct specialized resources towards youth at greatest risk of committing violent crime or serious, repetitive crimes.

4. Alternatives to detention and confinement are approaches sometimes taken to prevent juveniles from being placed in either secure detention or confinement facilities when other treatment options, community-based sanctions, or residential placements are more appropriate. What do you think about the idea of expanding community-based alternatives to meet the needs of young people in detention and closing the youth detention center at the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center?

5. What do you think it would take to close the youth detention center? More specifically, what alternatives or structures need to be in place so that the youth detention center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?

6. What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent your future involvement in the criminal legal system?

7. How would you like see the space used or repurposed if the youth detention center is closed?

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

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### APPENDIX 3 - Listening Session Notes

At the onset of each listening group, VSS hosts shared the purpose of the session, and thanked participants for their willingness to share valuable feedback on the topic. Of note, there was a resounding gratitude from participants for being included in the project as most stated that they felt that the inclusion of the victim's voice on such an individualized level was a novel approach to juvenile criminal response. The victim's perspective is an important element for understanding and consequently deciding how to repair the harm caused by crime.

#### March 01, 2023 – 5pm

20 attendees: 9 male, 11 female.

6 individuals who have received (or are currently receiving) services from Victim Support Services.

- Accountability is key to correcting behaviors that cause harm to other people and to communities. Allowing our youth to get off scot-free due to their age does not teach them lessons or create adults who will change that behavior. Maybe the government should adopt some national service initiatives at the local level to provide youth with opportunities to assist their communities somehow.”
- Significant discussion about *prevention versus intervention* of truancy. Participants discussed the importance of school and after-school activities as an effective preventative measure, as well as mandating life skills classes in middle and high schools – to include classes on things such as budgeting, career prep, and conflict management.
  - Other suggestions: assigning staff to identify students from an early age, who may be at risk for traveling down a bad path. Create alternative classes/programs for those students to create an environment where they may be more inclined to succeed and turn around bad life choices.
  - Participant Quote: “*These kids should be made to tour tough detention facilities and sit in on legal proceedings to remove the glamour that Hollywood and television has created.*”
  - Create partnerships with established community groups (example: Churches, Big Brothers/Sisters, YMCA, etc.) to serve as mentors for at-risk youth – may help to create a better sense of support and community for those children and their families.
  - Ensure that these programs and partnerships are culturally relevant.

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

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- Participant Quote: *“What about family support for the families of at-risk youth? Some of these young people come from really bad home life? Is there some way there could be a program that works with the whole family early on so that the whole family until gets involved, rather than waiting until it is too late and their child has committed a horrible crime?”*
- There is benefit to a collaborative culture across the county with the different social service agencies and programs. They will need to work together in order to be able to provide the most effective comprehensive services for an endeavor such as closure of the detention center. With this, comes a need for additional funding to support this and make it sustainable for the long-term.
  - Relevant Participant Quote: *“Working in the social service field myself, I understand more than most, how funding will be the determining factor in the success or failure of this type of goal. It is a big goal, and big goals need big money to back them up. Let’s say all of the people working together on this project decide to come together and provide all these suggested services...or even some of them...who will make sure that there is enough sustainable funding to keep them running? Which entity is going to be responsible for that? Because I know from experience, it’s really tough to get collaboration in social services when places are competing for resources. And by resources, I mean money...funding. So it might be a great idea in theory, but I can’t visualize how it will turn out in practice.”*

#### March 22, 2023 – 5PM

17 attendees: 8 male, 9 female

2 individuals who have received (or are currently receiving) services from Victim Support Services.

- Discussion at length about gang activity in/around King County. Are there programs outside of LE that track youth gang activity? Prevention/intervention programs for gang-related incidents – for both victims and offenders.
  - Participant quote: *“Sometimes it’s tough to draw a clear line between a victim and offender when it comes to gang violence because some of these kids; especially those who are very young...may feel like they have no choice but to join an area gang because they have such few resources or support at home. They may feel it’s do or die for them In my opinion that makes them a victim.”*

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

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- Are there residential programs that can function as group homes for children at-risk of joining gangs? What about re-entry programs and support for youth when it is time to exit these types of programs?
- Brief discussion about gun control; began to veer slightly into politics – VSS host had to redirect the conversation to keep the focus relevant.
- School plays a big role in reinforcing values that are (or should be) taught and instilled at home. Some group participants feel that a breakdown in the family at home is likely a root cause of youth turning to crime. Others felt the school system owned more of the responsibility and cited that schools no longer have the ability to teach and enforce rules and expectations, as they once did.
  - School Resource Officers and Guidance Counselors could be helpful in this endeavor – and in working with families who may be struggling with resources, or unable to provide adequate support or guidance for their at-risk children.
  - Conversation drifted back to firearms in school and school shootings – redirected by VSS host.
- Participant Quote: *“I read once that most crimes by kids happen in the afternoon hours between 2 and 6pm so maybe schools can get funded to develop targeted after-school programs when students have been identified as at-risk for whatever reason...maybe from 3pm to 6pm, and those programs can have classes from community partners and other activities to keep kids out of trouble.”*

#### **March 23, 2023, 10AM**

15 attendees: 8 males, 6 female, 1 non-binary

2 individuals who have received (or are currently receiving) services from Victim Support Services.

**MW note:** This group had an interesting dynamic as two of the attendees are currently involved in a court case involving the early release of an offender who brutally murdered their sibling in 2000. The offender was 19 y/o at the time of the murder. There have been several news articles recently about this particular case, as the family continues to grieve the loss, and feel strongly that a person who commits such a violent and heinous act is not capable of being “rehabilitated”. The participant, along with his wife, were present in this group and shared their experience with the group, for context. In an emotional outpouring, this participant shared that to this day, he cannot even stand to look at the offender. He expressed how the crime had affected his family and that, for years, the entire family did not feel safe in any environment,

## Care & Closure Community Engagement

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highlighting that even 23 years later, he is convinced that this individual is a danger to society and that had their not been a detention center, this individual would have been allowed to walk freely and likely would have repeated the crime. This was a more emotionally charged group, as a result (I believe). Once the participants shared their experience toward the beginning of the group, it is my opinion that the other groups members took on a less optimistic view of the feasibility of alternative options to a youth detention center, particularly for violent offenders, regardless of age. By its nature, this topic is likely to glean some negative feedback from individuals who have been directly impacted by crime(s) committed by youth; however, I want to point out that the added emotional charge of this particular group appeared to result in responses that seemed more prone to emphasis on the negative impacts of closure of the youth detention center, as well as the possible impacts of this on the wider community. VSS hosts would like to provide the disclaimer that this consequence was neither intended nor encouraged/discouraged. VSS hosts made it clear to each group, at the outset, that **all opinions and feedback** throughout the sessions is/was relevant and that in no way would the VSS hosts provide any judgement of such opinions.

#### Some direct participant quotes throughout this session:

“It will be a bad decision by the public and ignorant politicians to close down the center. They think they know better and have a bleeding heart for the youths but in reality, they live in a bubble that is nothing like the environment they are trying to change and think they know better. I don’t think there are alternatives for the high risk and highly violent youths in the center closes.”

“The existing diversion programs need to remove this major push of diversity into every aspect of society. Focus on that everyone is human, accepting the cultural differences and leaving race out of the equation. Everyone deserves help regardless of who you are.”

“Absolutely do not close the detention center; it would be insane. Period. At this point, there is no acceptable alternative.” (\***MW note:** multiple agreements to this statement)

“I would like King County Government to explain to us how this will make us feel safer? Explain to me how you will ensure public safety and keep serious, violent and repeat offenders from re-offending.”

“The youth need to be made to know the weight of the harm they caused and how disastrous it is towards the development and harmony of the community; that it’s very serious and they should be made to face the law.”

## **Care & Closure Community Engagement**

### **Summary of Findings**

**Submitted by Victim Support Services**

**March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

“There needs to be clear and consistent consequences for youth who commit crimes. Going from a Detention Center to alternative programs doesn’t seem consistent. Especially if word gets around among them that if they steal, for example, they will just be made to attend some classes, and then they can get back to life as if nothing happened. Then the victims of that theft are let worrying if that kid or their friends are going to come back and do it again because the consequences weren’t severe enough.”

“I think this is just a sad situation all around. I don’t think there is one good or right answer to please everyone. Do I think closing the actual center is going to be better in the long run? For the criminals, probably. But not for the majority.”

Your Money Matters Mentoring  
Summary of Findings

Section 1: Overview

- 1) **Organization Overview:** Your Money Matters Mentoring (YMMM) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission to provide financial education with one-on-one and/or group financial mentorship for economically vulnerable youth and young adults. YMM was launched to fill the gap existing between classroom-based financial literacy education and financial coaching, counseling, and advising. Since our inception in 2018, we have helped over 3,000 students, including youth and young adults (16-25) who are involved in K-12, post-secondary education, workforce development programs, and those transitioning out of the U.S justice system to re-enter society. There is a huge need in our community for more culturally relevant financial education and mentoring support for economically vulnerable students of color. By providing financial literacy to economically vulnerable youth and young adults, we empower them and their communities leading to food security, a stronger and educated workforce, which translates into lower crime rate, fewer foreclosures in our communities, less stress in our lives and happier individuals and families. A 2010 estimate put the figure of youth and adults living with a felony conviction at 5.85 million. Life after prison can be a huge challenge—and this is definitely true when it comes to money. Even after serving time for a felony conviction, formerly justice involved people can remain legally bound to the judicial system for the rest of their lives due to court-imposed fines and fees related to their crime. In some counties in Washington State that adds up to an average of \$9,204, according to Alexes Harris’s new book *A Pound of Flesh*. Washington State collected \$30 million dollars in Legal Fine Obligations (LFOs) in 2012, according to Harris. About 19,000 new debt accounts are added every year for formerly justice involved people. To provide financial education and mentoring support for current or previously justice involved individuals in a structured program designed to assist them with their financial wellness as they transition back into society. The need for more culturally relevant financial education, mentoring support and post-release direct services will help formally justice involved participants establish money management habits, leading to making better financial decisions, lowering their debt, and reduce the number of new debt accounts lowering the possibility of recidivism, thus creating safer communities.
- 2) **Engagement Activities:** YMMM facilitated four in-person listening sessions each session lasted 90 minutes using questions provided by the county. In attendance were community members, family members, and youth participants. YMMM posed question in a power point and went over each question one at a time giving time for those who wanted to comment to do so. YMMM staff would ask follow-up questions based on participants response to the scripted questions. Participants were also able to ask questions from one another and make comments thought-out the discussion.
- 3) **Number of Participants:** 66 attendees participated in the four in-person listening sessions.

- 4) **Demographic Information:** The age of attendee’s range between 14-60 years old. A majority of participants who attended represented the Latinx, East Indian, and African American communities. More than half of the attendees reported had been impacted by the criminal legal system either personally, through a family member, or a close friend.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
Youth under 25 years old	46
Parents	6
Community members	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>

- 5) **Outreach:** Outreach was done through advertising the listening sessions on all YMMM social media platforms, flyers and sign-up information was sent out across the local school districts in Kent, Federal Way, and Auburn. We also shared the information with community partners through our Auburn Roundtable group.

Section 2: Key Findings

- 1) **Main Ideas:** There were several key themes that came out of the listening sessions. When asked about how the government and community should respond to harm, young people consistently stated the legal system should try to find out why the youth committed the crime. The youth encouraged the legal system should try to find out what the youth might have been going through at the time of the offense. Participants said that youth will do things they don’t want to do to fit in or help them to relax. Participants also shared that not all youth need detention centers unless they are endangering themselves or others. When asked about youth harming others, youth and community members shared that youth have a lot of stuff going on in their lives and committing crimes for a many youths is a direct reaction to their challenging life’s circumstances.

The listening sessions also focused on the question about what resources are needed to support youth and families. The youth stated that they wanted the government and community to offer more programs in the community that youth can be involved in that give them different options so gangs and just hanging out isn’t an option. The youth also highlighted a great need for more trusted adults to engage with. Lasty, youth said multiple times that they more supportive services to deal with prevalent mental issues and drug issues.

- 2) **Participant Quotes:** Almost unanimously, many of the youth throughout the four listening sessions mentioned some variation of: “Do they [the legal system] really care about what we’re dealing with or going through out here?” They also said: “It’s not always what it seems like; people need to take time to find out what the young person is dealing with. There’s so much going on in our lives.” These were comments made by youth throughout the listening sessions. These comments were made as follow ups from the question on what supports young people need and how should the government and community respond when a young person creates harm.
- 3) **Common Responses:** As mentioned above, youth encouraged government and community partners to try to find out why the youth committed the crime and try to find out what the

youth might have been going through. young people going to group homes instead of juvenile detention. Youth, parents, and community members shared that we need more people to redeem themselves and that we need to help them change their lives. Parents and youth also highlighted that if we are going to discourage activities, we need to have alternatives for young people that they can be involved in. There was a common response that we need to “replace bad activities with the good activities.” Some youth pointed out that peer pressure can influence youth to make good or bad decisions. Usually when their friends do stuff, the young people will want to do those things.

Parents and community members reflected on the challenges of keeping youth focused on positive activities. They reflected that sometimes they give them a warning or a reminder and depending on what the youths are doing, they can intervene. However, sometimes it is hard to keep kids in the house; it comes down to how are you training your kids and teaching them about bad decisions, especially when you live in bad neighborhoods and surrounded with people with bad reputations. Others reflected that for youth, sometimes you don’t know an issue is an issue until you see yourself with the consequence. Parents shared the sentiment that a lot of kids don’t want to listen.

**4.) Variation in Responses:** There was little difference in responses to the questions across the four listening sessions; they were consistent between each session. Youth were saying a lot of the same things, as highlighted above in the main idea section. Community members mentioned the importance of considering what a youth’s home life looks like and the environment that they come from. They also highlighted that everybody wants young people to be accountable and be held accountable for what they do. Some community members highlighted that there a difference between creating harm and breaking the law or committing a crime. Harm can be reckless ,while some crimes are just because of the law. When that community member looked at young people, they realized that for the vast majority of them, we are talking about crimes.

Some community members shared that to be effective, we need to isolate and separate the young people from their environment. We need remove all parties from the harm; we don’t want to see the young person go back to that same environment where they are likely to remake mistakes. However, separation does not mean confinement. Instead, we will need to create a reasonable and rapid response to remove them from the harm, provide support, and create a sustainable support plan. When young people end up in harm or create harm, we don’t want to confine them, but we shouldn’t just send them back into the community. If we send them back to the home, they may make the same mistakes because they do not have support. How do you distinguish if home is harmful to them too? When we look at harm and young people in the impoverished community, we need to get a broad understanding of info from the family, community, and systems – including schools.

**5.) What the Advisory Committee and King County Should Know:** Youth, parents, and community members urged the response to harm as one grounded in trying to find out why the youth committed the crime and trying to find out what the youth might have been going through.

Many participating youth highlighted that detention doesn't work and make outcomes worse. Many youth are afraid to ask for help and have to face the court system with adults around them. Sometimes they are afraid about who might come after them; perhaps there is a need for a more anonymous space. The environment in which a youth exists makes a big difference in whether or not a young person will ask for or accept help. Many participants believed that children should not be put in prison. They need rehabilitation services and connection to community. They do not need to be locked up in a psych ward; they need to be in community and understand that path.

Youth and community participants highlighted that we need more mentors. They pointed to a deficit of Black men in the community and in these youths' lives because of mass incarceration. The community needs more mentors who looks like our kids and have the lived experience of our kids. Funding is needed to support credible messengers and building a pipeline of caring adults in every setting where youth are. One person said: "In schools, teachers or guests that come to the school don't look like my kids. Black kids are more likely to be disciplined; our kids are coming from a different culture than law enforcement; we need folks who look like our kids and let's sit down and talk to our kids."

Youth and community members highlighted that accountability needs to exist for our young people, but that providing resources is a way to increase accountability. We need to transform the system so that we respond not in a punitive way but in a restorative and healing way.

**6.) Interesting or Surprising Information:** Another key message that was somewhat surprising was a focus on how we can better support parents and families of youth impacted by the system. Youth, parents, and community members shared that we mostly focus on the youth impacted by the system, but the parents and siblings need help too because the entire family is impacted by what's going on. It is critical that we ask youth, parents, and siblings what they need and connect the dots and resources for them. Sometimes there are programs but sometimes that's not the right program for the specific needs of the parents.

As a community and government, we need to create different partnerships and creating partnerships with parents in mind. We need to help them connect to resources because they often lack those resources and lack services to deal with kids who are getting in trouble. We need to loop the parents into the support for the youth and find trusted adults to help support them. We need to be aware that the family dynamics might be problem. Mentorship is always good to expand that support, someone they can talk to and be heard. Participants highlighted the need for more funding in community programs; when we talk about diversion, we need to reimagine diversion programs including financial literacy and supporting families with the resources to support them. Youth are concerned about making money; how do we promote those skills to make money in a positive way.

### Section 3: Recommendations on Community-Based Alternatives

- 1) Offer more programs in the community that youth can be involved in that give them options so gangs and hanging out isn't an option.
- 2) Address the need for more trusted adults to engage with, including expanding more mentoring programs.

- 3) Provide for the financial needs of youth and families and expand access to financial literacy education.
- 4) Increase awareness about existing resources in the community; there are some resources, but youth and families don't know how to find them.
- 5) Develop stronger diversion programs: support the coalition groups with the program instead of working with specific organizations who may not have the right services for every young person; facilitate capacity building and trainings with interacting with each other.
- 6) Expand mental health resources and training for staff in community support and diversion programs; staff who are directly impacted need healing and mental health support to best support youth and families
- 7) Advance legislative policy change and promote positive narratives; people who are voting for these kinds of centers, they have the wrong image of our young people

## Section 4: Appendices

### **1) Full list of all engagement activities**

Session 1: Listening session, Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> /13 attendees. Auburn WA

Session 2: Listening session, Feb 12<sup>th</sup> /13 attendees. Auburn WA

Session 3: Listening session, Feb 24<sup>th</sup> /5 attendees. Auburn WA

Session 4: Listening session, Mar 10<sup>th</sup> /36 attendees. Auburn WA

### **2) Questions for Engagement Activities**

- What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent future involvement with the criminal legal system?
- What alternatives or structures need to be in place so that the youth detention center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?
- How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities?
- How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities?
- How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?
- What does accountability mean to you?

### **3) Notes from Engagement Activities**

#### **January 22, 2023 Listening Session Notes**

Attendees: 13 members; 8 shared that they were personally impacted by the criminal legal system and the others shared that they have had family personally impacted

#### **Q: What is accountability to you?**

- Think about your next move
- Put thought into what you are doing before you make a decision
- Understanding your actions and consequences
- Owning up to your actions, taking responsibility
- Tangible Alternatives
- Knowing what is wrong and owning it.

#### **Q: How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities?**

- Question is very broad, and depends on the crime
- Education and treatment are a good start
- Look at the foundation of the minor that's committing the crime- what's the back story
- Are they willing to be accountable for their actions
- How the Community/environmental influence is shaping the minor
- “Instead of pushing them away, they should take these kids and actually help them”
- “Look at the root of the problem, cause of the harm from the root to prevent future problems”

- “Be held accountable for their actions”
- “Gov needs to look at how the community impacts the individual, isolation”

**Q: How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities?**

- They deserve to do time if they are mentally capable of knowing the difference
- Weigh all the factors
- Could be trauma
- Mental illness
- What are the alternatives
- Mental health evaluation is not given when asked or needed
- Teach educators how to deal with these students that have mental or emotional illnesses. What are the environmental factors that are leading to these harmful crimes?
- How is institutionalization hurting the youth- what kind of mental harm is being done to young people at such a young age not being given the opportunity to get help?
- Young people are acting on fight or flight mode
- Using restorative justice-retaliation comes into the circle
- The community is not what it used to be- we don’t see each other as humans
- Teach fundamentals
- Life skills are not given in school
- Understand the repercussions
- There are other alternatives other than what is seen on tv or what they hear from their peers
- How the gov should respond should work more with the community- it is more reactive than proactive
- If you had a prison record your opinion did not matter- now they are looking for your input
- What is rehabilitation? Inside it is an option to rehabilitate not a requirement
- What is the preventive measure being taken
- There is nothing in place to prevent young people from going from the classroom to prison
- “They gotta go sit down, go up in that cell and get their mind right”
- “Consider mental health, got us as a community as a voice”
- “Teach kids to address feelings in a non-violent way, non-violent alternatives”
- “The government can’t respond! Because they don’t know what it is like, they aint spend a day in that cell”
- “Isolate and contain, that doesn’t mean incarcerate, it means removing them from the place of danger so that they cannot retaliate”
- “We don’t see each other as humans anymore or communicate as we used to, we need to reteach the fundamentals, we need to get outside the mindset of sports -> that’s where we are failing as a community, it is a slim chance you make it to the NBA”

**Q: What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?**

- Not saying you shouldn't be accountable for your actions...

- Look at the mental health- was the crime a learned behavior-foundational instinct
- Look at the role models in the community
- The core values are the mission
- What are values in the home-is the family/spiritual practice at fault
- Who is speaking up in the family to seek the help of the minor before harm is done in the community
- We separate ourselves from the government when we are actually the government
- If we have to reform justice – Justice is out of wack
- Generational trauma the family foundation is harmful- therefore minors act out
- Families don't have the space to express their feelings generational what happens and home stays at home and I don't have time for your nonsense
- Effective ways to accountability-gov be more intentional with effective ways reaching kids in the schools-teach young people to have an impact on their own community
- Family structure is strong you won't get involved with crime or spirituality is solid.
- “Self-control, spirit, reevaluate what we are teaching at home”
- “We have instinct, we have to develop the whole person, he mentions foot-in-the-door phenomenon, most of the time harm is done in the family before it enters the community, we separate ourselves from government but we are a part of it, we put the people who are in power in power”
- “Self-structure in families, keep them in the house until they develop their spirituality, I was open to the world at 11 but I was looking for that stability outside of the home”

**Q: How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?**

- How could a program be strengthened-More money
- Peer base-people with lived experience
- Finding people to speak your language
- Those programs have a curriculum that steers them away from crime or influence.
- Teaching educators how to be peers to troubled teens so they are not triggered • Having a cultural influence is strong so they will not fall into the trap of life
- Not having that influence is where the narrative fails
- Strengthened diversion programs set in place that are relatable
- Diversion programs are biased
- Diversion is culturally relevant I need to hear from my peers or someone that looks like me. • Exposure-what is outside of our community needs cross-cultural experience • Lack of strategy to create a plan-it gives empowerment to move differently • Organizations are not working together to create change.
- Building consensus with young people to get a better understanding of where they are and how to deal with them on a daily basis
- “MORE FUNDING!!! Increasing or encouraging peer-based diversion programs, making sure those programs have structure that steers individuals away from harm”

- Having a strong social cultural identity or self of self protects one from harm, if it is shaken you will be more susceptible to bad influence
- Find people who are influential and relatable to the youth, so the youth will listen to them
- “The history they are teaching is their history about our history” make them more culturally relevant
- “We are not exposing ourselves outside of our zip codes, I think we should be exposed to educational systems outside of our area”
- “We got all these black lives matters signs but where is the action?”

**Q: What do you think about the idea of expanding community-based alternatives to meet the needs of young people in detention and closing the youth detention center?**

- Great Idea- but it shouldn’t be expanding the gov; the gov should be working together with community resources

**Q: What do you think would take to close the youth detention center?**

- Work between the community and gov
- Parents need to be responsible for their children and the influence they have on their children's future or outcome
- Need to have a strategy government who is going to be accountable
- Funds are used to educate and put in detention facilities
- Build leaders
- “We need to get everybody at the table”
- Educate and support parents. “Don’t just be having kids to have kids”; “the child is the reflection of the parent”
- Close detention centers to reinvest the money into the youth instead of using those funds to run the detention centers, repurpose money
- Funds used to educate or to incarcerate “raise people up to be leaders rather than followers”

**Q: What alternatives or structures need to be in place so that the youth detention center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?**

- Strategies
- Family advocates
- How kids are engaged in the school

**Q: What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent future involvement with the criminal legal system?**

- Mentorship program within the school system that is incentivized
- Minimum wage employment opportunity
- After-school programs
- After-school programs with peer mentors and outside influence
- Taking the financial resources and putting them back into the schools and making the schools responsible.
- What happened not only in the home but also in the school that the students became disenchanted

- Accessibility, and support to the family as a whole
- Family engagement to give life skills to give the root of a solid foundation
- Mentorship program that goes from adolescence to adulthood, financial coaching
- Taking funds and investing them correctly in the educational system
- “Where did they get disenchanted with that learning system? Why are 14-year-olds shooting people”
- Greater stability – two parent household

### February 12, 2023 Listening Session Notes

Attendees: two young people (Y), two parents (P), two community members (one shared that they were formally incarcerated - C), YMMM staff (F), member of Advisory Committee, DCHS staff

#### **Q. What alternatives or structures need to be in place so that the youth detention center is no longer needed to meet the needs and risk levels of young people in their communities?**

- Y: gave an example of Foster's tv show and how the show depicts giving a chance to see if youth want to change their lives. I have heard of young people going to group homes instead of juvenile detention. We need more people to redeem themselves, help them change their lives
- F: After-school programs, activities youth want to be engaged in. To change the narrative you need to replace the behavior with positive change. I think about after school programs and summer programs instead of hanging out; if you are going to say don't do something, we need to have an alternative for young people that they can be involved in; we need replacement of the bad activities with the good activities; usually when friends do stuff, the young people will want to do those things
- Y: Youth will do things they don't want to, to fit in or help them to relax. Not all youth need detention centers unless they are endangering themselves.

#### **Q How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities?**

- Y: They should be responsible to the members to the community. Depending on the crime they should be responsible to the community...Don't lock them up immediately know their backstory.
- Y: Talk it out
- P: Keep them in the house.
- P: Sometimes it is hard to keep kids in the house; it comes down to how are you training your kids and teaching them about bad decisions, especially when you live in bad neighborhoods and surrounded with people with bad reputations. Sometimes you don't know an issue is an issue until you see yourself with the consequence; a lot of kids don't want to listen; kids are angry and lot of trouble outside. Comes down to how you support, communicate and train them to be responsible adults. Kids don't know the consequence until they are told even after they have been told this act is bad.

- F: I had an issue with my daughter; couldn't control her friends and who she was surrounded by; she got in trouble and had an assault charge and she went to detention; it really depends on the kid and the harm and the family; some kids are committing crimes because they are all they know; we need to respond by working together to address and respond with services to help kids and family and figure out how to move forward; we need to find a way to connect with kid and know what's going on; response is all too often punishment and locking them up

**Q. How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities?**

- Y: There should be a difference in response. Depends on what the serious or violent crime in and the way they did it with one of them or a group; depends on community and the capacity to receive the child and what they have to deal with
- Y: We need to consider what does their home life look like and the environment that they come from; not too scary; everybody wants young people to be accountable and be held accountable. We want people to be held accountable for what they do.
- C: There is a difference between harm and crime; harm can be reckless while some crimes are just because of the law; when I look at young people, we are talking about crimes
- C: We need to isolate and separate the young people from their environment. We need remove all parties from the harm; don't want to see the young person go back to that same environment where they are likely to remake mistakes. I say separate but that doesn't mean confinement. Need to have a reasonable and rapid response. Remove them from the ham and provide support and create a support plan. When young people end up in harm, we don't want to confine them but we send them back into the community. If I send them back to the home, they may make the same mistakes. How do you distinguish if home is harmful to them too? When I look at harm and young people in the impoverished community, get info from the family, community, and systems – including schools.

**Q: What does accountability look like for young people?**

- C: There should be some accountability for young people
- Y: It's about being responsible
- P: Having responsibility; making an action; we know our responsibility but don't make an action towards it
- Y: How people deal with consequences of the thing that they have done
- Y: Taking responsibility; doing the right thing
- C: Repairing relationship
- C: Own up to fact that you did it; does it really resonate with you; if you can do something wrong and I call you out on that, do you understand why it is wrong what you did. Take responsibility and understand why it was wrong for what you did; taking responsibility of what you did and understanding. I asked this question to 15 grown men – everyone said that they believe in accountability, but no one said that they are actually

accountable; what does that impact. No one admitted that they did something wrong. If we flip the question, it is saying that you would do the right thing.

- F: Sometimes young people don't know what they are doing is wrong if that is all they know and grew up with
- Y: Accountability depends on an individual
- C: How do we rethink accountability to any degree of harm? Harm with family and all things have a root cause; often there is something in the homes and an unmet need with a child. Accountability also depends on where the mistake is. I am a product of the school to prison pipeline system and got pushed out early; when I had a grand niece and nephew, I didn't want them to go through the same thing; we need to not be looking at the cookie cutter approach; we take a young person and move them to Pierce Co out of King County to get away from the gangs; to get to that point, you need to be comfortable in the conversation for being separated and where you can be safe; helped that person get a job and provide the professional development; we aren't talking to schools and connecting the dots.
- F: Asking them what they need and connect the dots for them; you can go to this program but it is not the same thing and sometimes that's not the right program; we need to create different partnerships and creating partnerships with parents; help them connect to resources because they often lack those resources and lack services to deal with kids who are getting in trouble; loop the parents and find trusted adults; the family dynamics might be problem; mentorship is always good, someone they can talk to and be heard
- P: When you assess the need, how do you get the youth to open up?
- C: We meet people where they are; we have an office space with other community partners; invite people to the space to experience what we do; if we are feeling comfortable, we are more likely to accept help and talk about needs; if not, we can't push the button and get them help; we are pushed to the point where need to stop the harm, we can access the harm and they can respond to that
- Y: Youth who are afraid to ask for help and have to face the court system with adults around them. Depending on the person who is looking for help; maybe someone is afraid who might come after them, maybe there is a need for an anonymous space
- Y: Setting makes a big difference in whether or not a young person will ask for or accept help
- P: Youth violence has been a big challenge; gun violence has always been a problem in our community but that is growing

**Q. How could existing community diversion programs that keep young people out of detention be strengthened?**

- F: Common answer they need more money. Kids are committing crimes for money. Funding is always a good source to get programs to the community.
- C: Reimagining how we create the need to prevent these crimes. How do we give program facilities the skills to handle funding to assist the community? The school pipeline to prison is real. How to captivate the goal, If we can't we get aligned and caught up with the times we will be taken .....
- F: What can be done to strengthen the programs that are already in place

- P: Letting people know about resources; some resources but don't know how to find them, not advertised; parents being abused by children; how to help parents and the kids; look forward; information was hard to find; a lot of kids say that they are interested but bored but not appropriate and keep making bad decisions
- C: Strengthening programs across they need to be diverse or collaborate, they need to work together. What happens when a program has exhausted its resources?
- C: Connecting programs to programs; they don't have the hardest kids and they think that they are the end all be all – we are prolonging the intervention; collaboration with strengthening the programs; making it more accessible; one stop shop; sometime of programs with parents and they need more support; two generation diversion programs requirement to parents to do stuff

**Q. What do you think it would take to close the youth detention center?**

- Y: We would need proof that not all youth need to go to detention. You don't know the back story – sometimes kids try not to get help or they don't know how to ask for help; I think we should only lock them up if they are endangering themselves. We need to highlight how the detention center impacts each youth; make sure each youth is supported so they don't have to go through trauma; go to detention center and are traumatized.
- P: Community improving and harm goes away; improve the conditions of community
- P: Stronger diversion programs have coalition groups work together, and the capacity learns different ways of working with each other. People working in the diversion are coming in with personal trauma. Impact of legislative rules. They need to be involved in the conversations with the community.
- C: Why do they continue to exist? There needs to be legislative policy change; there needs to be an impact; people who are voting for these kids of centers, they have the wrong image of our young people
- C: We live in a throw-away society (why do we have detention centers If you send people into the system without resources you will repeat the action from past trauma. Society determines you are inadequate; continues to traumatize them because you sent them away; rehabilitation means to reequip them; people don't change when they are locked up; instead we cover the trauma for whatever impacted them. I went to Echo Glen and asked about school to prison pipeline, and all of them had been kicked out of school by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade for unacceptable behavior; when we see what's wrong, we normalize punishment; information is not education, need to apply that information, especially to gun violence.

**Q: What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent future involvement with the criminal legal system?**

- Y: Bring in the school; bring financial education to the school; they don't know what's happening; resources in schools; you don't know what you don't know
- P: My son did ask to see a therapist; but there were complications with my medical insurance; found a counselor who was white, but my son was mixed; wanted a therapist of color who would connect with them but they were all at capacity; not finding it

immediately led to some lost hope; time passed and it made it difficult to have the same impact

- C: There is a network of African American and Hispanic therapists and depending on folks to do pro bono; they got into the field because they want to help; CCYF: success stories to be trained as peer; young man with fentanyl addition and needed services for younger kids; he has genius and brilliance and starting a program and they see there is a problem, and we have professional support
- F: Being a parent of a young person, I felt helpless; we were two professionals, two parents, trusting that they would do the right thing; when you are at work, they are with their peers; we need more support groups for parents; it impacts the whole family; I needed a parent to talk to; how to share resources and don't where resources that exist; connect parents with other parents or other trusted adults; parents take most of the blame and the financial costs
- C: Need transition planning: we spend our time in what we value; counselors all over the place; how much time do we spend with kids; realized I only spent 1.5 hours of quality time per day with my kids; paid for both of us with tutor; quality time – improves grades and creates a stronger bond; especially with fathers
- C: We do diversion with children; we deal with the problem; but there are some groups that think that their program can solve everything; where does the child go back to? Look back at the home and what the parents need; prevent crime by moving that child to the other partners; need a lot of things with covid but it is up to us to support young people

### **March 3, 2023 Listening Session Notes Justice Involved-Students**

Attendees: Girls 27 (F); Boys 12 (M); and 4 Community Members(C)

**Q.** What does accountability mean to you?

- M-Responsibility
- F- Owning up to the action made
- M- who is being responsible for their action
- F- being held accountable for the decision
- M- Management

**Q. How should the government and community respond when a young person commits serious or violent harm in their communities?**

- F-Find the reason why what goes on behind the act
- M-Put them on house arrest instead of locking them up
- M community service
- M Talk it out
- F-By serving time- If they did a harmful crime should serve their time
- F- Have classes for different offenses
- M-Counseling instead of serious punishment
- F-Substance abuse group

- M-Mental Health some people are not in their right mind like PTSD and need a safe space
- M- Reach out to families
- F-Provide a mentor/support while going through the system.

**Q. How should the government and community respond when a young person commits harm in their communities?**

- F-Shopping is it a harmful crime? Some people are stealing for a reason People are focusing on the wrong issues. Know the why before the punishment is handed down
- M- Graffiti they should clean it up
- M- Make a person own up to their actions.
- F-Consequences according to the crime should match the situation
- F-Consider how harmful the crime is If is not that harmful worth solitude confinement what should be done to the person

**Q.What are effective ways to create accountability for young people who have caused serious harm in their communities?**

- M-Activities ie sports basketball on so on
- M- Counseling
- F-A friend or close relative can intervene
- F-Groups of people that have been in similar situations will be a good support group
- C-Get the whole story behind what is going on-All in agreement

**Q What do you think it would take close the youth detention center?**

- F-See results from new methods from classes or counseling
- C-Best practices
- F-Groups in schools that inform and educate on the laws of the juvenile system
- M-Try something new. The system is not working
- M-Help the youth as much as you can give them the initiative to do better
- M-Mentors on the inside that continues once released.
- M-Youth rehab center to get their minds off the reason they committed the crime.
- C-What to do with the empty buildings
- M-FCC (Colorado) Family Crisis Center they help you with classes, and school help for youth, not a detention center- replace the name with something positive-(open campus)
- M-Bootcamp (Military)

**Q. What resources or support would you and your family need to prevent future involvement with the criminal legal system?**

- M-Mentorship outside of serving your time as a confidant
- M- Therapy
- F-Tutoring center and have resources that will benefit the whole family, therapy will assist the whole neighborhood
- F-Therapy one on one sessions
- F-Mental Health
- C-You may or may not get mental help when you are locked up

- F-Awareness (family) does the family know what mental health is?
- F-That youth knows that they can communicate with their parents openly
- F-Job skills
- M-What is their family history in crime
- C-Family may be in need that resulted in a life of crime
- F-Give a safe space to communicate

**Q. If you were the parent and my family or child is always in trouble, what services will you need?**

- F-Single mothers or Fathers to intervene and assist with another family; a trusted adult. Give parents a day off to regroup, process and recharge.
- C- Parenting classes-All agree
- F- Have a resource for parents to learn skills on how to deal with their teen during a rapidly changing world, learn to speak their language

## Compiled Additional Listening Sessions with Impacted Youth

This appendix highlights the findings from additional listening sessions that DCHS convened with impacted youth: Young Ladies Standing Tall at Garfield High School in December 2022; Consejo Youth Council in April 2023; and The Garage in Issaquah in May 2023.

### Summary of Young Ladies Standing Tall Discussion

#### Overview

In December 2022, DCHS facilitated a classroom discussion at Garfield High School with Young Ladies Standing Tall, a new specialized classroom experience to support the growth and development of Black high school girls at Garfield. There were eight girls who participated in the discussion, all of whom identified as Black. Three of the eight students identified that they had a close family member who had been involved in the juvenile criminal legal system. Each girl who participated received a \$50 gift card for their participation, and the discussion was approximately one hour.

The discussion was structured around an overview of the youth legal system and the proposed approach to expand community-based alternatives needed to close the youth detention center; questions related to how to respond or intervene when a young person harms others and resources needed; and additional insights that the girls wanted to share.

#### Discussion Findings

Overall, the group agreed about the need for more options and alternatives to detention for young people who harm others. Several girls shared that detention does not help the kids and different structures in their homes or their communities would better support young people. One girl disagreed and shared that she thought young people belonged in detention because they would not change their behavior without it.

When asked about alternatives that are needed to support youth healing, the group discussed a variety of social supports that need to be in place before the detention center closes. One girl highlighted community houses where young people can live with responsible adults who could help them make responsible decisions. Another encouraged King County to evaluate options with a community-focused approach and allow other adults in the kid's life to determine the response along with a judge. One girl highlighted the importance of mentors, and particularly mentors of color, who can support young people as they navigate through issues and bring in hope. Others focused on the education environment and shared that more Black teachers are needed. The group also highlighted that they think that young people in detention should provide input into what is needed to replace the youth detention center.

When discussing how the government should intervene when a young person harms others, the group had mixed opinions. Some of the girls responded that the response should depend on the severity of the offense. They thought that harsh consequences would be appropriate for very serious offenses. Others, however, pointed out that getting to the root and the "why" of the offense is more important than detention. They shared that sometimes people harm others because they have unmet basic needs or

because of accidents. One girl mentioned that the young person should go to a place where they are held until their behavior changes, but that detention should not be the place.

When discussing what accountability looks like, the group discussed taking responsibility for one's action, owning up to the mistake that took place, facing consequences, and being supported and held accountable by loved ones or family members or a responsible adult. One girl mentioned that accountability should allow you to get the help that you need without getting away with stuff. Several others agreed and emphasized that importance of balance.

The group also highlighted that their experience as young Black girls was unique and important. They mentioned that they are constantly thinking about safety and that it is easy for them to be in unsafe situations. They shared that men pry on them, their sisters, and their friends in the community. They also shared that it is hard to be a person of color and specifically a Black person in King County. They emphasized the importance of discussing detention in a broader context of racism, over-policing, false allegations, and disinvestment in their communities. They shared that they care for their Black brothers and friends who go to the detention and are targeted by police. One girl shared that mistakes should not cost someone the rest of their life and should instead be corrected with support and compassion.

## **Summary of Consejo Youth Council Discussion**

### Overview

In April 2023, DCHS partnered with Consejo to virtually meet with the youth people that serve on their Consejo Youth Council. There were six youth who participated in the discussion, and all had previous experience in the criminal legal system. The youth were from both King County and Pierce County. Each youth received a \$50 gift card for their participation, and the discussion was approximately one hour.

The discussion was structured around opportunities to expand community-based alternatives needed to close the youth detention center; questions related to how to respond or intervene when a young person harms others and resources needed; and an additional insight they wanted to share about their experiences in detention.

### Discussion Findings

The youth believed that it was important to be specific about where young people will go if the detention center closes. They discussed the importance of places that were "less cage-like" and "somewhere you can free your mind." They emphasized that youth should still be accountable and that the focus should be on rehabilitation. One youth said that detention is "just jail, nothing else; that's why people come back". Another youth said that unless you have been in detention, you cannot fully understand how impactful it can be on your mental health, goals, and hope. They said: "one day isn't health, one month isn't healthy, one year isn't healthy." Some ideas they shared about the potential space included group homes and places where they could leave for the weekend or visit their families.

The youth shared that many resources are needed to keep youth from coming back to detention. They shared that life skills are critical, and most young people need to be supported to gain those skills. They

highlighted aspects like getting a car permit or a license or knowing what they need to do to graduate high school or get a job in a field they want to explore.

The youth discussed the importance of recognizing that young people will make mistakes, and there needs to be room for youth to make mistakes and grow from those mistakes. However, another youth highlighted that there have to be consequences for repeated mistakes, especially if they are the same mistake. “If someone is trying to make an effort, they should get another chance; if they repeat it again, it’s different.” The youth also shared their desire for the legal system to expand to understand why a youth committed a different offense and noted that there are “more sides to the story.”

The youth shared that current systems of support to understand youths’ needs are limited and fail to support youth while in detention. They highlighted that many youth do not answer truthfully on the needs assessments such as mental health assessments conducted before and during detention because they are afraid of the consequences and often lack a connection or relationship with the person asking them. One youth shared that they saw other youth in detention get news that family members had died and had gotten nightmares, but they did not get the counselors because they did not think the counselors could help. They suggested that mentors and other community folks that youth trust could ask them the questions and provide support to make sure the assessments reflect the youth’s needs. The youth also shared concerns about some of the staff in detention and noted that while some staff are there to help people, others seem like they do not like their job.

## **Summary of Findings with Youth from The Garage**

### Overview

In May 2023, DCHS partnered with The Garage in Issaquah to meet with a group of young people that participate in their programs. There were six youth who participated in the discussion. The youth were all from Issaquah. Each youth received a \$50 gift card for their participation, and the discussion was approximately one hour.

The discussion was structured around the supports they receive at The Garage, the needs that they see in their communities, and their ideas for alternatives to secure youth detention for youth who harm others in their communities.

### Discussion Findings

The youth highlighted that the elements they appreciate with The Garage are that it is youth-centered, a welcoming place to hang out and be with friends, and a place to explore their interests. They also shared that it is full of available resources and supports such as counseling, job support, and navigation of difficult circumstances. They highlighted that it is important to have spaces as teens to be themselves, learn to advocate for themselves, and get support from adults who care about them.

The youth highlighted that Issaquah and East King County is experiencing affordability challenges and that resources are harder to find here. When asked about existing resources they know of in their community, they talked about the community center, the food banks, and their high schools. However,

they pointed out the differences in support that the high schools have for students and how schools can better support young people experiencing mental health issues, alcohol and substance use disorders, family difficulties, and financial insecurity. They pointed to rising housing costs and gentrification that has been pushing families further out of the area. One youth shared that they have seven family members that will likely need to move into a smaller space or another community because their rent has increased beyond their ability to afford it.

The youth highlighted that more resources are needed to keep youth and families healthy and engaged. They highlighted the importance of expanding mental health support, including counseling for LGBTQ+ youth, and general medical support. One youth shared that they had difficulty finding a mental health provider for gender therapy; it took them nearly one year to get off a waiting list, and the cost would have been prohibitive if they did not have health insurance.

The youth grappled with what the responses should be to youth who cause harm in their communities. They highlighted the need to understand what the youth was going through before they harmed someone else and really understand the situation they were in. They highlighted the role of peer pressure and the home environment as influences for harmful behavior. They thought that families and other adults in their lives should be more accountable for those environments and any harm that the youth caused because of those circumstances. They thought it was somewhat contradictory to hold a youth accountable for harm or a crime when youth are told constantly that they are not old enough to make their own decisions. They thought that every youth should get resources and therapy to address those underlying issues. However, some of the youth thought that someone, if not the youth, needs to be accountable for the harm that occurred. One youth shared the example of school shootings where teachers and administrators may know that a youth has underlying mental health issues but do not address them and then the youth brings a gun to school and tragedy occurs.

The youth stressed that rehabilitation should be a core part of the response and should not remove the youth from their humanity. They highlighted that just because a youth might have made a horrible decision to hurt others, they are still people, not monsters, and they should be supported and not punished. They reflected that the youth legal system and detention can be traumatic for young people and fail to connect them with resources that they need.

As part of their concluding thoughts, the youth shared that they want more adults to understand their perspectives; they want empathy-based decision-making and approaches from adults; they think youth should not be in detention; and they wanted the County to consider models from other places like Norway focused on rehabilitation and healing, not punishment.

### Summary of Community Awareness Building Events

Between June 2022 and June 2023, the DCHS project team tabled at seven different community events to share updates and information to community partners and community members.

Event	Date	Location
Garfield High School Youth Summit	June 2, 2022	Seattle
Juvenile Court Services Annual Juneteenth Celebration	June 16, 2022	Seattle
Communities in Schools Renton- Tukwila Annual Back to School Block Party	August 21, 2022	Renton
Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle Fall Resource Fair	September 3, 2022	Seattle
Center for Children and Youth Justice LINC Conference	September 30, 2022	Highline
Empowering Resourceful Communities Health and Resource Fair	May 6, 2023	Seattle
Consejo Counseling and Referral Service's Youth Leadership Conference	June 3, 2023	Milton

Across the community tabling events, the project team handed out over 300 recruitment flyers and project two-pagers and spoke with over 500 people about the project.

The project team also conducted raffles for people to respond to the prompt: **King County has committed to ending secure detention for young people. What do you think should happen when a young person causes harm in their community?** There were nearly 200 responses to this question across five events. The responses ranged but included the following components:

- Understanding the root causes of the harm and educating on impact effect of the action
- Keeping young people with their families
- Community centers and afterschool programs
- Behavioral and mental health support, counseling, therapy, anger management
- Treatment centers for substance and alcohol use
- Community mentors, mentorship, and credible messengers
- Community service programs
- Enhanced educational opportunities
- Workforce training; job development; job training; paid internship
- Alternatives to detention and diversion programs
- Restorative justice programs
- More programs focused on rehabilitation
- More funding for community providers to support young people
- Existing measures such as detention, house arrest (known as Electronic Home Monitoring for young people), and prison; treating youth as adults for serious harm

## Compiled Engagement Findings with Organizations

This document compiled findings from the BSK Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline Providers meeting in December 2022 and the Reengagement Providers meeting in February 2023.

### Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline Providers Meeting

#### Overview

In December 2022, DCHS joined the BSK Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline Providers meeting to create awareness of the project and get feedback from providers of what community-based alternatives they believe are needed. The DCHS project team presented to the group and facilitated small group breakout sessions.

#### Notes from Breakout Groups and Large Group Discussions

##### **Breakout Group #1**

- 1) How does your organization currently support young people (under 18 years old) who have experience in the criminal legal system or are at-risk for involvement in the criminal legal system? Are there particular groups of young people you focus on?
  - Mentorship, resource navigator, workforce development programs, healing-centered engagement, tackle trauma at the root, rediscover selves and culture
  - Job readiness, partners with organization that focuses on youth employment; gainful youth employment
  - Families don't leave island; limited school and career access; low paying jobs for youth due to lack of access; creating workforce program; leadership opportunities
  - Mentoring/ coaching/ job help
- 2) What would your organization need to better meet the needs of impacted young people with complex needs and experience in the criminal legal system?
  - Therapy; there are not enough resources
- 3) What service gaps need to be addressed to better support young people who would otherwise be in detention?
  - Root of what is going on isn't addressed; let them open up and talk; discipline in detention doesn't meet crime – over punished
- 4) How should the government and community intervene when a young person commits serious and violent harm against another person?
  - All situations are different. Get down to the root. Intensive therapy
- 5) How should an individual who is harmed by a young person be supported when harm occurs?
  - System treats young folks like criminals. We need child development. What led the young person to do what they did?
  - All young people need a chance to work towards returning to society.

##### **Breakout Group #2**

- 1) How does your organization currently support young people (under 18 years old) who have experience in the criminal legal system or are at-risk for involvement in the criminal legal system? Are there particular groups of young people you focus on?
  - Providing mentorship and life services to yya, primarily BIPOC community
  - School based diversion

- Counseling
  - Long term engagement for those accused of a crime
  - Court involved yya and young people at risk of engagement in legal system
  - Support yya and their families in school, 16-24
  - Families of African descent throughout the diaspora
  - Approach is with the families
  - Focus 12-24
  - Opportunities for self-development for those under 18
  - Provide workshops and tools; also do capacity building
  - Internships
- 2) What would your organization need to better meet the needs of impacted young people with complex needs and experience in the criminal legal system?
- Dollars connected to referrals
  - Black therapists/ therapy money (their expertise to be honored)
  - Resources and ability to grow capacity
  - Resources to get our young people travelling
  - Partnerships with commerce/ businesses
  - Opportunity to replace whatever they were doing/ the action that led or leads to criminal legal

### **Breakout Group #3**

- 1) How does your organization currently support young people (under 18 years old) who have experience in the criminal legal system or are at-risk for involvement in the criminal legal system? Are there particular groups of young people you focus on?
- Youth advocacy, BSK since 2017, program started as diversion program with the Highline College called Project SCOPE; running start programs with high school degree and aa degree; students from all different walks of life; help enroll them in programs; had some gang issues that didn't get along together; highline college said that we couldn't work on campus anymore because of those issues; we are now working as mobile case managers and mentors – students in murder and those who have been murdered; runaways, truancy court and worked with the PAO to serve those kids; barrier reduction and emergency response and paid internships with students; post-secondary goals like being a mechanic or going into real estate; change narrative to what they could be; focus on students of color: Black and Latinx
  - Doesn't specifically work with kids in the criminal legal system or diversion; prevention and healthy futures; emphasis in youth skills for college and career; mental health, cultural competence, identity, and tribal identity; urban native youth have a broader identity; native youth focus; close encounters with legal system; families are getting pushed further North and South; focus on prevention and diversion
  - Preventative; whole system design; 7-19 years working with families; been touched with mentorships; we don't necessary working with children who have been incarcerated; identity development and salient identify; African Diaspora; undoing a lot of stuff; accurate self-identity/ mental wellness/cultural wellness/ responsible with money and what does that look like to you; we teach who are you accountable to, use African rights of passage to share that work; whole family system

- 3) What service gaps need to be addressed to better support young people who would otherwise be in detention?
  - Housing – nothing fancy, something with a bathroom, basic needs – options to quality and safe food; transportation options that don't take forever
  - Transformation issue; still getting from place to place; time that it takes on public transportation is too long
- 4) How should the government and community intervene when a young person commits serious and violent harm against another person?
  - Place: getting housing, transportation, real time opportunity and navigate the jobs; if your identity is messed up anyway, you need to get support
  - Accountability: their journey is lived; hard to get that if they don't have youth housing; waitlist is too long; nowhere to be found; housing
  - Mental health – reforming people don't get jail; doesn't reform youth; more money in mental health; kid killed his mother over a virtual reality set; needs intensive mental health
  - Parents are also in arrested development; who's child is this? Who raised you? And can't change what you can't see; family trauma patterns; why is that the case/ reduce capitalism; you aren't your clothes and be your authentic self
  - County: government entities – help support positive mental health and development; promotion of materials
  - It takes a lot of time and resources – children who are touched by the system need intensive care; here to see past that; for example, our organization supported young people on a civil rights tour in the south – that was a lot of money and takes a lot of time

**Large group discussion:**

- Identify complex needs: funding to do the work; a lot of work falls on us to fill gaps of the system; system continues to keep dollars and pulls from resources; support everyone with limited resources; hog tied into a specific thing and meet needs – for example, our organization has 12-15 programs but only 2 programs are funded; other programs rely on output and creates imbalance, limits partnerships
- This type of work takes time with deep and transformative relationships; 5-10 years; paradigm shift is not the number of kids; not the best quality of education family systems training
- Agreed with the need for more time: biggest advocate for extra time; together as a group with 6 years; advocate together
- Data that supports that; opportunity gap with black schools; one year of bad schools; one year of bad schooling; multiple issues
- Therapy, resources for young people, root is going on with young people; open up; discipline in detention does not match up on crime; system treats young folks like criminals from the beginning; we need grace filled approaches

**Reengagement Provider Network Engagement**

Overview

In February 2023, DCHS joined the King County Reengagement Provider Network meeting to create awareness of the project and get feedback from providers of what community-based alternatives they

believe are needed. The DCHS project team presented to the group and facilitated small group breakout sessions.

#### Notes from Breakout Groups and Large Group Discussions

#### **Question 1: What would your organization need to better meet the needs of impacted young people with complex needs and experience in the criminal legal system?**

- Addressing bias of staff/faculty. Curriculum and pedagogy are relevant and making sure it is more culturally sensitive to where the students are at.
- Coordinating collaboration among multiple services. Scholars sometimes are confused with all of the services they have for support. System of wraparound for the scholar. Over managing the scholar. How does the provider know if there are other services for that scholar.
- Being aware of what resources/trainings are available.
- Have MOUs in place with school and parents. Without parents' permission they can't work with the students.
- Getting the youth to agree to the services/resources.
- Housing
- Mental health support on site for YouthSource: needed mental health, need more co-located support instead of referred; referral with mental health services and case managers
- Most students are using buses for transportation and need one-stop shops
- Cultural barriers with mental health: some parents don't believe in that; how do you bring in more support for a young person? People don't reflect demographic
- We know the science of brain development and trauma but we don't actually apply it in the situations that matter: you see that in discipline data in schools; black boys with higher rate and huge obstacle – adultification of black boys and girls
- Hosted a pilot program with vouchers with mental health: powerful voices, multi-cultural counselors; network of counselors to connect with; with therapy, we all know that you can have a great or a horrible experience / want our kids to access true diversity
- Gun violence: convened faith leaders with partners: advocacy to destigmatize mental health; messaging around how you need therapy and Jesus; win rapport and communication with trust building and safety; highlight confidentiality without judgement; generational
- All comes down to the way we talk about and introduce therapy: therapy is for everyone; way we think about therapy; not just unpacking what happens to you
- Mentorship: looking for mentor opportunities; good mentors are overstretched; individuals are being tapped far too often; mentorship is huge; relationship with adult with more likely to succeed
- Funding: financial aid is staying same with rising costs: you have to work to go to school; all students are working full time; need to give people the money they need
- Professional development and support with workforce: more opportunities for professional development and emotional support; wellbeing; provide more capacity with professionals too – they are burned out
- It's hard for staff to stay in the profession; staff get burned out and exhausted without support: lost connections with staff and students
- More staff to serve more youth. This organization only has three staff people for the entire.
- Have a training that was prevention focused. More funding opportunities for organizations that are assisting the youth that have been in the system.

- Training on running a holistic program
- Create joint trainings for CBOs and youth probation counselors so we know what they are responsible for and can better ID what we can do - create alignment & consistency
- It is extraordinary for 16 year-olds to get and keep a job - How can we support them with future jobs and goals?
- Healing center engagement center trainings, trainings on trauma informed care
- More programs that look like the youth that we serve
- Divert funds from juvenile legal system to other youth serving programs and organizations to better meet the needs of young people and their communities
- We need more direct communication with probation system and CBO to support youth.
- Adult and youth experiences are so different, more collaboration with youth system - problem specifically for young adults.
- Better understand trauma informed practices through a racial equity lens
- Built environment preventing provision of services - colleges with social workers, DOC re-entry navigators are good but not present everywhere. needs more support & funds
- More flexible funding

**Question 2: What is currently working well with supporting young people in the community that we can all learn from?**

- Peace Circles are a great way to build connection, communication, and coordination for the youth, and how to repair. Needing the infrastructure/institutional resources dedicated to facilitating and hosting the circles before things become an issues or crisis. Need more than just facilitation training, but there isn't no time set aside to host the circles during the day.
- The origination is following youth voices. So that the youth feel heard and that someone cares about them.
- Some of the groups have been meeting the youth where that are at. Not expecting them be something that they are not.
- Had a Youth Advocacy Day
- Listening to the youth and collaborating with various organizations.
- JTRAC - Focusing on therapeutic methods - looking at youth-centering instead of retribution.
- Staff with lived experience supporting youth (case managers, social workers, etc.)
- Providing job-training / STEM opportunities to engage students in career pathways
- Building community with the youth and families
- Meeting the youth where they are at.

**Question 3: How should the government and community intervene when a young person causes serious and violent harm against another person?**

- How can services/support available during the weekend? How can we provide something other than the police?
- Who do we reach out?
- Coordination of care in the off hours that doesn't necessitate or involved law enforcement.
- Match the need with the right resources.
- How can we get young people with gang/violent involvement back into the community to help them mentor those who are on the brink of being involved?
- How do mobilize caring adults to provide care and loving accountability in their community?
- How do we also care for those who are indirectly impacted by the incident? The friends or other kids who witness the harm?
- Having no time between the incident and responding to the incident, and staying involved for as long as is needed.
- Leveraging CBOs to help students who are suspended, collaborate to provide support onsite and immediately (vs sending them home, isolating, or corraling into one space).

- Lean in, get closer to, and seek to understand, building a culture of honoring the voices of the youth/students. As opposed to pushing away or punishing. And shift from individualistic culture to collective culture.
- Address immediate basic needs
- Making sure the providers are getting paid enough and not being overworked.
- Youth need to be detained and take a look at what brought them into the system.
- Serious intervention needs to take place. Look at the youth in a holistic way. Find out what is missing.
- Eliminate detention, reform the whole system.
- Imagine a whole different justice system
- Violence often starts in the home; how is the parent being held accountable? We hold parents accountable for truant youth, what about when they commit violence?
- What is their aptitude/intelligent level – some people who knows what they did; can they actually be held accountable? Connection to culture and need; there's also the cool factor
- 1) Systemic and personal: used to work in the direct service with detention center; youngest was 11 years old; some juvenile officers had honest relationships with others did not; don't believe the system is build to address rehabilitation: more community and mental health providers; 2) education: are we meaningfully mentoring our kids to make good decisions and decision-making; 3) are we giving families to interact with parents; we can't support young person without supporting their parents and families; give them tools and resources to support the vision and the knowledge; 4) providing other adult relationships: could take outlets; provide opportunities to community centers; barriers to engage youth
- Impacts of trauma: they stop dreaming; no one asks them questions about their future; need more options with lifestyle; mentorship models of excellence; offering different images; need asked the question of what they want and how to get there
- Staff are afraid of young people with experience in the juvenile legal system; say that they can't be by myself; kids can grasp that there is a problem; knows that their teacher is afraid of them; it relates to the adultification of black kids; ways that better vet people who work with kids
- They will hold you more accountable if you love them
- Challenges with hiring teachers
- The genius of our young people is not being measured; it is not being celebrated; rapping with literary genius – different ways of expressing themselves
- Behavior in high schools and middle schools – move forward with connection without mastery – worked with high schooler who could not read or write; leads to angry kids – repeatedly get pushed forward in class; real world with assault charges; get pushed in the system
- So much needs to be individualized; dreams: what is an educational experience that you learned from? What learning can be feel like?
- Need to raise kids of hope: who is an adult who cares about you; ASU offers a degree in hope that everyone can get; business owners, teachers, etc. Who all care about young people
- Look to models in other countries where young people are not detained/serious harm not dealt with in legal system - reforms to child welfare, behavioral health & other systems
- Preventative not reactive, mental health resources
- Youth that commit serious harm need to have some big intervention, evaluation.
- What is the reason for the violent harm? often because of lack of resources, and therapy isn't going to fix that
- There is research around what needs are that prevent crime, we should actually use that

- Needs to be holistic - look at the whole community. how can we give the kids the resources they need. focus on prevention
- What does the person harmed want to see in terms of accountability?
- Restorative justice. Not always sure what it looks like. There also is a line when we need to protect staff/etc. from extreme violence
- Really such a tiny percentage of "crimes" are violent/have a "victim" - when people hyperfocus on this question it creates a skewed view of who's involved in criminal justice
- Concepts like the social determinants of health are helpful to think about in terms of how we address the inequities that lead to crime

**Question 4: How should harmed individuals be supported when harm occurs?**

- (Similar as above)
- Addressing immediate basic needs: food
- Support and therapy to the victim and top the person who is harming others.
- Prevent the trauma that causing the person to do the harm.
- Take a deep look at what does the victim need?
- How can the community help both the victim and the person doing the harm?
- Knowledge for victim - what was the context? why did they harm them? where are they? what support are they receiving?
- Counseling, health care, victim advocacy.
- Restorative justice practices
- Check in on power dynamic - harm to peer/other youths vs harm to adult in authority
- Want to know that the community is doing what it can to support the youth and know that they won't harm someone again; eg, if stealing for food, provide food
- How do we provide for the individual's needs (material, emotional, social) while rebuilding the fabric of community?

**Question 5: What alternatives do you think should be in place to support young people and their families instead of secure youth detention?**

- There are needs that are perceived as being met through detention and electronic home monitoring
- Address the need of safety for the family from the youth (detention)
- A way to hold accountable and support scholars school attendance/participating (i.e. EHM)
- EHM, works in some cases, but there is no accountability. These kids are smart. If they cut their monitor on Friday, no one checks till Monday
- Detention is needed sometimes. gives youth an opportunity be clear minded and connect with service providers in a different way than in community.
- EHD - Electronic home devices - however brings with multiple complexities: communication & collaboration with counselors, EHD monitors, etc.

August 2022

## Summary of July Juvenile Division Listening Session Findings

### Section 1: Overview

In July 2022, the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) held four listening sessions focused on the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CFJC) Strategic Plan with Juvenile Division staff. These sessions built on previous listening sessions that were held in early 2022 with detention staff and community partners working in detention. The hour-long sessions in July 2022 included a project overview, updates on the strategic planning process, and time for questions and discussions on how King County can support detention staff throughout the strategic planning process. The sessions were facilitated by the DAJD human resources team and attended by King County Chief People Officer Whitney Abrams, DAJD leadership, Juvenile Division leadership, and the project team.

A total of 48 staff participated in the four listening sessions, and many staff members attended more than one listening session. There was broad representation from across the Juvenile Division including Juvenile Detention Officers, Community Surveillance Officers, Health Clinic Staff, Food Service Staff, Juvenile Programs Staff, and Administrative Support Staff.

**Thank you to all staff who attended the listening sessions and shared their questions and feedback on the strategic planning process.**

### Section 2: Findings from the Listening Sessions

Staff shared important questions and feedback on the strategic planning process and how the County plans to retain and support detention staff throughout the process and beyond. The following themes were found across the four listening sessions:

- 1) Staff expressed concerns about the community-based alternatives created to replace youth detention and whether those alternatives would support young people with complex needs, uphold community safety, create accountability for young people to make better choices, and support both young people and their families. Staff are especially concerned about the young people held on serious and violent offenses and where they will go when the facility is closed.
- 2) Staff are interested in learning more about how the County plans to retain the Juvenile Division workforce throughout this process and support staff through a transition. Staff asked about retention incentives, job placement opportunities, training and professional development, and general career support. Staff also want to make sure that those services and supports are provided to all employees, not just the Juvenile Detention Officers.
- 3) Staff want the County to communicate more to the public about the great work that they do to support the young people in detention.

- 4) Staff want to know more about how the people involved in the strategic planning process, including the Advisory Committee and the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), will become familiar with the work they do to support young people in detention and detention operations. They asked about the general support for closing the youth detention facility from impacted communities and if that support from community members and organizations has been sustained through rates of increased crime.
- 5) Staff were concerned with the fact that a vision has been set for the closure of the facility by 2025, but that there is not a plan yet developed for how that will happen. At the same time, staff do understand that there is a process underway to develop the expansions of community-based alternatives needed to meet the needs of young people, uphold community safety, create accountability, and support families.
- 6) Staff are worried about community partners being able to support young people with complex needs who can be non-compliant and difficult to manage. Staff asked about how King County will support and develop capacity within those community organizations to make sure that they meet the needs of young people and uphold community safety.
- 7) Staff asked many questions during the listening sessions, and a few staff members shared additional questions and feedback via email and comment boxes to the project team. These questions ranged from clarifying questions about the strategic planning process; how the County plans to support staff throughout the process; how the community-based alternatives will address concerns of community safety; how the County plans to continue supporting the young people who are already in detention; and how the County plans to address staffing challenges.

Answers to those questions are provided below, and many are included in FAQ documents on the January/February listening sessions and the transition of the project governance from the DAJD to DCHS. The project team has compiled all the FAQs into a single document located on SharePoint ([link here](#)) and in the staff breakrooms at the CFJC.

### Section 3: Conclusions and Future Action Items

These listening sessions continue to provide an important opportunity for Juvenile Division staff to hear updates about the project and provide feedback to key questions. The listening sessions were successful in gathering input from staff as the project moved into Phase 2: Community Listening and Learning. Staff have unique and valuable insight into the needs of young people and what it will take to successfully meet those needs in their communities. Staff want to continue to be informed, involved, and engaged in the strategic planning process moving forward.

The County values the work, dedication, and unique skillset of the juvenile detention staff and is committed to supporting them throughout the strategic planning process and beyond. Because the community-based alternatives to secure youth detention have not yet been identified in the strategic planning process, it is difficult to name the specific opportunities that will exist for detention staff in the future supports for young people. However, the County is committed to exploring all the possible options to keep staff who want to stay at the County for

the next chapter of their careers and finding opportunities where appropriate for detention staff to support the new community-based alternatives.

Guided by the feedback from the staff, the County is committed to the following action items:

- The County will continue to convene listening sessions with Juvenile Division staff to provide an opportunity for feedback throughout the strategic planning process and to share information and updates.
- The project team, including DCHS leadership, will continue to visit facility and meet with detention staff in the coming months to learn more about their work with young people in detention.
- DCHS and DAJD will continue to identify and share opportunities for Juvenile Division staff to participate in the community-centered strategic planning process, including through the Advisory Committee's subcommittee structure.
- DAJD human resources will coordinate with the King County Career Support Services (CSS) to provide introduction sessions on available professional development resources to Juvenile Division staff in the coming months.

## Appendix: Questions from the Listening Session and the CFJC Strategic Planning Process

The project team solicited questions from staff and community partners working in detention about the strategic planning process. The questions were compiled across the listening sessions and answered below. These questions build on previous frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents that DAJD has provided to staff throughout the strategic planning process, including on the shift in project governance and following the staff listening sessions in January and February 2022. Staff can find the full list of frequently asked questions in a compiled list, available on SharePoint ([link here](#)) and in the staff breakrooms at the CFJC.

### **1) Where will the young people with violent and serious offenses go when the facility is closed? How will the community-based alternatives address community safety, accountability, and supports without compelling them to be there?**

Closing the County's youth detention facility requires a holistic continuum of community-based alternatives to address the complex needs of young people who would otherwise be in detention. The Advisory Committee will make the ultimate recommendations around closure and repurposing the facility. They will consider these important questions raised about violent and serious offenses and how community-based alternatives will uphold community safety while meeting the needs of young people. The Advisory Committee will work to ensure community safety is a key consideration of the recommendations made to close the facility and repurpose it for other community uses. The mechanisms of how the community-based alternatives will address community safety, accountability, and supports for young people without compelling them to be there will be a critical consideration of how the alternatives will operate. The Advisory Committee members will be informed by the findings from the community-centered engagement strategy where young people, families, and communities most impacted by the legal system will be prioritized to share their input and feedback on the project and potential strategies to close the youth detention facility.

### **2) What is DAJD doing to further incentivize our staff to stay during this strategic process?**

DAJD is considering a range of options to retain our high-quality staff and recruit new staff to support the operations of the Juvenile Division. Locally and nationally, public safety agencies are facing difficulties in recruiting and retaining employees. King County is not unique in this respect. DAJD human resources and the King County Office of Labor Relations is in discussion regarding possible retention incentives and other changes in pay and working condition that will incentive existing CFJC staff to remain in their current positions in the upcoming years. Any retention incentives and changes in working conditions will need to be bargained with the respective labor unions.

At the same time, DAJD recognizes that recruiting to fill vacancies will also support current staff in the work environment and will also be critical to maintaining safe and effective operations. DAJD human resources has implemented a multifaceted marketing approach for CFJC positions, inclusive of social medial advertising, radio advertising, billboard advertisements and recruiter attendance at regional job fairs/recruitment events.

**3) What is the plan for current staff in the building for employment in the future? If there are other positions in the County, what are other positions that JDOs qualify for? What is being planned in the interim to support staff before the recommendations from the Advisory Committee are submitted in 2023?**

This critical question will be answered as part of the strategic planning process. Because the process is in its early stage, there are no set recommendations on the alternatives to secure detention or the staffing requirements. The Advisory Committee will identify clear recommendations around detention facility closure and repurposing.

King County is committed to supporting staff throughout this process and beyond. As any post-detention plans are drafted, they will be shared with employees. Further, the project team will work closely with the Department of Human Resources, the Office of Labor Relations, and DAJD human resources staff to communicate timelines, processes, and other needed information to support affected employees. The department will follow all County policies and collective bargaining protocols around staffing transitions, if staffing changes are necessary.

Juvenile Detention staff have highly transferrable skills and experiences that will prepare them well for positions across the County. If there are reductions in force, the County will use its priority placement program to help detention staff find new positions that are a good match for them. While the Adult Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention may be a good fit for many staff, there are many other opportunities for juvenile detention staff to be matched with jobs across the County. Existing positions that may be a good fit include social service positions, case managers, project managers, youth development specialists, etc. In addition, the County will explore finding opportunities where appropriate for detention staff to support the new community-based alternatives.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the DAJD human resources team will support juvenile detention staff to learn about the existing services provided through the King County Career Support Services. In addition, the DAJD human resources team will work with juvenile detention staff to identify other career services and professional development opportunities staff are interested in receiving.

**4) What is the evidence that community-based alternatives to detention work?**

Communities across the country have struggled with the complexities of supporting young people in their communities without relying on secure detention. King County is not unique in exploring community-based alternatives to secure detention and closing its youth detention facility. New York City's Close to Home initiative, for example, shifted from placing most of their young people in state secure detention facilities to residential services and aftercare services closer to their families and communities. Young people receive therapeutic services at small group homes in their communities, and there are both non-secure placements and limited-secure placements. Other jurisdictions have closed their detention facilities because of declining youth detention numbers and high operational costs.

While it is difficult to estimate the impact of these potential strategies on King County, research shows investing in community-based alternatives improves outcomes for young people and does not decrease community safety.

- Read more about the outcomes and lessons learned in the Close to Home initiative: <https://thecrimereport.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/close-to-home-report-.pdf>
- Read more about how detention facilities across the country have been repurposed to meet other community needs: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/transforming-closed-youth-prisons>
- Read more about the impact that community-based alternative programs in Texas have had on youth outcomes: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/closer-to-home/>
- [Read more about Hawaii's recent success of eliminating the use of secure youth detention for girls here: https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/07/25/hawaii-zero-girls-youth-correctional-facility/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/07/25/hawaii-zero-girls-youth-correctional-facility/)

#### **5) What are the strategies for closing detention? How will King County learn from previous efforts to close youth detention in other places?**

Closing the County's youth detention facility requires a holistic continuum of community-based alternatives to address the complex needs of young people who would otherwise be in detention. Accordingly, the strategies that will need to be developed will be comprehensive and be part of a range of community-based solutions. The Advisory Committee, informed by the community-centered engagement process, will identify the strategies needed to close detention as recommendations.

As shared above, communities across the country have grappled with the complexities of supporting young people in their communities without relying on secure detention. King County is not unique in exploring community-based alternatives to secure detention and closing its youth detention facility. King County is learning from previous efforts to close youth detention in other places through best-practice research, collaboration with national experts, and evaluations of previous processes. There are several examples of efforts to close secure youth detention facilities, including New York's Close to Home, Los Angeles County's Youth Justice Reimagined, and California's closure of state-run youth correctional centers. There are also several promising examples to eliminate the use of secure detention for young people including Hawaii's most recent success of zero girls in youth detention in the state. King County will also look to its local programs that seek to divert young people from the youth legal system and will evaluate how those programs are supporting young people and community safety.

#### **6) What will this building be repurposed for? What are some of those ideas?**

There are not yet recommendations for the repurposing of the facility because we are still in the early stages of this strategic planning process. However, ensuring that youth and their needs are prioritized is central to this strategic planning process and the repurposing conversation. It's anticipated that centering the needs of young people will be a guiding principle of the work of Advisory Committee to consider when identifying uses for the repurposing of the facility. While no specific ideas have been identified yet, it is likely that the

building will be used to address critical gaps in services for young people in King County and their families.

**7) What is King County doing in other areas that affect the number of youth in detention? Are there other efforts from the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, Department of Public Defense, and Superior Court that are working to reduce the number?**

King County has made significant progress to reduce the number of youths in detention. Starting in the 2000s, King County began participating in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to address racial disparities in the youth legal system and reduce overall numbers in detention. King County continues to participate in the state’s JDAI committee with other counties. In 2018, the King County Executive launched the Zero Youth Detention initiative with a framework for advancing racial equity and reducing the number of young people in detention. The Superior Court’s Juvenile Court regularly convenes systems partners in a Juvenile Court Partners’ meeting to coordinate efforts across the County and has recently embarked on an effort to reduce long lengths of stay of young people in the detention facility. The Juvenile Court Services team manages the Family Intervention and Restorative Services (FIRS) program that offers an alternative to secure detention for youth referred for family violence. The Juvenile Court Services team also has recently launched the Juvenile Therapeutic Response and Accountability Court (JTRAC) to help connect young people to community supports that they need earlier in their involvement with the legal system and then incentivizes positive behavior. DAJD’s Alternatives to Secure Detention team operates the Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM) program that allows youth to remain within their family unit and their permanent school situation, but within set geographic boundaries and timeframes. In 2020, community organizations partnered with the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office (PAO) and the Department of Public Defense (DPD) to establish the Restorative Community Pathways Program (RCP), a community-led and County-supported diversion program. RCP responds to youth in crisis and harmed parties with community-based services and support. Combined, these efforts made across the County have greatly reduced and continue to reduce the number of young people in detention.

**8) What is the County doing to advertise that we do a great job with the youth we serve?**

DAJD is exploring opportunities to highlight good work by Juvenile Division staff through internal communications, such as KC Employee News. DAJD is on track to launch a new public-facing website in late 2022 as part of the countywide KC Refresh project. Once this new website launches, DAJD will have a more effective platform to highlight good work of Juvenile Division staff to external audiences.

**9) Why was the closure decided this far in advance but to not know what is happening next? If all our research comes to find out that we can’t close detention, is the county thinking about a “plan B?”**

The Executive’s commitment to close the youth detention facility at the CFJC was made in response to community calls for transformation of the youth legal system and to advance racial equity. The recommendations on how to effectively close the youth detention facility will be

created as part of the strategic planning process and community-centered engagement strategy. The County is committed to creating and maintaining an accessible, transparent, and honest process with clear and realistic goals. The County will not change operations of the youth detention facility until there is a realistic and implementable plan to effectively care for the young people in DAJD's care. Given the extensive planning and stakeholder engagement needed for a policy shift of this magnitude, sufficient lead time in advance of the actual closing is required in order to develop the county's alternative response to detention.

**10) Has the County been looking at other states or counties to explore their successes and shortcomings?**

Yes. The County recognizes that there are many promising examples around the country where jurisdictions have successfully closed their youth detention and correctional facilities and expanded the community-based alternatives needed to support young people and uphold community safety. The County has been and will continue to research the successes, challenges, and limitations of those efforts. In addition, the County has secured project support from the W. Haywood Burns Institute to help ensure that best practices, promising practices, and lessons learned are incorporated throughout the strategic planning project.

**11) Why aren't we working to improve detention now for young people who are here instead of focusing on this strategic planning process?**

It is critical that the County focus on both the future goals of the strategic planning process and the immediate needs of caring for the young people already in the detention facility. The Juvenile Division is working to improve safety and security for young people in the detention facility now and will work with outside consultants and detention staff to create recommendations to improve processes and systems in the detention facility to reduce staff assaults and violence in the facility. The Juvenile Division is dedicated to ensuring that young people have access to programming that builds skills, supports their mental health and well-being, and prepares them for returning to community. Lastly, the Juvenile Division is examining how to further enhance clinical services provided to youth in custody, while embracing a case management model that promotes individualized interventions and leverages multi-discipline case plans as a means of advancing a coordinated response to youth risks and needs.

**12) How many people are on that Advisory Committee? How will those people be informed by the opinions of other people in the County?**

The project's Advisory Committee is comprised of community leaders, impacted young people and parents, and youth criminal legal system partners. The Advisory Committee guides and shapes the project, identifies avenues for engagement, and will co-create recommendations to achieve the project goals. The County provides stipends to the Advisory Committee's community members for their time and expertise. Creation of the Advisory Committee and the selection of members was an intentional process conducted to ensure key interested parties and perspectives are built into and guiding this work. Out of the current 14 members of the Advisory Committee, seven members represent community perspectives and impacted communities, including three representatives under 25 years old and one parent. Recruitment

is underway for more community representatives including from victims' advocacy organizations and community diversion programs.

The Advisory Committee will be informed by perspectives of other people across the County through the community-centered engagement strategy. The strategy will include subcommittees that will expand the number and diversity of organizations and community members who can participate and directly inform the strategic planning effort and the recommendation development. The strategy will also include engagement activities with young people, families, and communities most impacted by the youth legal system and with experience in detention. These activities include focus groups, listening sessions, healing circles, and interviews. There will also be planned engagement with members of the general public including through public townhalls, surveys, and community events. The Advisory Committee's development of the recommendations will incorporate findings from subcommittees and community engagement conducted with impacted populations, community organizations and groups engaged, as well as town halls and surveys.

**13) Will employees be able to participate in subcommittees?**

Yes. DAJD employees will be invited to participate in the subcommittees for the Advisory Committee if their time and schedule allows. Any meetings attended during work time would need to be approved and coordinated with their supervisors.

**14) Who is DCHS, and what are their plans for engaging detention staff?**

The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) is a King County department. DCHS' mission is to provide equitable opportunities for people to be healthy, happy, and connected to community. Its wide array of programs and expertise, ranging from behavioral health to children, youth, and young adults to housing, align with the goal of developing a continuum of community-based alternatives to address needs and risks of young people that uphold community safety and support their well-being. DCHS also manages and administers several of the County's social service funds, including Best Starts for Kids, the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) Behavioral Health sales tax, and the Veterans, Seniors & Human Services levy (VSHSL).

Leonardo Flor is the Director of DCHS, and Sheila Capestany is the Division Director for the Children, Youth, and Young Adults (CCYA) Division. The strategic planning project will be managed in the CCYA Division. The CCYA Division already manages other programs that support young adults, including those involved in the youth legal system. Best Starts for Kids and Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline are two major efforts, along with Reconnect to Opportunity, a program focused on 18- to 24-year-olds. DCHS works directly with community partners to provide social services throughout the County. The agency will leverage these community partnerships to move the project forward.

DCHS will lead the community-centered strategic planning process and will engage detention staff in collaboration with DAJD. DAJD will continue to lead the engagement with detention staff on current operations and will communicate project updates to detention staff including

through monthly communication updates. DCHS will meet with detention staff to learn more about their work with young people in detention, hear their feedback and ideas on how to support young people in their communities, and determine how detention staff can support future efforts in the community-based alternatives needed to close the youth detention facility. DCHS looks forward to meeting detention staff and learning about their work and their expertise in supporting the young people in detention.

**15) What communities support this idea of closing the youth detention facility? How are communities of color being involved in this plan? Are the communities who previously called for the closure of the detention facility still in support of closing?**

Executive Constantine's decision to close the youth detention facility at the CFJC was made in response to community calls to transform the criminal legal system and advance racial equity as part of addressing racism as a public health crisis. The County is committed to ensuring this process centers the experiences and input of young people, families, and communities impacted by the youth legal system, centering youth of color who are overrepresented in detention.

The County has continued to hear calls for transformation of the criminal legal system and the closure of the youth detention facility from communities in King County and community organizations working with young people involved in the criminal legal system, including those led by individuals with lived experience in the criminal legal system. The support for the closure has not wavered among those communities. Several organizations that called for the closure of the youth detention facility and transformation of outcomes for young people are involved in the strategic planning effort.

November 2022

## Summary of DCHS Detention Staff Listening Session Findings

### Section 1: Overview

In October and November 2022, the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) convened five in-person listening sessions with Juvenile Division staff focused on the strategic planning effort for the secure youth detention center at the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CFJC). These sessions built on two previous listening session series with detention staff and focused on introducing detention staff to DCHS Director Leo Flor and DCHS Children, Youth, and Young Adult Division (CYAD) Director Sheila Ater Capestany. The sessions were designed to allow Juvenile Division staff to meet directly with Leo and Sheila, learn about DCHS programs and the department's role in the strategic planning process, and share their experiences of caring for the young people in detention.

The hour-long sessions included introductions, a brief overview of DCHS and its programs, and then questions and discussion with staff. A total of 34 staff participated in five hour-long listening sessions, and several staff members attended more than one listening session. There was broad representation from across the Juvenile Division, including Juvenile Detention Officers, Food Service staff, Juvenile Programs staff, and Alternatives to Secure Detention staff.

**Thank you to all staff who attended the listening sessions and shared their questions and feedback.**

### Section 2: Overview of DCHS

DCHS' mission is to provide equitable opportunities for people to be healthy, happy, and connected to community. Its wide array of programs and expertise, ranging from behavioral health to children, youth, and young adults to housing, align with the goal of developing a continuum of community-based alternatives to address needs and risks of young people that support their well-being and uphold community safety. DCHS manages and administers several of the County's social service funds, including Best Starts for Kids, the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Behavioral Health sales tax, and the Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy.

DCHS has five divisions, and the strategic planning project is being led in the CYAD. The overarching theme of CYAD's programs and services is supporting happy, healthy, safe, and thriving young people. CYAD takes a "to and through" approach to help young people through high school and into the next part of their lives, whether that is through a license, degree, or technical experience. CYAD includes several initiatives such as direct services with education and employment resources for young people, Reconnect to Opportunity, Best Starts for Kids, Puget Sound Taxpayers Accountability Account, and the community-led, County-supported Restorative Community Pathways program. Key elements of CYAD programs are that they are youth-centered, strengthen and build partnerships with community providers, and designed to support upstream supports for youth success.

### Section 3: Findings from the Listening Sessions

Staff shared important feedback on the strategic planning process and insight into their work with the young people in detention. The following themes were found across the five listening sessions:

- Staff are concerned about both community safety and safety for the young people with potential community-based alternatives to detention. They stressed that many of the young people in detention are safer here than in the community because of their involvement in gangs, unsupportive home environments, or unmet complex needs such as behavioral health issues. They also highlighted that the detention facility upholds public safety and safety of families because many of the young people in detention have serious allegations against them and pose risks to their families.
- Staff shared that the nature of youth detention has changed and evolved over their time working in the facility. While there are far fewer young people in detention on average, they have more serious and complex offenses and stay longer. Detention is supposed to be a short-term facility or a holding place for young people as their cases move through formal court processing. However, detention currently functions as more of a long-term facility for many young people while their cases are being processed but lacks the resources to adequately serve young people with complex needs.
- Staff asked about the potential balance of keeping the detention facility open to care for the young people with the most serious offenses while expanding community-based options for young people who could benefit from them. They highlighted that more efforts could be made to connect community partners and expand programming to better meet the needs of young people in detention.
- Staff shared that their work requires skill, dedication, and real commitment to the young people in their care. The work of supporting young people in detention is not easy and often requires staff to be constantly alert and engaged. Several staff shared that it is their calling to work with young people, be there for them in detention, and help them make better decisions in the future. Staff shared that they felt dismissed and undervalued when the Executive announced the commitment to close the youth detention center.
- Staff asked about how community providers would be held accountable to support the young people in their care. They asked about how those programs are currently monitored by DCHS and the County and how evaluations would determine if they were producing the intended results. Staff shared concerns with the operations and infrastructure of community organizations and the ability of those organizations to support young people with complex needs and risk levels. Some staff shared examples of how programs are not able to handle difficult young people or cannot get them to participate in programs.
- Staff highlighted their concerns about their future employment and the positions of their colleagues if the detention facility closes. Some staff shared that they had planned to work their entire careers in detention and retire with the Juvenile Division. Others shared that

good colleagues have already left because of the announcement to close the facility; the reduction in staff has impacted morale, workload, and overall safety.

- Staff asked questions about how this work of closing the detention facility will impact 18- to 25-year-olds. Some staff shared that it is a disservice to young people to not hold them accountable for the harm they create under 18 years of age because the adult system is much harsher.
- Staff shared that there are young people who do not belong in detention, but there is nowhere else for them to go. When asked to describe what elements are needed in a future continuum of supports and accountability for young people, staff shared the following elements:
  - Safety and security that matches the risk levels of young people who would otherwise be in detention for themselves, their families, and their communities;
  - Care and support for both young people who need additional support in reentry to community and the young people who may be facing a future of incarceration and separation from their community;
  - Accountability for young people to take responsibility for their actions and buy in to participate in programs;
  - Residential facilities for young people who do not have safe or supportive home environments or are experiencing homelessness;
  - Specific inpatient and outpatient resources to address needs of young people such as intensive mental health and behavioral health treatment; sex offender treatment beds; substance use and alcohol treatment facilities; detoxification facilities; gang intervention services; and crisis care centers;
  - Greater infrastructure for community programs to meet desired outcomes for young people, adhere to high standards of care, and meet high-risk levels and complex needs of young people;
  - Wraparound services and resources for the families of young people, especially parents and guardians, who may need intensive services to better support their young person at home; and
  - More programs in community that do not have eligibility restrictions that prevent young people with serious or felony offenses from participating.

#### Section 4: Conclusions and Future Actions

These listening sessions continue to provide an important opportunity for Juvenile Division staff to provide feedback and insight. Staff have unique and valuable insight into the needs of young people and what it will take to successfully meet those needs in their communities. Staff want to continue to be informed, involved, and engaged in the strategic planning process.

Guided by the feedback from the staff, the County is committed to the following actions:

- Continuing regular engagement opportunities where detention staff can share feedback directly with leaders from DAJD and DCHS to inform the process and receive updates;

- Creating opportunities for interested detention staff representatives to participate in upcoming work groups for the Advisory Committee; and
- Sharing findings from previous detention staff engagement with the Advisory Committee to continue to inform their decision-making.

Appendix

WA State Legislation Requiring Youth Detention

King County will need to address several existing Washington state laws requiring juvenile detention before it can close the youth detention center. These state requirements fall into three major categories: 1) legislation requiring the maintenance and operation of youth detention centers; 2) legislation requiring the use of detention to confine young people; and 3) legislation allowing the use of detention to confine young people. The figure below outlines the state statute, summary, and full legislative text of the state requirements for the operation of detention and the confinement of youth.

Category	State Statute	Title	Summary	Legislative Text
State legislation that requires youth detention centers	RCW 13.16.030 <sup>1</sup>	Mandatory function of counties.	Maintenance of juvenile detention facilities as a mandatory function of several counties.	The construction, acquisition and maintenance of juvenile detention facilities for dependent, wayward and delinquent children, separate and apart from the detention facilities for adults, is hereby declared to be a mandatory function of the several counties of the state.
	RCW 13.04.135 <sup>2</sup>	Establishment of house or room of detention.	Requirement of counties with more than fifty thousand inhabitants to provide a “detention room” or “house of detention”.	Counties containing more than fifty thousand inhabitants shall, and counties containing a lesser number of inhabitants may, provide and maintain at public expense, a detention room or house of detention, separated or removed from any jail, or police station, to be in charge of a matron, or other person of good character, wherein all children within the provisions of this chapter shall, when necessary, be sheltered.
State legislation that requires confinement of a young person	RCW 10.31.100 <sup>3</sup>	Arrest without warrant.	Probable cause of an offer to arrest without a warrant a person they believe has committed or is committing a felony.	A police officer having probable cause to believe that a person has committed or is committing a felony shall have the authority to arrest the person without a warrant. A police officer may arrest a person without a warrant for committing a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor only when the offense is committed in the presence of an officer, except as provided in subsections (1) through (11) of this section.

<sup>1</sup> RCW 13.16.030. Mandatory function of counties [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>2</sup> RCW 13.04.135. Establishment of house or room of detention [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>3</sup> RCW 10.31.100. Arrest without warrant [\[LINK\]](#)

	RCW 13.40.040(3) <sup>4</sup>	Taking juvenile into custody, grounds— Detention of, grounds— Detention pending disposition— Release on bond, conditions— Bail jumping.	Requirement to detain youth found guilty of rape in the 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree or rape of a child.	Notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, and within available funds, a juvenile who has been found guilty of one of the following offenses shall be detained pending disposition: Rape in the first or second degree (RCW 9A.44.040 and 9A.44.050); or rape of a child in the first degree (RCW 9A.44.073).
	RCW 9.41.280(2) <sup>5</sup>	Possessing dangerous weapons on school facilities— Penalty— Exceptions.	Requirement to detain anyone 12-21 years old who is arrested for bringing a firearm to school for up to 72 hours.	(2) Any such person violating subsection (1) of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. Second and subsequent violations of subsection (1) of this section are a gross misdemeanor. If any person is convicted of a violation of subsection (1)(a) of this section, the person shall have his or her concealed pistol license, if any revoked for a period of three years. Anyone convicted under this subsection is prohibited from applying for a concealed pistol license for a period of three years. The court shall send notice of the revocation to the department of licensing, and the city, town, or county which issued the license. Any violation of subsection (1) of this section by elementary or secondary school students constitutes grounds for expulsion from the state's public schools in accordance with RCW 28A.600.010. An appropriate school authority shall promptly notify law enforcement and the student's parent or guardian regarding any allegation or indication of such violation. Upon the arrest of a person at least twelve years of age and not more than twenty-one years of age for violating subsection (1)(a) of this section, the person shall be detained or confined in a juvenile or adult facility for up to seventy-two hours. The person shall not be released within the seventy-two hours until after the

<sup>4</sup> RCW 13.40.040(3). Taking juvenile into custody, grounds—Detention of, grounds—Detention pending disposition—Release on bond, conditions—Bail jumping [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>5</sup> RCW 9.41.280(2). Possessing dangerous weapons on school facilities—Penalty—Exceptions [\[LINK\]](#)

				<p>person has been examined and evaluated by the designated crisis responder unless the court in its discretion releases the person sooner after a determination regarding probable cause or on probation bond or bail.</p> <p>Within twenty-four hours of the arrest, the arresting law enforcement agency shall refer the person to the designated crisis responder for examination and evaluation under chapter 71.05 or 71.34 RCW and inform a parent or guardian of the person of the arrest, detention, and examination. The designated crisis responder shall examine and evaluate the person subject to the provisions of chapter 71.05 or 71.34 RCW. The examination shall occur at the facility in which the person is detained or confined. If the person has been released on probation, bond, or bail, the examination shall occur wherever is appropriate. Upon completion of any examination by the designated crisis responder, the results of the examination shall be sent to the court, and the court shall consider those results in making any determination about the person.</p> <p>The designated crisis responder shall, to the extent permitted by law, notify a parent or guardian of the person that an examination and evaluation has taken place and the results of the examination. Nothing in this subsection prohibits the delivery of additional, appropriate mental health examinations to the person while the person is detained or confined.</p> <p>If the designated crisis responder determines it is appropriate, the designated crisis responder may refer the person to the local behavioral health administrative services organization for follow-up services or other community providers for other services to the family and individual.</p>
	RCW 13.40.193 <sup>6</sup>	Firearms— Length of confinement.	Requirement to confine juvenile who is found to be in possession of a firearm for a minimum of ten days of confinement. <b>Note that EHM is permitted.</b>	If a respondent is found to have been in possession of a firearm in violation of RCW 9.41.040(2)(a)(vii), the court shall impose a minimum disposition of ten days of confinement. If the offender's standard range of disposition for the offense as indicated in RCW 13.40.0357 is more than thirty days of confinement, the court shall commit the offender to the department for the standard

<sup>6</sup> RCW 13.40.193. Firearms—Length of confinement [\[LINK\]](#)

				range disposition. The offender shall not be released until the offender has served a minimum of ten days in confinement.
	RCW 13.40.045 <sup>7</sup>	Escapees— Arrest warrants.	Arrest warrants for juveniles who abscond from parole supervisor or fail to meet conditions of parole; allow law enforcement to arrest the juvenile and place in detention.	The secretary or the secretary's designee shall issue arrest warrants for juveniles who escape from department residential custody. The secretary or the secretary's designee may issue arrest warrants for juveniles who abscond from parole supervision or fail to meet conditions of parole. These arrest warrants shall authorize any law enforcement, probation and parole, or peace officer of this state, or any other state where the juvenile is located, to arrest the juvenile and to place the juvenile in physical custody pending the juvenile's return to confinement in a state juvenile rehabilitation facility.
	RCW 13.40.308 <sup>8</sup>	Juvenile offender adjudicated of taking motor vehicle without permission in the first degree, theft of motor vehicle, possession of a stolen vehicle, taking motor vehicle without permission in the second degree—	Requires juveniles adjudicated of taking motor vehicle without permission, theft of motor vehicle, and possession of stolen vehicle to spend time in detention.	(1) If a respondent is adjudicated of taking a motor vehicle without permission in the first degree as defined in RCW 9A.56.070, the court shall impose the following minimum sentence, in addition to any restitution the court may order payable to the victim: (a) Juveniles with a prior criminal history score of zero to one-half points shall be sentenced to a standard range sentence that includes no less than three months of community supervision, forty-five hours of community restitution, and a requirement that the juvenile remain at home such that the juvenile is confined to a private residence for no less than five days. The juvenile may be subject to electronic monitoring where available. If the juvenile is enrolled in school, the confinement shall be served on non-school days; (b) Juveniles with a prior criminal history score of three-quarters to one and one-half points shall be sentenced to a standard range sentence that includes six months of community supervision, no less than ten days of detention, and ninety hours of community restitution; and

<sup>7</sup> RCW 13.40.045. Escapees—Arrest warrants [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>8</sup> RCW 13.40.308. Juvenile offender adjudicated of taking motor vehicle without permission in the first degree, theft of motor vehicle, possession of a stolen vehicle, taking motor vehicle without permission in the second degree—Minimum sentences [\[LINK\]](#)

		Minimum sentences.		<p>(2) If a respondent is adjudicated of theft of a motor vehicle as defined under RCW 9A.56.065, or possession of a stolen vehicle as defined under RCW 9A.56.068, the court shall impose the following minimum sentence, in addition to any restitution the court may order payable to the victim:</p> <p>(b) Juveniles with a prior criminal history score of three-quarters to one and one-half points shall be sentenced to a standard range sentence that includes no less than six months of community supervision, no less than ten days of detention, and ninety hours of community restitution; and</p> <p>(3) If a respondent is adjudicated of taking a motor vehicle without permission in the second degree as defined in RCW 9A.56.075, the court shall impose a standard range as follows:</p> <p>(b) Juveniles with a prior criminal history score of three-quarters to one and one-half points shall be sentenced to a standard range sentence that includes no less than one day of detention, three months of community supervision, thirty hours of community restitution, and a requirement that the juvenile remain at home such that the juvenile is confined in a private residence for no less than two days. If the juvenile is enrolled in school, the confinement shall be served on non-school days. The juvenile may be subject to electronic monitoring where available; and</p>
	RCW 13.40.210 <sup>9</sup>	Setting of release date—Administrative release authorized, when—Parole program, revocation or modification of, scope—Intensive	Requires confinement if juvenile on parole possessed a firearm or used a deadly weapon. Allows state parole officer to arrest a juvenile.	<p>4(c) If the department finds that any juvenile in a program of parole has possessed a firearm or used a deadly weapon during the program of parole, the department shall modify the parole under (a) of this subsection and confine the juvenile for at least thirty days. Confinement shall be in a facility operated by or pursuant to a contract with the state or any county.</p> <p>(5) A parole officer of the department of children, youth, and families shall have the power to arrest a juvenile under his or her supervision on the same grounds as a law enforcement officer would be authorized to arrest the person.</p>

<sup>9</sup> RCW 13.40.210. Setting of release date—Administrative release authorized, when—Parole program, revocation or modification of, scope—Intensive supervision program—Parole officer's right of arrest [\[LINK\]](#)

		supervision program— Parole officer's right of arrest.		
	RCW 13.24.011 <sup>10</sup> And RCW 13.24.060 <sup>11</sup>	Execution of compact.	The Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ), RCW 13.24.011, requires Washington State (and therefore King County) to work with the Interstate Commission for Juveniles to ensure the safe interstate movement of juveniles subject to the compact, to include the safe return of juveniles who may have run away from their home state. Require the detention of certain juveniles in secured facilities until returned by the home/remanding state.	The compacting states to this interstate compact recognize that each state is responsible for the proper supervision or return of juveniles, delinquents, and status offenders who are on probation or parole and who have absconded, escaped, or run away from supervision and control and in so doing have endangered their own safety and the safety of others. The compacting states also recognize that each state is responsible for the safe return of juveniles who have run away from home and in doing so have left their state of residence. The compacting states also recognize that congress, by enacting the crime control act, 4 U.S.C. Sec. 112 (1965), has authorized and encouraged compacts for cooperative efforts and mutual assistance in the prevention of crime.
	RCW 13.04.145 <sup>12</sup> and RCW 28A.190.005 <sup>13</sup>	Educational program for juveniles in detention facilities— Application of chapter 28A.190 RCW.	Requires the County to provide education to youth who are in detention.	A program of education shall be provided for by the several counties and school districts of the state for common school-age persons confined in each of the detention facilities staffed and maintained by the several counties of the state under this chapter and chapters 13.16 and 13.20 RCW. The division of duties, authority, and liabilities of the several counties and school districts of the state respecting the educational programs is the same in all respects as set forth in chapter 28A.190 RCW respecting programs of education for state residential school residents. Nothing in this section shall prohibit a school district from utilizing the services of an educational service district subject to RCW 28A.310.180.

<sup>10</sup> RCW 13.24.011. Execution of compact [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>11</sup> RCW 13.24.060. Responsibilities of state departments, agencies, and officers [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>12</sup> RCW 13.04.145. Educational program for juveniles in detention facilities—Application of chapter 28A.190 RC [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>13</sup> RCW 28A.190.005. Definitions [\[LINK\]](#)

State legislation that allows but does not require confinement of a young person	RCW 13.40.040 <sup>14</sup>	Taking juvenile into custody, grounds— Detention of, grounds— Detention pending disposition— Release on bond, conditions— Bail jumping.	Allows juvenile to be confined pursuant to 1) a court order, 2) by law enforcement, if grounds exist for the arrest of an adult in identical circumstances, 3) pursuant to a court order that the juvenile be held as a material witness, 4) or where the secretary or the secretary's designee has suspended the parole of a juvenile offender. Allows court to order continued detention if juvenile requests so because of community threats.	(a) Pursuant to a court order if a complaint is filed with the court alleging, and the court finds probable cause to believe, that the juvenile has committed an offense or has violated terms of a disposition order or release order; or (b) Without a court order, by a law enforcement officer if grounds exist for the arrest of an adult in identical circumstances. Admission to, and continued custody in, a court detention facility shall be governed by subsection (2) of this section; or (c) Pursuant to a court order that the juvenile be held as a material witness; or (d) Where the secretary or the secretary's designee has suspended the parole of a juvenile offender. (2) A juvenile may not be held in detention unless there is probable cause to believe that: (a) The juvenile has committed an offense or has violated the terms of a disposition order; and (i) The juvenile will likely fail to appear for further proceedings; or (ii) Detention is required to protect the juvenile from himself or herself; or (iii) The juvenile is a threat to community safety; or (iv) The juvenile will intimidate witnesses or otherwise unlawfully interfere with the administration of justice; or (v) The juvenile has committed a crime while another case was pending; or (b) The juvenile is a fugitive from justice; or (c) The juvenile's parole has been suspended or modified; or (d) The juvenile is a material witness.
	RCW 7.21.030 <sup>15</sup>	Remedial sanctions— Payment for losses. (Effective until July 1, 2023.)	Courts have the power to hold persons in contempt. Courts have the power to sanction persons held in contempt, to include by imprisonment.	(1) The court may initiate a proceeding to impose a remedial sanction on its own motion or on the motion of a person aggrieved by a contempt of court in the proceeding to which the contempt is related. Except as provided in RCW 7.21.050, the court, after notice and hearing, may impose a remedial sanction authorized by this chapter.

<sup>14</sup> RCW 13.40.040. Taking juvenile into custody, grounds—Detention of, grounds—Detention pending disposition—Release on bond, conditions—Bail jumping [\[LINK\]](#)

<sup>15</sup> RCW 7.21.030. Remedial sanctions—Payment for losses. (Effective until July 1, 2023.) [\[LINK\]](#)

				<p>(2) If the court finds that the person has failed or refused to perform an act that is yet within the person's power to perform, the court may find the person in contempt of court and impose one or more of the following remedial sanctions:</p> <p>(a) Imprisonment if the contempt of court is of a type defined in RCW 7.21.010(1) (b) through (d). The imprisonment may extend only so long as it serves a coercive purpose.</p>
	RCW 43.185C.310 <sup>16</sup>	Youth services—Crisis residential centers—Removal to another center or secure facility—Placement in secure juvenile detention facility.	Allows juvenile housed in a crisis residential center to be placed in detention for a maximum of 48 hours.	<p>(1) A child taken into custody and taken to a crisis residential center established pursuant to RCW 43.185C.295 may, if the center is unable to provide appropriate treatment, supervision, and structure to the child, be taken at department expense to another crisis residential center, the nearest regional secure crisis residential center, or a secure facility with which it is collocated under RCW 43.185C.295. Placement in both locations shall not exceed fifteen consecutive days from the point of intake as provided in RCW 43.185C.290.</p> <p>(2) A child taken into custody and taken to a crisis residential center established by this chapter may be placed physically by the department of social and health services' designee and, at their departmental expense and approval, in a secure juvenile detention facility operated by the county in which the center is located for a maximum of forty-eight hours, including Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, if the child has taken unauthorized leave from the center and the person in charge of the center determines that the center cannot provide supervision and structure adequate to ensure that the child will not again take unauthorized leave. Juveniles placed in such a facility pursuant to this section may not, to the extent possible, come in contact with alleged or convicted juvenile or adult offenders.</p> <p>(3) Any child placed in secure detention pursuant to this section shall, during the period of confinement, be provided with appropriate treatment by the department of social and health services or the department's designee, which shall include the services defined in RCW 43.185C.305(2). If the child placed in secure detention is not returned home or if an alternative living</p>

<sup>16</sup> RCW 43.185C.310. Youth services—Crisis residential centers—Removal to another center or secure facility—Placement in secure juvenile detention facility [\[LINK\]](#)

				<p>arrangement agreeable to the parent and the child is not made within twenty-four hours after the child's admission, the child shall be taken at the department's expense to a crisis residential center. Placement in the crisis residential center or centers plus placement in juvenile detention shall not exceed five consecutive days from the point of intake as provided in RCW 43.185C.290.</p>
	RCW 13.04.116 <sup>17</sup>	Juvenile not to be confined in jail or holding facility for adults, exceptions—Enforcement.	Details the allowable use of jails or holding facilities for adults	<p>(1) A juvenile shall not be confined in a jail or holding facility for adults, except:</p> <p>(a) For a period not exceeding twenty-four hours excluding weekends and holidays and only for the purpose of an initial court appearance in a county where no juvenile detention facility is available, a juvenile may be held in an adult facility provided that the confinement is separate from the sight and sound of adult inmates;</p> <p>(b) For not more than six hours and pursuant to a lawful detention in the course of an investigation, a juvenile may be held in an adult facility provided that the confinement is separate from the sight and sound of adult inmates; or</p> <p>(c) For a juvenile who is subject to exclusive adult criminal court jurisdiction under RCW <a href="#">13.04.030</a> or who has been transferred to adult criminal court under RCW <a href="#">13.40.110</a>, the juvenile may not be held in a jail or holding facility for a period exceeding twenty-four hours excluding weekends and holidays, unless a court finds, after a hearing and in writing, that it is in the interest of justice.</p> <p>(i) If a court determines that it is in the interest of justice to permit a juvenile who is subject to exclusive adult criminal court jurisdiction under RCW <a href="#">13.04.030</a> or who has been transferred to adult criminal court under RCW <a href="#">13.40.110</a> to be held in a jail or holding facility, the juvenile may not have sight or sound contact with adult inmates, unless the court also finds, after a hearing and in writing, that it is in the interest of justice to permit sight or sound contact with adult inmates. In making the determination regarding sight or sound contact with adult inmates under this subsection, the court shall consider:</p> <p>(A) The age of the juvenile;</p> <p>(B) The physical and mental maturity of the juvenile;</p>

<sup>17</sup> RCW 13.04.116. Juvenile not to be confined in jail or holding facility for adults, exceptions—Enforcement [[LINK](#)]

				<p>(C) The present mental state of the juvenile, including whether the juvenile presents an imminent risk of harm to himself or herself;</p> <p>(D) The nature and circumstances of the alleged offense;</p> <p>(E) The juvenile's history of prior delinquent acts;</p> <p>(F) The relative ability of the available adult and juvenile detention facilities to meet the specific needs of the juvenile, protect the safety of the public, and protect other detained juveniles; and</p> <p>(G) Any other relevant factors.</p> <p>(ii) If a court determines that it is in the interest of justice to permit a juvenile who is subject to exclusive adult criminal court jurisdiction under RCW <a href="#">13.04.030</a> or who has been transferred to adult criminal court under RCW <a href="#">13.40.110</a> to be held in a jail or holding facility or have sight or sound contact with adult inmates under this section:</p> <p>(A) The court shall hold a hearing at least once every thirty days to review whether it is still in the interest of justice to permit the juvenile to be held in a jail or holding facility, as defined under RCW <a href="#">70.48.020</a>, or have sight or sound contact with adult inmates; and</p> <p>(B) The juvenile shall not be held in any jail or holding facility or permitted to have sight or sound contact with adult inmates, for more than one hundred eighty days, unless:</p> <p>(I) The court, in writing, determines that there is good cause to allow an extension beyond one hundred eighty days; or</p> <p>(II) The juvenile expressly waives this limitation.</p> <p>(iii) A juvenile who is subject to exclusive adult criminal court jurisdiction under RCW <a href="#">13.04.030</a> or who has been transferred to adult criminal court under RCW <a href="#">13.40.110</a> has the right to be represented by counsel, and if indigent, to have counsel appointed for him or her by the court at any hearing held to determine whether to place the juvenile in a jail or holding facility or to continue the juvenile's placement in such a facility.</p> <p>(2) The department shall monitor and enforce compliance with this section. The department may use information regarding juveniles confined in a jail gathered under the authority granted</p>
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				by this subsection in the report required in RCW <a href="#">13.22.060(1)</a> with respect to juveniles in the custody of a jail or holding facility.
	RCW 13.40.050(6)(e) <sup>18</sup>	Detention procedures— Notice of hearing— Conditions of release— Consultation with parent, guardian, or custodian.	Allows confinement of juvenile in detention even if detention is not necessary under juvenile sentencing guidelines.	If detention is not necessary under RCW 13.40.040, the court shall impose the most appropriate of the following conditions or, if necessary, any combination of the following conditions: (a) Place the juvenile in the custody of a designated person agreeing to supervise such juvenile; (b) Place restrictions on the travel of the juvenile during the period of release; (c) Require the juvenile to report regularly to and remain under the supervision of the juvenile court; (d) Impose any condition other than detention deemed reasonably necessary to assure appearance as required; (e) Require that the juvenile return to detention during specified hours; or (f) Require the juvenile to post a probation bond set by the court under terms and conditions as provided in *RCW 13.40.040(4). (7) A juvenile may be released only to a responsible adult or the department. (8) If the parent, guardian, or custodian of the juvenile in detention is available, the court shall consult with them prior to a determination to further detain or release the juvenile or treat the case as a diversion case under RCW 13.40.080. (9) A person notified under this section who fails without reasonable cause to appear and abide by the order of the court may be proceeded against as for contempt of court. In determining whether a parent, guardian, or custodian had reasonable cause not to appear, the court may consider all factors relevant to the person's ability to appear as summoned.
Other relevant state laws referenced in this proviso response				

<sup>18</sup> RCW 13.40.050(6)(e). Detention procedures—Notice of hearing—Conditions of release—Consultation with parent, guardian, or custodian [\[LINK\]](#)

<p>Statutory purpose of county youth detention centers</p>	<p>RCW 13.40.038</p>	<p>County juvenile detention facilities— Policy— Detention and risk assessment standards.</p>	<p>Statutory purpose of the juvenile detention facilities and need for intake standards and risk assessments to determine if detention is warranted</p>	<p>(1) It is the policy of this state that all county juvenile detention facilities provide a humane, safe, and rehabilitative environment and that unadjudicated youth remain in the community whenever possible, consistent with public safety and the provisions of chapter 13.40 RCW.  (2) The counties shall develop and implement detention intake standards and risk assessment standards to determine whether detention is warranted, whether the juvenile is developmentally disabled, and if detention is warranted, whether the juvenile should be placed in secure, nonsecure, or home detention to implement the goals of this section.  (3) Inability to pay for a less restrictive detention placement shall not be a basis for denying a respondent a less restrictive placement in the community.  (4) The assessment standards to determine whether a juvenile entering detention is developmentally disabled must be developed and implemented no later than December 31, 2012.</p>
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## Appendix N

## DAJD, Juvenile Division Bargaining Units (as of 4/19/2023)

1: CBA #297 – Juvenile Detention Guild – Uniform Staff (interest arbitration eligible)		
JOB TYPE	FILLED POSITIONS #	BUDGETED POSITIONS #
Detention Officer	71	91
PPM 2 (Restorative Justice Coordinator)	2	2
Recreation Coordinator	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>94</b>
2: CBA #276 – Juvenile Detention Supervisors (interest arbitration eligible)		
JOB TYPE	FILLED POSITIONS #	BUDGETED POSITIONS #
Corrections Supervisor	11	11
3: CBA #296 – Juvenile Detention Guild Non-Uniform Staff		
JOB TYPE	FILLED POSITIONS #	BUDGETED POSITIONS #
Administrative Specialist III	2	3
Administrator 1	1	1
Community Corrections Placement Spec.	2	3
Community Surveillance Officer	6	8
Inventory Purchasing Specialist	1	1
Juvenile Facility Cook/Baker	6	6
Medical Assistant	6	6
Training Coordinator	1	1
Volunteer Coordinator	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>
4: CBAs #310– Juvenile Detention Nurses		
JOB TYPE	FILLED POSITIONS #	BUDGETED POSITIONS #
Registered Nurse	6	6
5: CBAs #310– Juvenile Detention Nurse Manager		
FILLED POSITIONS #	BUDGETED POSITIONS #	BUDGETED POSITIONS #
1	1	1