

# Restorative Community Pathways

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# Background

Community organizations, King County Dept. of Public Defense, and Prosecuting Attorney's Office proposed Restorative Community Pathways for youth and harmed parties in 2020.

King County included RCP in the 2021-2022 budget.

Restorative Community Pathways launched services in November 2021 to:

- Meet **the individualized needs** of youth **and** the harmed parties referred by PAO.
- Foster **long-lasting relationships and support** for participants.
- Provide **harmed parties a voice in their healing** process.
- Allow young people to engage in **meaningful accountability for the harm they have caused.**



# RCP Letter Requirements

1. ... **process for referring youth** to the restorative community pathways program....
2. ... **inventory of the programs available to youth** ....
3. **Summary of the contracts** .... enrollment statistics and outcomes for each contracted organization; and
4. **A description of any improvements** to the restorative community pathways program

# 1. Referral Process

- PAO refers youth with misdemeanors and first-time felonies\* to the RCP Referral Coordinator
- PAO refers harmed parties associated with alleged incidents to the RCP Referral Coordinator
- RCP Referral Coordinator assigns referral to a community navigator
- Navigators attempt to contact referrals within 48 hours of receipt of the referral (phone, email, text, and home visits)
- Within 90 days, RCP provides a status report to the PAO (accepted services, declined services, cannot locate)
  - PAO determines next steps (file charges, decline charges, etc)
- From Nov. 1, 2021 to Jun. 30, 2025, PAO referred 1,196 youth and 798 community members who experienced harm.

\* Felony referrals were paused in July 2025

*"[If] you're struggling, if you need help in certain areas, they're [RCP staff] definitely willing to help you; it's different than other programs; everyone really loves their job. They're willing to do the extra, and help you out, and give you a chance."*

*-Young person in RCP*

## 2. RCP's wraparound model

RCP's core services fall into four primary areas:

- Basic needs
- Education and employment pathways
- Access to behavioral health services
- Healing-centered activities

*Culturally responsive diversion offers a meaningful alternative to the juvenile legal systems; they can **address underlying causes, promote healing, and help youth reconnect** with education and community*

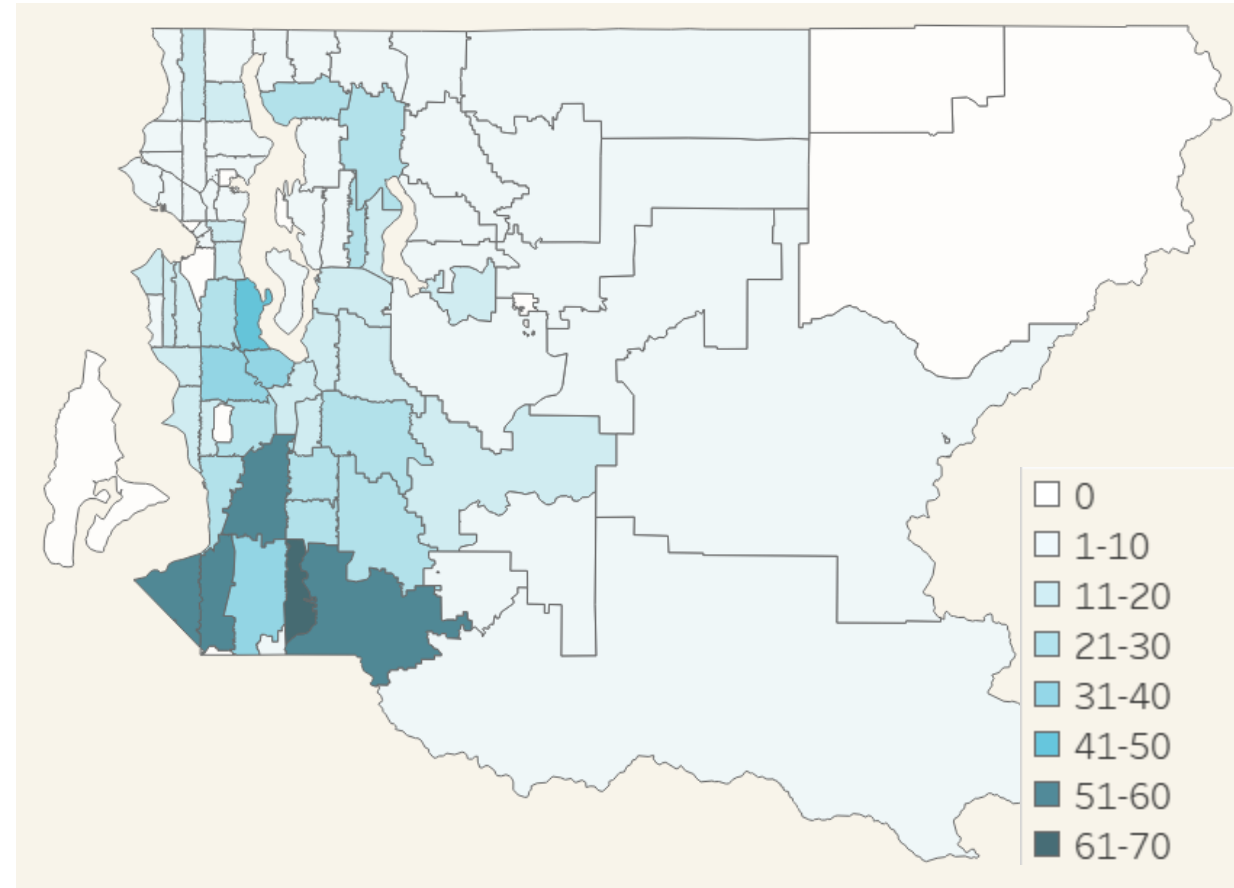
*(Beardslee et al., 2019; Seacrest, 2023).*

*When programming centers youth well-being and identity, it fosters **resilience, connection, and future orientation**, which promote positive academic and life outcomes*

*(Mendel, 2024; AECF, 2018; Bhargav & Swords, 2024; Del Toro & Wang, 2020; Hurd & Sellers, 2013).*

### 3. Contracted Partners for 2025

- CHOOSE 180
- Congolese Integration Network
- Collective Justice
- Creative Justice
- East African Community Services
- Pacific Islander Community Association
- Rooted in Vibrant Communities/RVC



RCP participants by ZIP code.

### 3. Outcomes: RCP positively impacts participant growth and development

- 69% of youth and 84% of CMEH **achieved at least one education, employment, or personal goal** from their action plan
- 93% of youth and 97% of CMEH showed **positive identity development** – reporting increased self-efficacy, empowerment, and belief in their potential
- 81% of youth and 95% of CMEH reported **gains in knowledge and skills**, such as the ability to express emotions, develop coping strategies, or deepen empathy toward family and peers
- 89% of youth and 95% of CMEH felt **more connected to others and their community** – often facilitated by Community Navigators who provide mentorship and emotional safety

*“It was a really great opportunity for [my son] to get some accountability without facing major consequences. It was an opportunity to keep him from going to court and from going to jail.*

*[RCP is] a really positive alternative to standard sentencing and [an] opportunity to learn and grow.”*

*(Parent of RCP participant)*

### 3. Outcomes: RCP creates stability and community connection

- RCP's network of care provides **basic needs assistance, mental health resources, and spaces for healing**
- **Youth learn accountability through developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed practices**, such as reflection and dialogue exercises, writing letters, and defining shared values
- **Community Navigators build consistent, trusting relationships** that are essential for long-term engagement in the program

*Research has demonstrated that punishment misaligns with developmental needs so rather than viewing accountability as synonymous with blame or punishment, RCP reframes it as a relational and reflective process—one that supports healing and growth through connection and care.*

*(Glicksman, 2019; Toews et al., 2024)*



### 3. Outcomes: Meeting basic needs is strongly linked to positive outcomes

Basic needs, including housing, food, clothing, and safety, help create an environment for participants to achieve positive development outcomes.

- 99% of participants who had at least one basic need met reported **positive identity development, stronger community connection, and program satisfaction**
- 94% of youth and 97% of CMEH with needs met reported **gains in knowledge or skills**
- 77% of youth and 88% of CMEH with needs met **completed at least one personal goal**

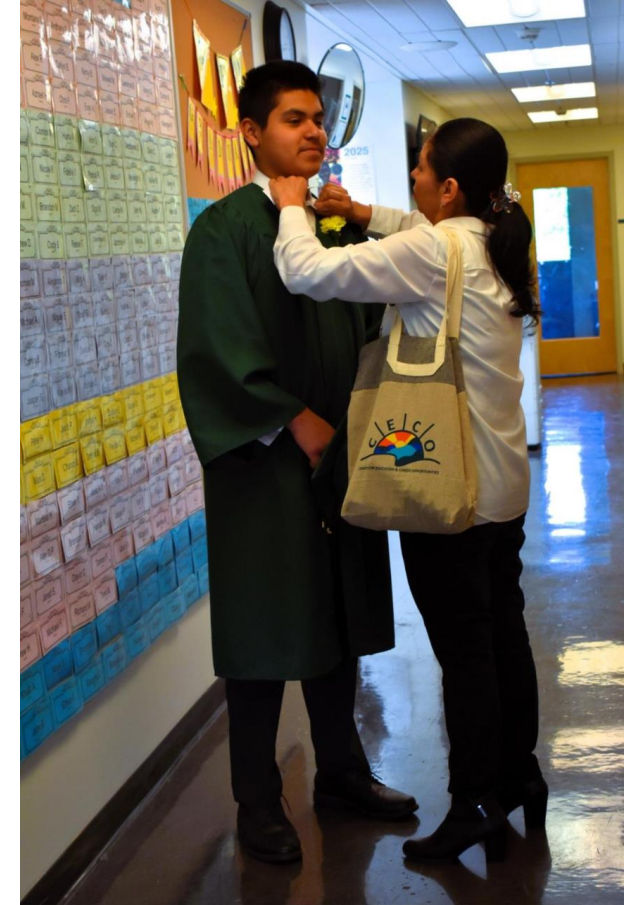
*Systemic challenges like housing instability, food insecurity, caregiver incarceration increase youth vulnerability.*

*These factors, compounded by racial bias, punitive school climates, and unmet basic needs, result in youth becoming disconnected from school and community, and often lead to involvement in the legal system.*

*(Hodara et al., 2023; Crumé et al., 2020; Hong et al., 2024; Mendel, 2024)*

## 4. Improvements for 2026/2027

- Moving the roles of referral administration and consortium coordination from a community organization into DCHS.
- Launching a new RFP to reprocore community-based services.
- Enhancing data collection and reporting, especially around school and education engagement.
- Strengthening connections between KCYDI service providers and DCHS services.
- Adding a School Liaison (one FTE) to support getting youth back into school, staying in school, and being successful in school.
- Decentralizing the distribution of the Youth and Family Fund.
- Shifting the role of a Youth Steering Committee away from decision-making to informing continuous quality Improvement.





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