

# PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO JUVENILE JUSTICE

## WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH?

A public health approach to juvenile justice means engaging communities and applying a strong evidence base to determine prevention and intervention strategies that eliminate the need for juvenile detention and promote the well-being and development of all youth.



### SCIENCE-BASED

Science about the way adolescent brains develop helps us understand ways we can support youth, particularly those who may have experienced trauma.



### PROGRESS & PARTNERSHIP

The County funds community partnerships that creates opportunities for young people who face systemic barriers to success.



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This approach has already proven effective, but more needs to be done in partnership with community leaders. Success and reaching our goal of zero youth detention will require community engagement and involvement of community organizations, partners, families and youth.



### LEADERSHIP & COMMITMENT

A coalition of twenty diverse county leaders committed to the public health approach has been assembled and includes:

- Public Health – Seattle & King County
- King County Superior Court
- Executive Office
- Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention
- Department of Community and Human Services
- Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Department of Public Defense
- King County Sheriff's Office
- Performance, Strategy and Budget
- Office of Labor Relations

King County has **reduced the number of youth in detention by 70%** since 1998, and most youth are **out of detention in 3-5 days**.

Our most recent steps forward:

**Summer 2018:** Road Map to Zero Youth Detention report will put forth short and long-term strategies to keep kids out of the justice system, better deliver services, and increase support for those transitioning out of the justice system

**Spring 2018:** All programming work within Juvenile Detention will be placed under the care of Public Health.

**November 2017:** Executive order calling for a new direction for juvenile detention using a public health approach

**November 2017:** Executive order moving youth charged as adults from Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent to Youth Services Center

**August 2017:** Deputy Executive Rhonda Berry appointed to lead the County's collective work to lead the County's Zero Youth Detention effort

**July 2015:** The Executive chartered the Juvenile Justice Equity Steering committee

# THE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH IN PRACTICE

Public Health-informed programming addresses the needs of youth and families before they experience the juvenile justice system, when they interact with our systems and facilities, and when they transition out of the juvenile justice system.

## STRATEGIES FOR ZERO YOUTH DETENTION

King County is already implementing **strategies to reduce the use of detention that are making a difference**. We are pairing upstream solutions that keep kids from interacting with the justice system in the first place with safe, respectful facilities to serve as a resource in our communities for our services. Additionally, our programs, working in conjunction with community partners, deliver supportive services in a nurturing, trauma-informed way.

- **Family Intervention and Restorative Services (FIRS)** - offers youth arrested for family violence incidents space at an overnight respite center instead of secure detention
- **Step-Up Program** - specifically addresses adolescent family violence
- **Creative Justice** - an arts-focused alternative to detention
- **The 180 Program** - a diversion program offering youth a chance to have their charges dismissed
- **Restorative Mediation** - helps youth understand the full impact of their actions directly from victims
- **Drug Court** - allowing juveniles charged with an offense who have alcohol or drug problems to participate in a program, including early, continuous and intensive court-monitored treatment

## The new Children and Family Justice Center brings all family law matters under one roof.

As we work toward fewer and fewer youth coming into detention, we want to make sure that those who do are supported by a developmentally appropriate environment that helps them leave as resilient as possible and better connected to what they need to thrive in their community.

### The new facility will feature:

- An environment conducive to delivering trauma-informed services
- Childcare for those attending family court
- 100 fewer beds than existing facility
- Space for courtrooms

## Building for a future of zero youth detention.

As the County continues to drive reductions in the use of secure detention for juveniles, **the detention housing units will be constructed so that they can be easily converted to transition units and community use space.**