



Becoming an Anti-Racist County

In June, King County Executive Dow Constantine and Public Health Director Patty Hayes declared that racism is a public health crisis and committed to implementing a racially just response to this crisis. This includes sharing power with the community, interrupting business as usual, and replacing it with something better—purposeful steps necessary to end racial bias and all its negative impacts.

The 2021-2022 Proposed Budget includes new investments and transformations in the criminal legal system, as well as funding priorities for anti-racism, pro-equity work, developed in partnership with advocates, community members, and public servants throughout King County government. These investments start to shift the historic and current power structure and represent a down payment toward a long-term and permanent shift in all County policies and operations needed to ensure Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) can thrive in King County.

In addition to the 2021-2022 budget actions, the Executive also commits to advancing policies, practices, and laws that will help make the County more anti-racist as an entity and a region. This transformation will include collaborating with community to identify priority actions that King County will implement and advocate for in areas beyond the Executive branch.

System Changes

The 2021-2022 Proposed Budget includes system changes that replace certain approaches with others that are more efficient, less costly, and/or will produce better outcomes. Co-creating with the community, these system changes will be designed in the 2021-2022 biennium. In many cases implementation will begin in this timeframe and will be fully implemented by 2023-2024.

- Invest \$6.2 million in the Restorative Community Pathways program in 2021 to divert 40-80 percent of young people involved in juvenile cases from the legal system by providing comprehensive community-based services for youth, as well as restitution and appropriate services and supports for the harmed party. The program will eventually be fully funded through staff savings in King County Superior Court, Department of Public Defense, and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office.
- Partner with community members and the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) to co-create and implement a new community-driven safety model in urban unincorporated King County, which will be funded through a \$750,000 reserve in the General Fund. This may involve hiring behavioral health professionals to partner with Sheriff's Office Deputies and divert cases from criminal courts and jails. The goal is to design the program in 2021 and implement no later than 2022.
- Engage with employees, Metro, KCSO, contractors, and community members to co-create new alternatives to traditional fare enforcement, which has had a disproportionate negative impact on riders of color. The goal is to design new programs in 2021 and implement no later than 2022. The current contract with a private security firm to provide fare enforcement services is \$4.7 million.
- Develop alternatives to the existing School Resource Officers (SRO) model for implementation in the 2021-2022 biennium after working with KCSO, school districts, and contract cities.



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- Implement a diversion and reentry hub in the jail in 2022 as an alternative to detention. Community-based organizations will partner with King County to provide behavioral health, cognitive behavioral therapy, community case management coordination, and other services to 60 individuals at a time (up to 700 annually). This will be funded by a \$1.35 million reserve in the General Fund.
- Work with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) and community organizations to remove up to 1,000 cases in the legal system through the community justice diversion model, which will divert felony cases for individuals with a first-time, non-violent felony to community-based alternative services or other programs that will be developed in 2021. The program will also provide a restitution fund to assist victims. The planning effort is funded in the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, and a reserve of \$2.5 million has been established in the General Fund to implement the program.
- Divest \$1.9 million in detention by continuing limits on jail population. During COVID, King County has reduced the daily adult population in the jail to 1,300, down from approximately 1,900 pre-COVID, and the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention and others will seek to maintain and further reductions. This will allow closure of one floor (out of 12) at the King County Correctional Facility in Seattle. The savings estimate is based on gradual implementation in 2022. Savings will be much larger in subsequent biennia and will be devoted to support programs outside the criminal legal system.
- Invest \$600,000 in the Zero Youth Detention (ZYD) Regional Approach to Youth Gun Violence to continue developing a long-term, systems-focused, community-centered, comprehensive strategy to reduce firearm death and violence. ZYD is working within the community to build safe, healthy, hopeful communities where equitable quality and quantity of life can exist, regardless of race and location.

Investments in Community and Residents Where the Needs are Greatest

- Invest \$2.8 million to help individuals vacate convictions of marijuana-related offenses that are no longer illegal, and settle unpaid court fines, fees, and restitution that could lead to incarceration. Black communities have historically been disproportionately harmed by the nation's "war on drugs," and this begins to undo some of that harm.
- Allocate \$1.35 million to the Department of Local Services (DLS) to co-create programs with the residents in the unincorporated area to address harms caused by the marijuana retail industry and support youth marijuana prevention and employment programs.
- Fund \$450,000 in DLS to create and support a community-centered advisory body in urban unincorporated King County that would determine how to spend marijuana taxes in future years.
- Set aside \$10 million in seed funding for a community center in Skyway. The funding will be used either for acquisition and design or as a contribution to a partner for the development.
- Use General Fund debt service payments to contribute up to \$10 million for a new facility that supports community-based behavioral health, housing, and/or employment supports.
- Reserve funds for environmental projects that create green jobs that can be turned into careers, with an emphasis on under-represented communities. These capital projects will have a long-term, positive benefits for the environment, will create green jobs with career pathways for BIPOC communities; and will support economic recovery. The use of funds will be informed by community engagement. This fund will be supported through the issuance of \$20 million in new



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bonds and supported by debt service payment in the General Fund and the projects identified in a supplemental budget on 2021-2022.

Community Engagement and Co-Creation

The 2021-2022 Proposed Budget makes investments to change the County's approach to working with community to support co-creation and the long-term success of community-based organizations.

- Create a participatory budgeting effort to determine how to invest \$10 million in new capital projects in the urban unincorporated areas of Skyway, White Center, Fairwood, East Federal Way, and East Renton.
- Invest \$1.5 million in the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) to support capacity building within community-based organizations (CBOs) to help create a vibrant, resilient, and sustainable system to provide services within their communities.
- Allocate \$1.6 million for a cross-functional community engagement team and a reserve of \$1 million to invest in intentional and meaningful community engagement to co-create anti-racist, pro-equity solutions *with* community.
- Fund \$1 million to build out an ongoing translation program for the King County website to ensure information is available in the six most-spoken languages in the County. The new translation program will allow nearly all residents to access information about jury summons, marriage licenses, snow closures, and more in their preferred language.

Support for BIPOC Employees and Enhancements to Workplace Culture

The Executive also proposes targeted internal investments to better support BIPOC employees and ensure the County has the capacity to be pro-equity and racially just in every element of County government.

- Fund equity and inclusion managers to lead the development of inclusive government practices, engage employees and communities, strengthen pro-equity networks, and collaborate with partners to support King County and community goals and priorities, particularly related to equity and racial justice. This includes a reallocation of existing resources and additional investment of \$400,000 in the Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ) to centrally support smaller agencies.
- Create a dedicated funding resource of approximately \$400,000 to support employee affinity groups, including development opportunities, training, capacity building, healing heritage months, town halls, education, and more.
- Provide \$250,000 for focused and integrated policy, systems and consulting support for agencies through OESJ.

This document highlights only new investments proposed by Executive Constantine that are intended to move King County toward becoming an anti-racist government and region. Additional investments can be found in the 2021-2022 Proposed Budget that carry forward existing programs.