

Justice and Safety



The 2023-2024 budget will work to reduce crime, gun violence, and behavioral health crises by tackling root causes, funding evidence-based programs that provide community-based accountability, and reducing systemic racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal legal system. Key investments include:

Deploying a well-trained, coordinated public safety network

- **Preventing Gun Violence:** \$9 million to support 52 Regional Peacekeepers Collective, trusted messengers delivering a community-led approach to gun violence prevention including critical incident response, hospital-based referrals, and hot spot remediation activities.
- **Expanding Sheriff's Office response to violent crime:** \$2.3 million to create a new unit focused on reducing gun violence and to hire additional detectives to the major crimes unit.
- **Ensuring safety for transit riders and staff:** \$21 million to support 140 Metro transit security officers providing support and visibility on Metro buses, transit centers, and stops. An additional \$5.1 million will support Metro SaFE Reform Initiatives, including a new partnership with the Department of Community and Human Services and community-based organizations to connect people in crisis on and near Metro transit with resources and services.
- **Increasing anti-racism training for frontline safety staff:** \$1 million to ensure sheriff deputies, corrections officers, and District Court staff have the latest anti-racism training. Additionally, Sheriff deputies will receive de-escalation training and corrections officers will receive suicide prevention training above the state-mandated trainings.
- **Pairing behavioral health professionals with law enforcement:** \$2.1 million to launch new co-responder units so behavioral health professionals can address crises together with law enforcement. This expansion will enable the Sheriff's Office to have co-responders in each precinct.

Providing diversion and intervention programs that are data-informed and responsive to community needs

- **Expanding safety net support to familiar faces:** \$2.4 million to fund the Vital program's support of 80 individuals who are frequent utilizers of the jail by addressing their underlying housing, health, and other basic needs, disrupting their cycle of crime.
- **Supporting Community Diversion Program:** \$9.2 million to serve 2000 first-time, non-violent adult felony cases through community-based alternative services with the goal of preventing future criminal behavior, improving outcomes for harmed parties, and decreasing racial disproportionality.
- **Continuing the Restorative Community Pathways Program:** \$7.3 million to provide community-based accountability and services to 850 youth via Restorative Community Pathways, an evidence-based program that reduces recidivism and helps address underlying needs of participants.

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Improving access to justice and restoring confidence in the public safety system

- **Fully funding the inquest program:** \$4.8 million to allow the inquest program to work through the backlog of cases and reduce wait times for the families involved. Inquests provide transparency on details surrounding deaths from law enforcement operations and an opportunity to identify learnings that could prevent similar tragedies in the future.
- **Addressing the backlog of cases in the legal system:** \$22.4 million in American Rescue Plan funds to continue working through the pandemic-created legal system's backlog.
- **Implementing body-worn cameras:** \$5 million to provide all Sheriff patrol deputies with body-worn cameras. Deployment of cameras and associated training will begin immediately and phased in over the next three years.
- **Vacating drug convictions:** \$2 million to community groups to build awareness about options to vacate drug convictions that are no longer illegal and provide services that address the needs of individuals affected by the collateral consequences of contacts with the criminal system and drug convictions, such as persistent barriers to housing and employment.

Improving conditions for people in custody

- **Expanding treatment programs for people in or being released from King County jails:** \$6.3 million to maintain and expand jail-based opioid treatment programs and services for people being released from the jail with substance use disorder or other behavioral health conditions.
- **Increasing access to communications and educational resources by providing tablets:** \$800,000 to provide tablets for people in custody in King County jails to improve access to communication with family or others outside the jail, educational resources, books, podcasts, religious and spiritual materials, legal research, and more.
- **Reducing risk of suicide and improving safety:** \$1 million to install jump barriers in the jail, which builds off of \$940,000 in prior funding to retrofit all jail bunks to reduce risks to people in custody.