

## Approach to the Juvenile Legal System

### What is a public health approach?

A public health approach to the juvenile legal system 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 & trauma-informed

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



#### Leading with racial equity

As overall numbers of youth in detention have decreased, racial disproportionality has worsened. We're leading with racial justice to commit to undoing the institutionalized racism and bias upon which the "justice" system is built.



#### Partnering with community

Success at reaching our goal of zero youth detention will require community engagement and involvement of community leaders, families and youth. The County funds community partnerships that create opportunities for young people who face systemic barriers to success.

King County has reduced the number of youth in detention by 20% since 2013, and most youth are out of detention in 3-5 days

#### RECENT STEPS FORWARD

**December 2018:** Launched Zero Youth Detention data dashboard to track process and increase public accountability and transparency

**September 2018:** County published Road Map to Zero Youth Detention, outlining long-term strategies to keep kids out of the legal system, improve service delivery, and increase support for youth and families

**May 2018:** Launched Community Empowered Disposition Alternative and Resolution (CEDAR) to expedite youth cases and reduce/dismiss charges if youth complete community interventions

**Spring 2018:** All Juvenile Detention programming placed under the care of Public Health

**November 2017:** Executive order calling for public health approach to juvenile detention and moving youth charged as adults from adult facility to Youth Services Center

**July 2015:** Juvenile Justice Equity Steering committee chartered by County Executive

### Alignment & commitment



When systems work together, the people they serve benefit. These leaders have committed to the public health approach to the juvenile legal system:

- Public Health – Seattle & King County
- King County Superior Court
- County Executive's 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

# The public health approach in practice

King County is already implementing strategies that are making a difference in reducing the use of youth detention:

- **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** - therapeutic group for youth and families addressing adolescent family violence
- **Mall Safety Project** - diversion for youth suspected of shoplifting
- **Truancy Boards** - community-staffed court-alternative for families with truancy violations
- **Restorative Mediation** - helps youth understand the full impact of their actions directly from victims
- **Community Accountability Boards** - diversion for youth accused of first or second-time misdemeanors
- **Community Empowered Disposition Alternative and Resolution (CEDAR)** - expedites cases and reduces or dismisses charges if youth successfully complete community justice interventions
- **Peacemaking Circles** - form of restorative justice, inspired by Native American traditions



Rimon and his mother participated in the first King County Juvenile Court felony case to be resolved through a peacemaking circle, a process inspired by Native American traditions.

## YOUNG PEOPLE

*"... thrive on community. But for young people in conflict with the law, our response is too often the opposite. By incarcerating young people, we do things we know are harmful... This separation disproportionately affects Black and brown communities, often characterized by tight social fabric."*

-- National Human Services Assembly. Beyond Bars: Keeping Young People Safe at Home and out of Youth Prisons

## Learn more

**Check out our blog:** [zeroyouthdetention.com](http://zeroyouthdetention.com)

**Visit the data dashboard to track our progress:**

[kingcounty.gov/depts/health/zero-youth-detention/dashboard](http://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/zero-youth-detention/dashboard)

**Read the Road Map to Zero Youth Detention:**

[kingcounty.gov/zero-youth-detention](http://kingcounty.gov/zero-youth-detention)

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