



# Road Map to Zero Youth Detention

---

The Road Map to Zero Youth Detention is a strategic plan to guide future investments and policies to support families and further reduce the number of young people involved in the legal system. In his proposed 2019-2020 budget, Executive Dow Constantine includes funding to help expand solutions to improve community safety and help young people thrive.

## BACKGROUND

Following Executive Dow Constantine's call for new ways of thinking about community safety and criminal justice in his 2017 State of the County speech, leaders from King County Superior Court, Public Health Seattle & King County, King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Department of Public Defense, the Sheriff's Office, and the Department of Community and Human Services set about to gather public input and outline practical solutions. The effort became known as the Road Map to Zero Youth Detention.

Road Map community engagement included a digital survey with more than 2,100 respondents, as well as meetings and focus groups with more than 180 participants. Nineteen parents or guardians and 12 youth also provided input and case histories. The final Road Map report draws on community recommendations from the *Juvenile Justice Equity Steering Committee*, the *Children and Youth Advisory Board*, and other community members and organizations.

The Road Map report findings include:

- Community-based diversion options should become the primary response for most youth who come into contact with the legal system.
- Organizations that involve youth such as school districts, child welfare systems, law enforcement, physical and behavioral health providers, and housing agencies must form closer partnerships and collaborations to better support youth and families at the earliest point possible.

## 2019-2020 PROPOSED INVESTMENT

As part of his proposed 2019-2020 budget, Executive Constantine included \$4 million to support actions called for in the Road Map. Each one of these investments funds promising strategies or provides judges and others with greater options for youth in crisis.

**Community organizations supporting youth diverted out of secure detention (\$1 million).** These funds will be available for community-based services to provide mentoring, case management, and educational services. This investment is intended to encourage juvenile court judges to consider electronic home monitoring if there are concerns about whether a youth has the support to meet court dates, make appointments, and stay connected with family, school, and community. Depending on how employed by judges, this program could reach 40-60 youth each year, reducing the daily population of youth in detention by 3-6 when fully deployed.



## King County

2019-2020 Proposed Budget

**Evidence-based behavioral health services for youth BEFORE they get involved with the legal system (\$700,000).** At the moment, youth are eligible to receive state-supported services, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, after prosecutors file a case. This funding makes such services available without involvement in the juvenile legal system. Referrals will come from a behavioral health intervention program available in King County middle schools.

**Continuation of the Community Empowered Disposition Alternative and Resolution (CEDAR) program, expedited case processing for certain first time felony cases (\$400,000).** This funding supports peace circles and other restorative justice programs for youth whose first-time felonies such as Robbery, Assault, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Unlawful Possession of a Firearm have been reduced through CEDAR's new "expedited" process. If the youth successfully engages with community-based interventions, charges may be further reduced or dismissed. If not, the case is resolved as a misdemeanor. CEDAR is expected to serve 150-200 youth annually.

**Family support services for families with a youth in detention (\$250,000).** Of this funding, \$200,000 will provide transportation services to families, such as transit, ride share, or taxi fare. The focus will be to remove barriers for families to visit their children in detention. This will include providing families the means to attend the first court appearance, to show judges that youth have support and are potential candidates for electronic home monitoring or other alternatives to detention. The balance of \$50,000 will produce a multi-lingual handbook and other materials for parents whose youth are in detention, and engage family focus groups to identify further ways to support parents, guardians, and others.

**Training of juvenile detention staff (\$25,000).** As part of Public Health – Seattle & King County's management of detention programming, all 108 juvenile detention officers and supervisors are now receiving training in adolescent brain development, motivational interviewing, and de-escalation techniques. This funding ensures this training is maintained and provided for all new detention staff.

**Support the Juvenile Justice Equity Steering Committee (\$250,000).** Formed in 2015, the JJESC is charged with recommending solutions to racial disparities in the regional juvenile legal system. These funds will provide an outside facilitator and continued administrative support.

**Coordination and staffing of ZYD, the public health approach in detention, and enhancing data (\$1.4 million).** This will include convening school partners to examine discipline practices and developing an understanding of new school discipline standards from the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. This funding will support two full time project managers and a half-time data analyst.

In the years ahead, the County will actively seek partnerships with community, philanthropy, higher education, the state and federal government, local jurisdictions, victims' organizations, law enforcement and the private sector to support and expand the work of Zero Youth Detention. The County will also continue convening and consulting with community, employee, and labor partners to inform implementation.

Public Health – Seattle & King County will be charged with measuring impact and tracking progress, and will create a dashboard on its website to follow implementation and adjustments. In addition, Public Health will submit required reports to the King County Council each June through 2021.