



King County



# KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

APRIL 1, 2025

## Follow-up on CCFJC Conditions of Confinement




**The Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) has implemented several operational improvements to enhance the wellbeing of the youth in its care and to provide decision-makers with key information.** Our original audit report found that youth spent long periods of time confined to their cells, which limited access to enrichment activities and ways to track the passage of time. DAJD now provides youth with tablet computers that allow them to access entertainment and reading materials while in their living units or their individual cells. This provides youth with a method to tell time and can help to lessen their feelings of stress and uncertainty when they are confined to their cells for extended periods. DAJD has also worked with the Facilities Management Division (FMD) to ensure that water quality tests occur annually, which can alleviate the concerns that youth previously shared regarding the health and safety of the drinking water within secure detention; however, staffing limitations within FMD will delay the initial test until later in 2025.

DAJD has expanded the amount and types of information available on its public website, providing local decision-makers and criminal legal agencies the information needed to monitor and respond to increases in the amount of time youth spend in secure detention. DAJD's public website now features a data dashboard that displays the number of youth in secure detention, as well as data on the amount of time youth spend in secure detention at the Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CCFJC). This information is important for criminal legal agencies such as the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Department of Public Defense (DPD), and Superior Court so that they can monitor and respond to the amount of time youth spend in detention while awaiting their case to be resolved.

**DAJD is working with its criminal legal and community partners to take important first steps toward identifying and addressing the service needs of the youth in its care.** DAJD is in the process of conducting a needs assessment to identify and address youth service needs. As part of this process, DAJD is gathering input across a wide range of key partners including Superior Court, healthcare providers, community partners, juvenile detention and juvenile rehabilitation leaders from peer jurisdictions, and from the youth in detention. DAJD plans to use the results of the needs assessment to inform future staffing and service provision decisions. Increasing staffing levels is key to ensuring that youth spend as little time confined to their cells as possible so that education and enrichment programs

occur without interruption. In recognition of this, DAJD has continued working to recruit and hire additional juvenile detention officers. Each of these efforts are in the early stages of development and are key to ensuring that youth in secure detention, particularly those with longer lengths of stay, receive the educational, health, and enrichment services they need.

### Of the 10 audit recommendations:

 <b>3</b> <b>DONE</b>	 <b>5</b> <b>PROGRESS</b>	 <b>2</b> <b>OPEN</b>
<b>FULLY IMPLEMENTED</b> Auditor will no longer monitor.	<b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED</b> Auditor will continue to monitor.	<b>REMAIN UNRESOLVED</b> Auditor will continue to monitor.

See details below for implementation status of each recommendation.

## Recommendation 1

**PROGRESS**



**The King County Executive and the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should conduct an analysis of the needs of youth who are securely detained in the Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center. The analysis should consider and document:**

- **actual lengths of stay experienced by youth in the facility**
- **age-appropriate therapeutic and skill needs of youth detained for extended periods**
- **how services could be differentiated for longer lengths of stay.**

STATUS UPDATE: DAJD has created a workplan that outlines the steps and timeline it intends to follow to complete a needs assessment for the youth in secure detention at CCFJC. DAJD has created this process with the intent to collaborate with key partners to identify any services gaps for the therapeutic, educational, behavioral, and vocational needs of youth in secure detention. As part of this assessment, DAJD will seek input from juvenile detention staff, Superior Court, healthcare providers, juvenile detention peers in other jurisdictions, community partners, and the youth in secure detention at CCFJC. DAJD anticipates completing the needs assessment by July 1, 2025.

WHAT REMAINS: To ensure that youth in secure detention receive services and programs that are responsive to longer lengths of stay, the King County Executive and DAJD should continue their work to determine the needs of youth who are securely detained in CCFJC. At a minimum, their

assessment should include consideration of the actual lengths of stay experienced by youth in the facility, age-appropriate therapeutic and skill needs of youth detained for extended periods, and how they can differentiate service for longer lengths of stay.

## Recommendation 2

OPEN



**Based on the results of the analysis in Recommendation 1, the King County Executive and the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should document and implement a plan to address gaps between the programs and services that securely detained youth need and those that are being provided.**

**In partnership with Superior Court, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Department of Public Defense, the plan could include:**

- **options for specific programs or services for securely detained youth**
- **identification of physical improvements to the Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center**
- **identification of placement alternatives to CCFJC secure detention, including placement in a Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families-operated facility and other alternatives**
- **documentation of alignment with the actions included in the January 2024 Care and Closure Final Strategic Planning Report on the Future of Secure Juvenile Detention.**

STATUS UPDATE: DAJD and the County Executive share that efforts on this recommendation will begin in earnest once the needs assessment, in response to Recommendation 1, has been completed.

WHAT REMAINS: To ensure that youth in secure detention receive services and programs that are responsive to longer lengths of stay, the County Executive and DAJD should continue their analysis in response to Recommendation 1, above. Once completed, the County Executive and DAJD should work with Superior Court, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and DPD to develop and implement a plan to address the gaps in the programs and services that secure-detained youth receive.

### Recommendation 3

**DONE**


**As part of its publicly available detention population data reporting, the Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should track, document, and report the number of youth in secure detention for extended periods and report that information to the Department of Public Defense, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and Superior Court for their use in addressing time to resolution and long lengths of stay.**

STATUS UPDATE: DAJD has created a [data dashboard](#), accessible from the department's public-facing website, that provides daily updates of the current population in secure detention. The data clearly shows the median and average length of stay for youth in secure detention, as well as the count of youth who have lengths of stay spanning ranges of 0–3 days, 4–10 days, 11–30 days, 31–60 days, 61–90 days, 91–180 days, 181–365 days, or 365+ days. DAJD notes that it sends daily reports to DPD, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and Superior Court to provide them with data that they can use to help address time to resolution and long lengths of stay.

IMPACT: By providing information on the average lengths of stay and the number of youth in secure detention for extended periods, the Juvenile Division of DAJD has helped ensure that the public and the criminal legal entities in King County are apprised of the lengths of stay that the youth in secure detention are experiencing. This provides county leadership, DPD, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and Superior Court with key information needed to track and respond to times to resolution and long lengths of stay.

### Recommendation 4

**OPEN**


**The Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should explore options to house youth facing adult charges separately from youth under age 16 charged solely with juvenile offenses and document how to incorporate this in its housing classification system.**

STATUS UPDATE: DAJD determines housing assignments at CCFJC following Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) guidelines. JDAI directs detention administrators to consider aspects such as the emotional development, history of victimization, and risk of self-harm — in addition to the youth's age — when making housing decisions, instead of basing housing decisions solely on the filed charges. As such, DAJD states that it would not align with best practices to base housing decisions solely on charges. However, the audit does not direct DAJD to house youth based solely on charges filed, nor is the recommendation intended to replace or conflict with JDAI guidelines. Instead, in tandem with the guidelines and best practices published by JDAI and others, the

recommendation encourages DAJD to explore the housing of youth for those facing adult charges separately from youth under age 16, who are charged solely with juvenile offenses. DAJD notes that incorporating the recommendation in addition to existing guidelines, would add complexity to housing decisions by limiting the ability to move youth to certain housing units, and it would, therefore, likely require additional housing units and staff. Looking forward, DAJD shared that it intends to incorporate the insights gained from the needs assessment in response to Recommendation 1 to determine what changes may be needed to the current housing decision practices.

WHAT REMAINS: To prevent younger youth from potentially being exposed to challenging behavior of some older youth in detention, the Juvenile Division of DAJD should continue efforts that may inform options to house youth facing adult charges separately from youth under the age of 16 who are charged solely with juvenile offenses. To the extent possible, based on its findings, DAJD should document how it would incorporate these considerations into its housing classification system.

## Recommendation 5

DONE



**As part of its publicly available detention population data reporting, the Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should track, document, and report the number of youth who are not visited in person by their attorney for 30 days or more.**

STATUS UPDATE: Each month, DAJD publicly posts anonymized reports that shows the number of legal visits each youth in secure detention received during the preceding period. These reports date back to May 2024, and are available via DAJD's public-facing website. DAJD also shares this information directly with DPD, which uses it to ensure attorneys meet with their clients regularly.

IMPACT: By reporting the number of youth who are not visited in person by their attorney for 30 days or more, the Juvenile Division of DAJD provides decision-makers and attorneys information that can be used to ensure that youth are appropriately apprised of their case, thereby helping to limit the uncertainty felt by youth in secure detention. Moving forward, DAJD should continue its work with DPD and should provide this data to DPD each month.

## Recommendation 6

PROGRESS



**The Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should develop, document, and communicate a plan that defines the appropriate level of staffing to meet the needs of youth in secure detention. The staffing plan should be informed by the needs assessment developed in response to Recommendation 1 and, in turn, should inform ongoing and future recruitment efforts.**

**At a minimum, the plan should account for the number and types of staff needed to ensure that:**

- **youth do not spend time confined in their cells due to staffing limitations**
- **school periods are not missed nor shortened**
- **mental health services can be provided effectively**
- **enrichment activities can be provided consistently.**

STATUS UPDATE: DAJD worked with the Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget to increase its total budgeted staffing positions, adding 13 additional juvenile detention officers (JDOs) for the 2025 budget. DAJD is in the process of recruiting and hiring JDOs to fill the new positions. DAJD notes that this and previous staffing models reflect best estimates for youth population, lengths of stay, and educational and programming needs. While the increased staffing may help to minimize disruptions to education, enrichment, and wellness services, by completing the needs assessment in response to Recommendation 1, above, DAJD may identify additional programs or services required to meet the needs of youth in secure detention. This may, in turn, inform additional staffing needs and related recruitment and hiring efforts.

WHAT REMAINS: To ensure that youth receive enrichment and educational services consistently, DAJD should continue its needs assessment in response to Recommendation 1. DAJD should then use the needs assessment to inform ongoing and future recruitment efforts with the aim to achieve adequate staffing to ensure that youth services and programs are not curtailed.

## Recommendation 7

PROGRESS



**To highlight positive performance and identify areas for growth, the Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should regularly conduct performance evaluations for juvenile detention officers at all levels.**

STATUS UPDATE: DAJD is in the process of implementing annual performance appraisals for JDOs. DAJD notes that its proposed annual performance appraisal policy is subject to bargaining with

the King County Juvenile Detention Guild, and related conversations between leadership and the guild are ongoing. DAJD adds that, in the meantime, detention supervisors are meeting with all staff to review competencies and to document individual goals and accomplishments.

WHAT REMAINS: As a method to highlight positive performance, career growth potential, and areas of improvement, the Juvenile Division of DAJD should continue its ongoing efforts to implement and conduct performance evaluations for JDOs at all levels.

## Recommendation 8

PROGRESS



**The Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should develop and implement a policy to test water quality at the CCFJC at least annually.**

STATUS UPDATE: DAJD collaborated with FMD to ensure that water quality testing occurs annually at CCFJC. DAJD has requested a water test occur as soon as possible in 2025. However, FMD is currently facing staffing challenges that may delay this testing. FMD is confident that testing will occur in 2025 and has already created a preventive action plan to conduct annual water quality tests for DAJD at CCFJC moving forward.

WHAT REMAINS: DAJD should continue communicating with FMD to ensure that a water quality test occurs as soon as possible — and annually moving forward — so as to ensure the safety of drinking water within CCFJC secure detention.

## Recommendation 9

DONE



**The Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should ensure all youth can see a clock from their cells.**

STATUS UPDATE: Our original audit report found that youth spent long periods of time confined to their cells with limited to no way of tracking the passage of time, leading some youth to feel anxious or disoriented. DAJD now provides youth with a tablet computer, while confined to their cells, which offers access to a clock as well as electronic resources that can help pass the time. Additionally, each living unit in CCFJC has a digital clock that youth can see from their room.

IMPACT: By ensuring youth have access to clocks, DAJD has helped ensure that all youth are able to track the passage of time. By also providing youth with tablet computers, DAJD has expanded youth's access to electronic resources and reading material which can help the youth to pass time spent in their cell. Coupled with efforts to limit the time that youth spend in cell — detailed in responses to other recommendations — DAJD has helped to limit youth's stress and uncertainty.



## Recommendation 10

PROGRESS



**The Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention should work with the Office of the Ombuds to ensure that the process to submit grievances to the Ombuds is available to youth in custody and that the materials provided to youth explain the difference between grievances to the Ombuds and grievances submitted internally.**

STATUS UPDATE: DAJD has worked with the Office of the Ombuds to improve and clarify the information available to youth in secure detention regarding how to contact Ombuds, should they have any complaints. Ombuds staff toured the facility in October 2024 to ensure that the information is accurate and easily available, and they continue to work with DAJD to improve the information available to youth in secure detention. As part of this improvement effort, DAJD has added posters regarding the grievance process and how to contact external oversight resources in each living hall. However, the "Youth Handbook," which outlines the rights, responsibilities, and expectations for youth in secure detention, has not been updated to clarify the difference between DAJD's internal grievance process and the external process for complaints submitted to the Ombuds.

WHAT REMAINS: DAJD should work with the Ombuds to clarify the external process for submitting complaints to the Ombuds and how it differs from DAJD's internal grievance process. By doing so, DAJD can ensure that youth better understand their rights and have consistent and reliable access to external contacts who can serve as an independent check on conditions.

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Grant Dailey conducted this review. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the King County Auditor's Office at [KCAO@KingCounty.gov](mailto:KCAO@KingCounty.gov) or 206-477-1033.