



King County

Department of Adult
and Juvenile Detention
Director's Office

July 21, 2020

TO: All DAJD staff

FM: John Diaz, Director, DAJD

RE: A New Vision for Adult and Youth Detention

Executive Dow Constantine plans to announce major steps this week to reorient King County's approach to the criminal justice system. For DAJD, this means a new vision for our adult and youth detention facilities in Seattle. Ahead of the Executive's State of the County address on Thursday, I'd like to provide an overview of the potential changes.

Facing the COVID-19 pandemic, our department worked quickly to reduce the number of adults and youth detained in our county. Our work with criminal justice partners, and community stakeholders, is essential for keeping this population at these levels, or even lower, as we move ahead.

King County Correctional Facility

The Executive's proposal calls for a phased closing of the Seattle jail. This would take place once the COVID-19 pandemic has been brought under control. The building, finished in 1986, was among the last of its kind. It features a design that's now considered obsolete. As many of you know, it's expensive to operate and doesn't serve our security, healthcare, or efficiency needs.

To decrease our reliance on secure detention, the Executive intends to support programs for prevention, diversion, rehabilitation, and harm reduction. As the County seeks out new models for public safety, your department leaders will continue to support orderly and secure operations. We hope to have more details on the plans for KCCF after the Executive prepares the budget later this year.

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Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center

Executive Constantine remains focused on achieving Zero Youth Detention. The number of youths in secure detention has been reduced by half since mid-March, reaching 21 this week. As the need for secure detention goes away, more space in the Clark Children and Family Justice Center can be devoted to community programs. The goal is to convert all remaining detention capacity no later than 2025.

DAJD leadership recognizes Juvenile Detention's hard work toward achieving these goals. We are committed to working with you and your labor reps to develop a thoughtful strategy for delivering our programs and services in new ways. I commend the innovative work that Juvenile Division Director Allen Nance and his staff have accomplished to make us national leaders in community justice.

In closing, your work has been outstanding across all DAJD divisions. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, our employees have upheld the highest standards to protect health and safety. I greatly appreciate your efforts. I am counting on your continued support as we reshape our workplace and our mission.