

City of Seattle Reentry Workgroup Progress Report

10.31.17

Reentry Workgroup Members

Patricia Lally, Director

Purpose: Status Update

Overview

- City's Role
- Background of Resolution
- Seattle's Reentry Workgroup
- SMC Report on Court Fines and Fees
- City's Current Investment in Reentry
- Coordination between Agencies
- Issues to Explore and Preliminary Recommendations

City's Role: Seattle's Criminal Legal System

Seattle Municipal Court (SMC) has jurisdiction over all violations of the Seattle Municipal Code.

- In 2016, SMC handled approximately 7,200 criminal filings—all misdemeanors
- Misdemeanor violations carry maximum jail sentences of 90 days for simple misdemeanors, or 364 days for gross misdemeanors
- Daily, SMC incarcerates approximately 200-300 individuals. The average length of stay in 2015 was 14 days
- 90% of individuals booked on SMC charges are indigent, it is estimated that 50% of those booked on SMC charges are homeless
- According to King County data, 22% of all King County jail bookings in 2013 & 2014 (or 3050 individuals) were SMC defendants who had four or more jail bookings in one year, also known as "Familiar Faces"

Seattle's reentering population

- Every year about 1500 individuals are released to King County from DOC
- Every day about 100 individuals are released from jails throughout King County
- According to the Count US In Report, 50% of the outdoor homeless population in Seattle has criminal justice involvement, which is likely an undercount
- The population is racially disproportionate: Black individuals only comprise of 7% of the King County population, but account for 36% of the King County Jail population. Native Americans only comprise of 1% of the King County population, but account for 2.5% of the King County Jail population

Seattle's reentering population

- In Washington, 58% of the jail population have mental health treatment needs
- In Washington, 61% of those in jail have substance use needs
- Nationally, 40% of individuals of those in jail have a disability
- Once released from incarceration individuals face significant barriers to reentry. Data shows approximately 30-50% of individuals released from incarceration will recidivate within three years without appropriate supports

Background: Reentry Resolution 31637

In December 2015, City Council unanimously passed Resolution 31637 to establish a Reentry Workgroup

Purpose: To strengthen the City's efforts to assist reentry, reduce recidivism, and alleviate the negative impact of incarceration on individuals.

Scope of Work

1. Inventory the City's current work to help individuals with criminal history transition into stable housing and employment
2. Identify where the City's efforts would be strengthened by more effective coordination with other criminal justice agencies
3. Develop policies, ordinances, strategies, or programs the City can implement to facilitate reentry and remove unnecessary barriers to employment, housing, and other benefits
4. Inventory and assess the City's imposition and collections of fines and fees for criminal violations and infractions

Reentry Landscape: Regional work addressing reentry issues

Government Convened

- The Statewide Reentry Council
- King County PAO Reentry Summit of 2013
- King County's Recidivism Reduction and Reentry Policy Work Team
- The LEAP Project
- King County Familiar Faces Initiative

Community and/or Non-Profit Led

- Huy
- The If Project
- The Black Prisoner's Caucus
- F.I.G.H.T (Formerly Incarcerated Group Healing Together)
- The Washington State Reentry Taskforce
- The Village of Hope
- King County Community Partnership For Transition Solutions
- Civil Survival
- Career Bridge at Urban League

Workgroup Composition

- **Non-Profit Organizations:** Career Bridge at Urban League, F.I.G.H.T. (Formerly Incarcerated Group Healing Together), Casa Latina, Disability Rights Washington, and Pioneer Human Services
- **Other Government Agencies:** King County Behavioral Health and Recovery Division - Diversion and Reentry Services, King County Executive Office - Recidivism Reduction Reentry, and King County Department of Public Defense
- **City Departments/Branches:** Office of Policy and Innovation, Office of Housing, Seattle Office for Civil Rights, Human Services Department, Finance and Administrative Services, Seattle Attorney's Office, Seattle Municipal Court, and the Legislative Department

Reentry Definition

An individual in reentry is a person living with criminal history.

The Reentry Workgroup will make recommendations that target certain reentry populations and communities of color who have historically been negatively impacted by the criminal legal system. These may include: individuals currently exiting from incarceration, individuals who have experienced long prison sentences, and those individuals who may face additional issues in conjunction with their incarceration history that makes successful reentry more challenging.

Seattle Reentry Workgroup Principles and Priorities

- Center race
- Center communities most impacted
- Address structural barriers
- Decriminalize poverty and/or health needs
- Prioritize issues the City has control and Seattle/City influence

How do we support successful reentry?

"People returning to the community after a period of incarceration need the same things everyone else does to succeed: housing, food, clothing, a job or an educational opportunity... They may also need these things: peer support, community orientation, family counseling, mental health and/or chemical dependency treatment, and help navigating social service networks and the legal system." King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office PAO Reentry Summit

1. Inventory the City's current work to help individuals with criminal history transition into stable housing and employment

City's Current Reentry Investments

In 2017, our current reentry investment amounts to \$1,990,581.

Program/Project Name	Agency Funded	2017 Amount
Co-STARS*	King County Department of Community and Human Services	\$444,669
Co-STARS* Permanent Housing	Plymouth Housing Group	\$108,420
Get Off the Streets	Seattle Neighborhood Group	\$347,452
Career Bridge	Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle	\$819,264
Communities Uniting Rainier Beach	People of Color Against AIDS Network	\$270,776

2. Identify where the City's efforts would be strengthened by more effective coordination with other criminal justice agencies

How should City prioritize coordination?

By prioritizing City representation on state and regional workgroups aimed at criminal justice reform and reentry support the City can:

- Develop collaborative partnerships to strengthen coordination and amplify resources
- Share innovations and solutions
- Integrate systems
- Share responsibility and increase accountability

3. Develop policies, ordinances, strategies, or programs the City can implement to facilitate reentry and remove unnecessary barriers to employment, housing, and other benefits

Remove Barriers: How can City increase targeted investments in reentry population?

Issue: Individuals with criminal history disproportionately shoulder the burden and barriers of criminal justice involvement and court fines and fees

Preliminary recommendation: Explore criminal justice investments and court revenue collected from fines and fees to support programs and services that target those living with criminal history, to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and to increase successful transition into the community.

Remove Barriers: How can City support Reentry Navigation for those who will and are returning from incarceration?

Issue: Individuals living with criminal history face significant barriers to access housing, employment, education, healthcare, and getting reconnected to their communities.

Preliminary recommendation: The City should explore "Reentry Navigators" who can provide navigation support services for currently and formerly incarcerated individuals.

- Evidence shows that navigators are most effective when they share similar backgrounds to those they are supporting and have also been system-engaged.

Remove Barriers: How can City increase support for Indigenous community living with criminal history?

Issue: There is a growing disproportionality of the Native American population in our prisons and jails, and in conversations regarding race and the criminal legal system, Native Americans are often left out.

Preliminary recommendation: Establish targeted support and strategies to the Indigenous community living with criminal history.

Remove Barriers: How can City ensure contracted jail services meet standards?

Issue: Jails serve our most vulnerable residents, it is critical we ensure that treatment is humane and basic human needs are met.

Preliminary recommendation: Explore whether jail services and our jail contract should be managed by those with lived experience of incarceration and/or those with experience serving vulnerable populations. *Alternatively*, explore whether jail contracts should be managed by a department with experience overseeing contracts serving vulnerable populations.

Remove Barriers: How can City decriminalize substance use and ensure a public health response?

Issue: The criminal legal system is too often used to answer behavioral health concerns

Preliminary recommendation: Establish a supervised safe consumption site and conduct a Racial Equity Toolkit to ensure equitable implementation.

Remove Barriers: How can City decrease use of criminal justice system?

Issue: 90% of individuals booked on SMC charges are indigent and it is estimated that 50% of those booked on SMC charges are homeless

Preliminary recommendation: Increase investments in pre-booking and pre-filing diversions with robust community-based support services and decriminalize low level offenses that burden poor communities

Remove Barriers: How can City create more jobs for individuals living with criminal history?

Issue: Significant barriers remain for individuals with criminal history to obtain family-wage jobs and professional careers

Preliminary recommendation: Increase employment opportunities for individuals living with criminal history including: private sector, City jobs and City contracts

Remove Barriers: How can City increase housing for those living with criminal history?

Issue: Currently, 50% of the outdoor homeless population in Seattle has criminal justice involvement, and there are limitations to Fair Chance Housing legislation.

Preliminary recommendation: Explore increasing housing access for people living with criminal history and make targeted and diverse investments to ensure permanent housing is available for people with criminal justice involvement through various initiatives

4. Inventory and assess the City's imposition and collections of fines and fees for criminal violations and infractions



THANK YOU.