

City of Seattle Reentry Workgroup Final Report Briefing

December 6, 2018

City of Seattle Reentry Workgroup

Today's Roadmap

- **Introduction**
- **Workgroup Background & Overview**
- **Key Strategies**
- **Legal Financial Debt Study Update**

Reentry Workgroup Members

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Reentry Workgroup Background & Overview

Background: Reentry Resolution 31637

In December 2015, City Council unanimously passed Resolution 31637 asking the Mayor to establish a workgroup.

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

The Workgroup's Scope of Work

1. Inventory the City's current "reentry work"
2. Identify more effective coordination with other criminal justice agencies
3. Develop strategies the City can implement to facilitate reentry and remove unnecessary barriers to employment, housing, and other benefits
4. Inventory and assess the City's collections of fines and fees

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, Pioneer Human Services, UW School of Sociology, Chief Seattle Club, Columbia Legal Services
- **Other Government Agencies:** King County's Diversion and Reentry Services, King County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Division, King County Department of Public Defense
- **City Departments/Branches:** Office of Housing, Seattle Office for Civil Rights, Human Services Department, Seattle Attorney's Office, Seattle Municipal Court, and the Legislative Department

The Workgroup centered the voices and leadership of those who have lived experience of incarceration. City and County representative roles were limited to technical advice and support.

The Workgroup's Principles and Priorities

- 1. Center race**
- 2. Address structural barriers**
- 3. Decriminalize poverty and/or health needs**
- 4. Prioritize issues the City has control of and City influence over**

Repurpose Current City Investments

The City currently invests \$2.7 million in “reentry” support and \$20 million to incarcerate misdemeanor defendants of Seattle Municipal Court.

The Workgroup urges the City to move away from something we know causes significant harm, to more restorative and effective responses that build stable and safe communities.

The Workgroup's Seven Strategies

- 1. Support Indigenous Community Healing**
- 2. Support Reentry Healing & Navigation**
- 3. Increase Economic Opportunities**
- 4. Increase Housing Access**
- 5. Reimagine City's Use of Jails**
- 6. Decriminalize and Divert**
- 7. Reentry Workgroup Next Phase**

Recommendations in Action

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1. Investing \$250,000 for Reentry Recommendations
2. Ending the Snohomish County Jail Contract and diverting those funds to invest in criminal legal system reform strategies
3. Commitment to Seattle criminal legal system alignment driven by principles developed by Workgroup.

Priority Strategies

Workgroup Priority

Support Indigenous Community Healing

Support Reentry Healing & Navigation

Strategy 1

Support Indigenous Community Healing

- Invest in strategies that provide access to culturally responsive healing practices and Indigenous mentors with lived experience *for Indigenous people returning from incarceration*
- Elevate Indigenous voices in efforts focused on criminal legal system policy and reform
- Contract solely with jails that provide access to religious and spiritual services
- Ensure that all homeless prevention, anti-poverty, or reentry investments strategies include targeted supports for the Indigenous community

Strategy 2

Support Reentry Healing & Navigation

- Fund community-rooted “Reentry Navigators” who can provide anti-racist support and navigation services for individuals currently incarcerated and those returning from incarceration
- Reconsider contracts that require elevated surveillance by agency staff
- Reconsider using recidivism as an outcome measurement

Leveraging Existing City Resources

- Increase Economic Opportunities
 - Reimagine City Jail Contracts
 - Decriminalization and Diversion
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Strategy 3

Increase Access to Economic Opportunities

- **City Contracting** – Explore ways to increase formerly incarcerated individuals' opportunity with City Requests for Proposals and City Public Works Projects
- Increase City TechHire Opportunities
- Increase City Employment and Recruitment
- Support Priority Hire Tracking and Accountability

Strategy 4: Increase Housing Access

- Match housing investments for those currently involved with the criminal justice system to the City's current jail expenditure
- Dedicate a portion of the City's investments to end homelessness to individuals living with criminal history
- Develop technical assistance programs to enable those living with criminal history to be mortgage-ready
- Whenever possible, redefine "homelessness" for non-HUD funded projects
- Create a mechanism to provide rent assistance to individuals currently being incarcerated by the City's criminal legal system
- Work with public housing providers to ensure they are in compliance with Fair Chance Housing

Strategy 5

Reimagine City's Jail Contracts

- Reduce the use of jail – What are the City's defined outcomes for jail contracts? Do these investments help the City reach these outcomes?
- City criminal legal system partners should evaluate current sentencing framework to make a shared commitment in reducing the use of jail for misdemeanors
- Work to eliminate as many beds as feasible in the current contract
- Manage jail contracts to ensure access to care

Strategy 6

Decriminalize and Divert

- **Seattle City Council** should repeal SMC 12A.20.050 – Drug-Traffic Loitering and repeal SMC 12A.10.010 – Prostitution Loitering
- **City Attorney’s Office** should exercise prosecutorial discretion, such as: do not request jail time for those charge with theft and decline to prosecute for drug traffic loitering and prostitution loitering crimes
- **Seattle Police Department** should limit arrests for nonviolent misdemeanor offenses and increase use of citations, summons, or forms of diversion; develop a more accurate way to develop race data

Strategy 7: Reentry Workgroup's Next Phase

Issue: The final report is just the first step in keeping the City's commitment to Resolution 31637.

Recommendation: City should establish a criminal legal system advisory board that:

- (1) Informs City policies that impact the criminal legal system and/or reentry support
- (2) Monitors the implementation of any recommendation from this report;
- (3) Is led by those with lived experience and equipped with a strong analysis of systemic racism and the criminal legal system.

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

Legal Financial Obligations: Current Inventory and Pending Assessment

Resolution requests: inventory and assessment of the City's imposition and collection of fees and fines and the impact of such on successful reentry.

Completed: SMC inventory of City's current imposition and collection of fines and fees for criminal violations and infractions

Pending: Assessment of how these fines and fees impact successful reentry

City Council Action Steps

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- Repeal SMC 12A.20.050 – Drug-Traffic Loitering and repeal SMC 12A.10.010 – Prostitution Loitering
- Prioritize Indigenous Healing Strategies with the funding allocated in the 2019 Budget
- When allocating 2019 Reentry funding convene the Reentry Workgroup by end of first quarter to develop the investment strategy
- Using the Workgroup principles leverage new Council position to champion the remaining reentry recommendations



THANK YOU.