

COMMUNITY FORUMS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our department held a series of community forums to initiate and build relationships with community members, [share information](#), and request participation in upcoming workgroups. We've compiled this list of frequently asked questions to illustrate the themes that arose in the forums.

Safe & Thriving Communities Division

How does this new division align with the organizing efforts? Is this what the community wanted?

The community has asked for investments that represent their interests and easier access to those investments. To facilitate that, we consolidated all of our safety investments into one place, and we're hiring a leader whose primary role will be to develop a deep understanding of community interests so that we are aligned.

Why use an HSD division as the new structure?

Outside of the Seattle Police Department, HSD holds the majority of safety funding. We were positioned well to consolidate the funding and administer any new funding. An alternative would have been to stand up a new department on safety, but this would require additional funding for operational infrastructure. HSD was able to create the new division using only existing funding.

Are there any plans to fill positions on the Crime Survivor Services team?

Yes. The team advocates carry an incredibly high caseload, and we're working on filling those vacancies as soon as possible.

How many positions are in the new division?

Thirty existing positions were transferred from other divisions in HSD and the Seattle Police Department into the new division.

How will you have accountability to the community?

We'll start by inviting community to the decision-making table and honoring their time with stipends. The Community Structure Design Work Group will then develop an accountability structure.

Will this division be working on homelessness issues?

The division will not directly be addressing homelessness; that's the work of the new regional homelessness authority. However, the new division will partner with the authority because safety is an issue that affects everyone – including people experiencing homelessness.

How is safety defined?

For planning purposes, our working definition of safety is the use of skills, knowledge, and techniques to prevent and reduce crime and fear of crime. We would like to develop a common definition with our community partners.

Partnerships

Is the City coordinating with County public safety departments?

Yes. We join in the County's Regional Approach to End Gun Violence so that we have a coordinated approach.

How will you make sure our youth are served?

King County's Regional Approach to End Gun Violence focuses on young people, and we participate in this work. This effort will help us understand strategies across the region so that all the funders can contribute (and not duplicate) the necessary services in the safety system. We also invest in youth and young adult development and look forward to partnering with community to design the next funding process.

How will the new proposed division collaborate with the new regional homelessness authority?

The new division will collaborate closely with the new authority, and we envision a representative from the authority participating in the Community Safety Work Group.

What role will Seattle Municipal Court play?

They are a partner and hold a key piece of the safety services continuum. We will work together – alongside all our other partners – to clearly define our respective roles, fill any gaps in our system, and ensure there is no duplication of work.

How will community partners be invited to this conversation to best advance racial and gender equity with this work?

We are trying to get the word out, and we hope you'll help us. We welcome anyone who wants to be involved. The time commitment will likely dictate how you much you'd like to be involved.

How does the Mayor's Equitable Communities Task Force align with the participatory budget process Council is supporting?

This is a work in progress as Council just passed the budget for 2022.

Investments

Have decisions on safety investments already been made without community engagement?

We want to be responsive to immediate needs, so some initial investments were made in the 2020 and 2021 budgets. But while we tend to short-term needs, we want to take some time to form deep, ongoing relationships with community so that we can pivot away from a reactive state and toward a proactive state where community is involved in making decisions.

How do we use this to re-envision how the City will respond to communities including BIPOC communities? Safe and Thriving Communities is so much more than the Human Services component.

The Mayor's Reimagining Seattle (focused on COVID recovery) and [Equitable Communities](#) initiatives acknowledge that the work is a City-wide effort, and the key to a safe community is upstream prevention: affordable housing, access to health services, digital equity, climate justice, etc. We will be working to understand what communities need holistically to achieve a thriving community, and we will be collaborating across City departments through the Mayor's initiatives.

Why is the BIPOC program now only \$30M versus the original \$100M announced by the Mayor?

Council has reprogrammed the funding to balance other priorities. You can read more about Council's budget [HERE](#).

What is the timeframe for program implementation?

Once budget is approved by the Council, we can begin implementation. Budget proposals are submitted every year between March and June for review by the Mayor. In September, the Mayor submits the City's budget

proposal to Council, who then adjusts and approves the budget by November. The City then begins program implementation for the following year with contracts that start in January.

Will there be any immediate funding consideration to cover gaps of service towards youth of color due to funding processes postponed by COVID response?

Last year, a handful of youth-serving agencies' funding was not renewed after we ran a competitive funding process for safety investments. The Mayor issued one-time bridge funding to help those agencies transition. We do not have additional funds for youth development beyond that bridge funding.

Which four agencies received the \$4 million investment? How were they selected?

Council specified that the funding should go to the community hub model operated by Community Passageways (lead), Urban Family, Boys & Girls Club, and YMCA.

Question: Will the \$10M address public order and safety issues apart from violence?

We are in the process of designing the funding process for the \$10M, and it will likely fund capacity building for organizations with wrap-around services and alternatives to policing.

Work Groups

What are the goals of the Hiring Process Design and Community Structure Design workgroups?

The Hiring Process Design workgroup will develop a recruitment for the new division director that promotes community participation and reflects community values for this leader. The Community Structure Design workgroup will create a structure to hold us accountable to centering our work on community.

What commitment is the Mayor making to support what HSD/this group recommends?

In her [executive order](#), the Mayor declared her commitment by creating the Community Safety Work Group, which includes HSD. It's now our job as a group to put forward a well-thought-out recommendation that everyone can support.

How do we bring different voices to the table?

We will look for a variety of venues that different people prefer to access, and we will look to build relationships that go beyond formal leaders and deeper into communities. We also welcome ideas from you.

What does the time commitment look like for workgroups?

We anticipate that the Hiring Process Design group will meet weekly for 60 minutes for about 10 weeks. We estimate the total time commitment to be 1-2 hours per week (which includes any follow-up work in between meetings), and we will compensate you for your time. The Community Structure Design group will likely meet monthly for 60-90 minutes each month.

Will the work groups' efforts stay within HSD or have impacts on other departments?

HSD's work is intertwined with other departments' work, so there will certainly be impacts in other departments.

Are the groups still accepting interested participants? Can we share the opportunity with others in the community?

Yes. Anyone interested in joining should email terri.croft@seattle.gov.