



Connecting the behavioral health crisis system to be more effective, more accessible, and more equitable so every person in King County can thrive.

King County is charting a path forward to create a regional network of crisis care centers, preserve and increase residential treatment beds, and invest in a robust behavioral health workforce. Together, these efforts will increase public well-being and safety, and give families, first responders, and crisis response teams better places to take people than jails and emergency rooms.



The living room space at King County's single crisis center.

What is the Crisis Care Centers Levy?

The behavioral health package developed by Executive Constantine with the support of the broad-based behavioral health coalition will do three things:

1.

Create five new regional crisis care centers:



Distributed geographically across the county, the centers will provide walk-in access and the potential for short-term stays to help people stabilize, depending on needs, with one center specifically serving youth.

Currently

One 46-bed crisis center for 2.3 million people in our county



2.

Preserve and restore the dramatic loss of residential treatment beds:



In 2018, 355 beds providing community-based residential care for people with mental health residential needs existed in King County. Today, only 244 of these beds are available.

Currently

Loss of 1 in 3 of our residential treatment beds in recent years



As of July 2022, people waited an average of **44 days** for a mental health residential bed.



3.

Grow the behavioral health workforce pipeline:



The proposal will create career pathways through apprenticeship programming and access to higher education, credentialing, training, and wrap-around supports. It will also invest in equitable wages for the workforce at crisis care centers.

Currently

Historic labor shortages

A 2021 King County survey of member organizations of the King County Integrated Care Network found that job vacancies at community behavioral health agencies

were at least double what they were in 2019.



“If we want to attract people from everywhere and we want them to come and stay, we need to think about what does it take to raise a family, what does it take to make this sustainable for people to actually not just survive but also thrive while doing this work.”

- **Kristen Badin**, behavioral health professional, at a roundtable discussion with Executive Constantine

Why do we need this levy?

- Currently, King County is without a walk-in behavioral health urgent care facility. Only one 46-bed behavioral health crisis facility is in operation for the entire county. The region’s only voluntary crisis facility resource, DESC’s Crisis Solutions Center in Seattle requires a referral from a first responder, hospital, designated crisis responder, or mobile response team due to its limited capacity.
- In 2021, more than 900 people in hospitals and emergency rooms in King County waited for two days or longer because there were no beds for treatment available.
- In our region, people who need a behavioral health supportive housing unit or a psychiatric residential treatment bed find that providers reach capacity by mid-month. As of July 2022, people waited an average of 44 days for a mental health residential bed.
- In the past few years, the county has lost one-third of its residential treatment beds. King County recently purchased Cascade Hall, preserving 64 beds and approximately 25 percent of King County’s mental health residential treatment beds.



King County Executive Dow Constantine announces the final stage of purchasing Cascade Hall, a 64-bed residential treatment center in north Seattle on September 14.

Costs to King County residents

The levy would be assessed at 14.5 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value, estimated to cost approximately \$121 per year in 2024 for a median-priced home of \$694,000. Total revenue is estimated at \$1.25 billion over nine years (2024-32) with 1 percent allowable growth.



**\$121 per year
per median-priced home**

Timeline

2022

Executive Constantine sends proposal to the King County Council.

2023

King County Council expected to vote by February on whether to put the proposal on the April 2023 ballot. If approved by voters, the Executive will prepare a detailed implementation plan by the end of 2023.

2024

Tax collection would begin. Upon adoption of the implementation plan, King County will develop partnerships with communities and providers across the region to fund siting and creation of crisis care centers, mental health residential capacity, and workforce recruitment and retention.