

FOREWORD

Our nearly 400,000 children and youth under the age of 18 years in King County deserve a more coordinated approach to service provision and intervention. Many have been the victims of maltreatment, witness to domestic violence, and subsequently may penetrate the juvenile justice system. Our county's most valuable resource, children and youth, deserve our best as we carry forward the mission of enabling them to be productive contributors in our community.

In the past year, a diverse and broad based group of youth-serving professionals have come together to form the King County System Integration Initiative, intent on reforming the culture, policies, practices, programs, and protocols that currently make up that fragmented method of service delivery. With the consultative and facilitative support of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), we have engaged in a comprehensive, strategic planning process to improve the coordination and integration of the juvenile justice, child welfare, and other relevant youth serving systems. This effort has brought together an impressive representation of county and state officials and personnel to conduct a thorough examination of data (both existing and that which must be developed to better inform our work), information sharing processes, information management systems, program and fiscal resources, and federal and state statutes governing our work. During this examination, our interagency relationships have been outstanding. The commitment to developing meaningful recommendations and action strategies has been tremendous.

This Strategic Plan report contains our findings, recommendations, and action strategies. Additional documentation supporting these findings is compiled on nearly 100 pages of documents and captures data, data systems, sharable information, survey results, inventories of programs, funding sources, assessment instruments, existing inter-agency agreements, system case flow diagrams, applicable and relevant state and federal codes, preliminary findings and reports, and meeting notes and minutes, among others. The supporting documentation is posted at: www.cwla.org/programs/juvenilejustice, under "Consultation Initiatives". We invite and welcome your participation in the work that is contemplated in our Recommendations and Action Strategies. It is our fervent belief that we can construct a more effective service system by institutionalizing coordinated policies, protocols, and practices across multiple systems. We believe this work goes a long way toward that construction and establishes a solid blueprint for progress toward that ultimate goal. King County children, youth, and families deserve our best.