



Action Request

- **Increase** workforce capacity and expertise across all services; expand culturally responsive training and technical assistance to support individuals, families and caregivers facing mental health crises and prevent future crises.

A Thriving King County

In order to thrive, residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) of all ages, races and cultures need access to equitable and culturally responsive services that support their health and well-being across their lifespan.

Gaps in Services Lead to Unmet Needs

Many individuals, families and caregivers experience gaps between what a person with I/DD needs and what services are available. Gaps occur for many reasons including limited funding; scarcity of paid providers, availability of workforce training and technical assistance; language supports; data related to community need; and siloed services. In addition, the root causes of many gaps, racism and discrimination, remain largely unaddressed in systems and services that were designed to meet the needs of the dominant culture. Community feedback indicates that many existing services do not respond to the needs of people with I/DD, especially when they are also people of color, require language supports, or have co-occurring behavioral health needs. Services are not supporting them to live the healthy and independent lives they wish to lead in the community.

Unmet Needs Perpetuate Disparities

The unmet needs that gaps in service perpetuate place people with I/DD at higher risk of harm from emotional, physical and sexual abuse, as well as negative outcomes related to education, employment, housing, and other determinants of equity. These disparities can cause stress, trauma, isolation, exclusion and contributes to crisis.

Solutions - Increase Workforce Capacity and Promote Equity:

- Include people with I/DD and people of color in planning and decision-making processes.
- Increase workforce capacity across services (including direct support, employment, early intervention, behavior supports, and respite) by addressing low compensation, access to training, and the integration of services across systems that serve people with I/DD.
- Promote policies and practices that identify and address gaps in service caused by racism and discrimination.
- Reduce cultural and linguistic barriers to services by using effective strategies such as bilingual/bicultural system navigators.
- Conduct cost studies so service providers can accurately budget and expand capacity.
- Promote technical assistance and focused training of behavioral health workers to serve and stabilize people with I/DD in crisis.
- Promote services that support healthy development, healthy relationships, increase inclusion, and prevent crisis.

Solutions Will Result in Positive Change

Expected results of implementing these solutions include increased equitable access to culturally responsive services that connect people to their communities; and, an expanded continuum of services that assist people to live and participate in the community in the way they choose while preventing and reducing behavioral health crises.