

To: Members: King County Law and Justice Committee
Fr: Mary Ellen Stone, KCSARC
Re: Follow up on KC Audit on sexual assault KCSO and KCPAO
August 6 2020

The urgency of this moment requires information and innovation to improve services for victims of sexual assault.

With the issue of criminal justice reform dominating public discussions and local government decision making, the KC Auditor's report highlights 3 areas which need more information and review.

Data. Starting Q4 2020 KCSO and KCPAO data should be reviewed at least quarterly. This should include what cases are reported to law enforcement, which don't proceed to active investigation. which are filed and proceed through prosecution comes. Data should include race and ethnicity of the victim and the defendant, case as filed vs final disposition, age (adult or child) of the victim and defendant and relationship of the defendant to the victim.,

This data should also be reviewed for the period covered by the audit 2015- 2018.

Time to disposition: Sexual assault cases take longer than most. There have been significant backlogs which span years especially for child sexual assault cases. Progress was being made but the pandemic has set this back. We understand there are over 800 cases backlogged (not all sexual assault) projected to take 5 plus years to resolve . There must be a transparent plan to address the existing backlog (child cases SKC) plus the newly created pandemic backlog. Because priority will be given to cases where the defendant is in custody, and this is rarely the situation for sexual assault cases, we fear sexual assault victims will be disproportionately impacted.

Remove barriers to reporting: We have seen effective adaptations in response to the pandemic- on line protection orders, video conferencing into hearings. These steps have reduced barriers for victims and they should be maintained and strengthened in the coming year.

KCSARC is willing to assist in any way in this process.