

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS



## Justice What are we hearing?



JUNE 2020

### People's experiences

- Shifting some laws from criminal and warrant based to fine based is putting a higher burden on people's financials.
- Systemic racism is embedded in the justice system which makes it unfair to access.
- How do you report the system to the system?
- Access to justice is difficult. The justice system is institutionalized, it's rigid and it's hard to get through the system. The system is broken.
- Fear of the police. Police do not have the training to deal with individuals with mental health issues.
- Offenders have many restrictions i.e. criminal records and being on probation. Some are afraid of being sent back to jail because they cannot meet court requirements, so they skip their appointments.
- Legal documents are hard to comprehend, including fines, because the language used is not accessible.

### Challenges and opportunities with COVID-19

- Police seem more aggressive with people.
- There is an increase in police presence in Forest Lawn and northeast areas.
- Concern over what we do when people are imprisoned in tight places and cannot limit their potential exposure to the virus.
- Support for clients with disabilities has been left to agencies and government is not giving the supports needed to access the justice system.
- The backlog within the justice system has caused a lot of pressure on the system and there needs to be better access to legal representation.

### What's needed

- Trauma-informed care training for the police, lawyers, clerks, and judges.
- Wellness checks and mental health wellness checks should be made by mental health practitioners. If these checks remain the work of the Police, officers should be required to have increased and ongoing mental health training. All of the Officers own mental health should also be assessed regularly.
- The Police and Crisis Team (PACT) hours need to become more flexible for better service.
- There needs to be reform that would create a collaborative environment between the prosecution and defense to create greater fairness in trial.
- There needs to be more collaboratives and networks between groups like AHS, CPS, and CMHA.
- Educating the community on their rights and what and how the justice system works.
- The justice system needs to take into account the context of why people are there.

### Enough for All Lever of Change - Justice

Lack of resources can be a barrier to addressing legal issues, while having legal issues can lead to a lack of resources. Calgarians need the knowledge, resources and capability to understand and address their legal issues, and deserve a legal system that does not contribute to or cause poverty.

#ENOUGHFORALL #SHAREDLEADERSHIP

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