

2020 RES-267

DISCONTINUING JUVENILE JUSTICE FEES AND FINES

In recent years, the County Board has become increasingly concerned with the impact on low income individuals of fines and fees assessed in the civil and criminal justice systems. In the 2019 budget, the County Board eliminated the county charges for families when their child is in the secure juvenile detention facility, and the 2020 budget eliminated the fees for youth placed in post-dispositional home detention. However, fees remain for shelter home and juvenile delinquency supervision.

Recently, the County Board created a subcommittee of the Public Protection and Judiciary Committee to review the current fines and fees assessed in the civil, human services, and criminal justice system throughout Dane County and determine how Dane County can reduce or eliminate these fees, fines, and costs. The review includes analysis of the financial hardship and justice hardship placed on low income individuals and their families because of these fees.

Juvenile justice-related fees and fines hit struggling families particularly hard, and are a part of the racial disparities of the criminal justice system. Often families are unable to pay the fees and the debt incurred creates another burden. All remaining fees and fines related to juveniles, and outstanding debt, should be eliminated. This is an equity issue and demands immediate attention.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the fees charged by the Juvenile Court Program and the Department of Human Services for shelter home and juvenile delinquency supervision be immediately eliminated.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any debt that families have incurred as a result of these fees and fines be forgiven.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that any past debt that families have incurred as a result of fines and fees for juvenile detention, Home Detention, shelter home and delinquency supervision be forgiven as well.