

*Dear Neighbor,*

*For the second year in a row, I was honored to be selected by my colleagues as the chair of the council's Budget Committee and will lead the annual deliberation and passage of the 2012 budget.*

*This year's budget is about tackling reality and continuing reform. The same kinds of realities that have fallen on families throughout the country as a result of the global recession are not avoided by governments like King County. While our revenues are beginning to improve, they are not growing at sustainable rates. We are going to work smarter and more efficiently to deliver high quality services to King County residents.*

*King County has taken a proactive approach to address these realities – making tough choices, tightening our belts and implementing reforms which help us balance our budget. Government cannot operate entirely like a business. It cannot choose its customers, and it cannot exclude services for those who can't pay for them. Through our own budget process this year, the Council will work to tackle these realities, continue to implement reforms, and practice prudent spending, exactly as you are doing at home.*

*In this newsletter, I have provided a "Budget 101" to help you understand the King County budget.*

*I look forward to seeing you at the public meeting on October 19th!*

*Sincerely,*

*Julia Patterson*  
Julia Patterson

COUNCILMEMBER  
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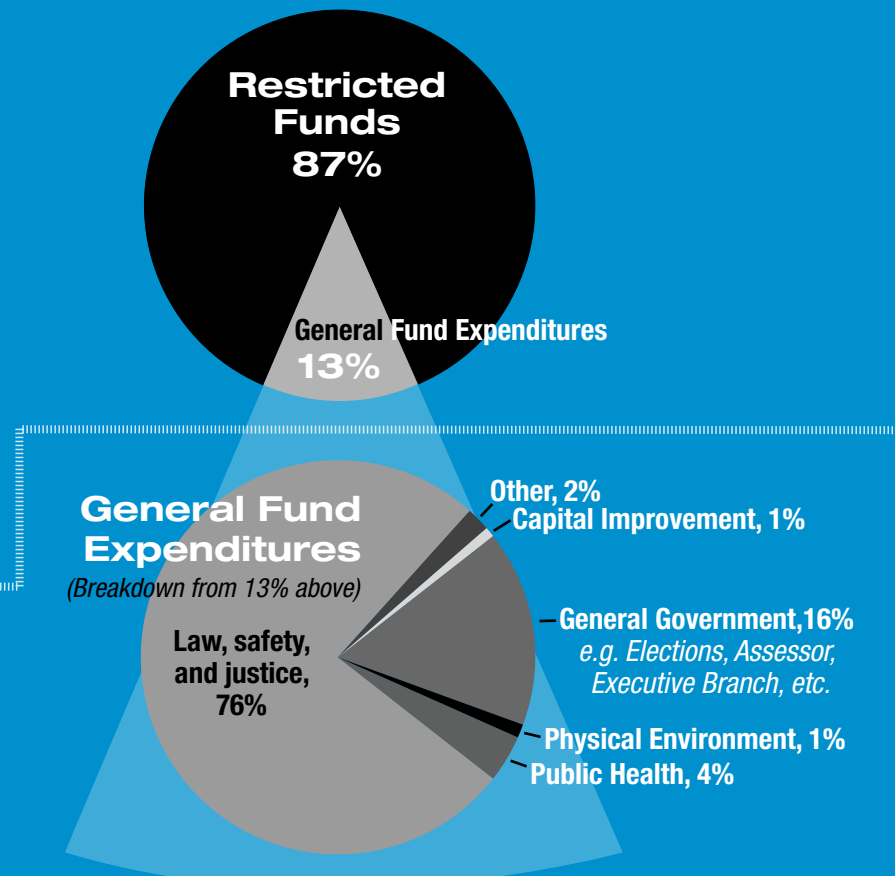
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## Budget 101 Understanding the King County Budget

### Legal Constraints on the county budget

Most of the county budget is restricted by law to specific purposes, such as transit, sewage treatment, and voter-approved services like Medic-One. The only discretionary portion of the budget is the general fund, which supports services like public safety, public health and elections.

King County is mandated by state law to fund public safety services, like our sheriff, prosecuting attorney and our court system.



## YOU ARE INVITED...



King County Councilmember  
**Julia Patterson**  
*invites you to attend a*

**County Budget Hearing**  
Wednesday, October 19, 6:30 pm  
**Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent**  
401 4th Avenue North - Courtroom 3F

King County must adopt a balanced budget for 2012 that protects the public. Your voice, your opinion will be vital in how we meet the fiscal challenges facing us this year.

*If you wish to provide public testimony, please come early to sign in*  
For more information, visit my website: [www.kingcounty.gov/patterson](http://www.kingcounty.gov/patterson) ■ [julia.patterson@kingcounty.gov](mailto:julia.patterson@kingcounty.gov)

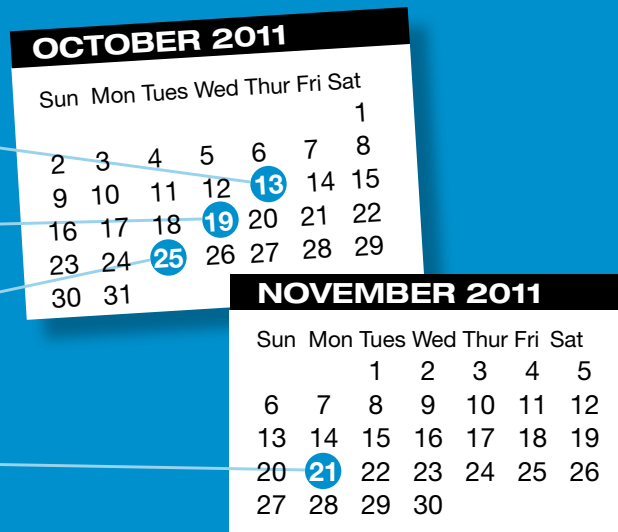
## Budget Hearings:

**Thursday, October 13, 6:30 pm**  
Pacific Cascade Middle School, Issaquah

**Wednesday, October 19, 6:30 pm**  
Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center, Kent

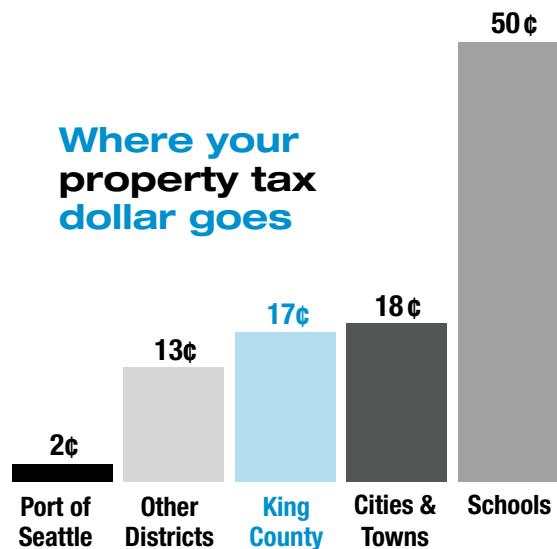
**Tuesday, October 25, 6:30 pm**  
King County Courthouse, Seattle

**Monday, November 21**  
Scheduled Adoption of the 2012 Budget



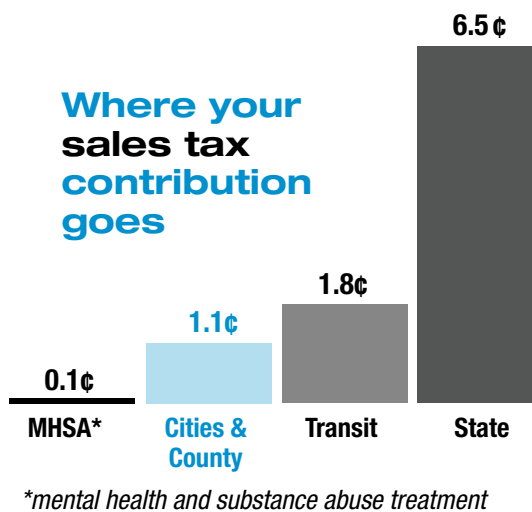
# King County Budget 101

## How are county services funded?



Although you pay your property tax bill to King County, the county government receives only 17 cents of every dollar. The rest is distributed to other levels of government, as shown above.

King County has only two principal tax revenue sources to support general fund services: property tax and sales tax.



With the sales tax of 9.5 cents per dollar in King County, the county splits 1.1 cents with cities, and the rest is distributed to other governments in the state.

## Realities faced by King County:

- 💰 Property tax and sales tax revenues support critical county services, including:
  - 💰 Services that keep people safe, like our storefront Sheriff's deputies and our regional jail system that keeps dangerous criminals behind bars,
  - 💰 Services like Metro Transit, which provides people with access to transportation as the cost of owning a vehicle increases,
  - 💰 Services like public health, that will provide affordable, quality care as more and more people are living without health insurance.
- 💰 In 2012, the new reality is that our revenue, while beginning to improve, is not growing at a rate that will sustain King County government because of the continuing recession.
- 💰 Citizens are holding onto their money which has stunted sales tax revenue.
- 💰 The slowdown in new construction and lower property values has resulted in depressed property tax collections.
- 💰 In the face of a \$1.4 billion state budget deficit, the county will likely lose even more services, particularly in areas like public health.

## Reforms implemented by King County:

King County has taken a proactive approach to address recession related budget realities. Our government has been reformed in ways that will result in a balanced budget this year, including:

- 💰 Cutting more than \$233 million from our \$648 million general fund over the last four years.
- 💰 Reforming health care delivery, which will save the county \$38 million in employee health care costs in 2012.
- 💰 Consolidating our regional animal services to allow for more efficient staffing and better care for our animals.
- 💰 Negotiating agreements with the City of Seattle and suburban cities to house their inmates in our King County jail.
- 💰 Creating public/private partnerships, like the one we have with HealthPoint Community Health Centers, which helps keep the lights on in many of our public health clinics.
- 💰 Finding significant efficiencies across the entire spectrum of services that we deliver in our public safety system, including consolidating Sheriff's facilities and streamlining electronic records in Superior Court.