



**King County**

## **Best Starts for Kids Levy Proposal**

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Best Starts for Kids is an initiative to improve the health and well-being of King County residents by investing in prevention and early intervention for children, youth, families and community. The King County Council voted to put a six-year levy on the Nov. 3, 2015 ballot that would fund the initiative.

### **Levy Amount**

A six-year levy at a rate of 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This would raise about \$65 million per year at a cost to the average King County homeowner of about \$56 per year.

### **Investing Early**

Fifty percent of the revenue would be invested in strategies focused on children under age five and pregnant women such as home visiting for new parents and their children. This will include a modest investment to sustain and expand parent/child health services that are delivered through the county's Public Health Centers. The science and evidence shows us that the earlier we invest, the greater the return for both the child's development and our society.

### **Sustaining the Gain**

Thirty-five percent would be invested in strategies focused on children and youth aged five through twenty-four such as early intervention to prevent teen depression and substance use. The science and research tells us that the brain continues to develop during this time and prevention efforts addressed at key developmental stages or transition points in a young person's life help to sustain gains made earlier in life.

### **Communities Matter**

Ten percent would be invested in strategies to create safe and healthy communities such as increasing access to healthy affordable food, expanding economic opportunities and access to affordable housing. This strategy will sustain and expand the partnership between King County and The Seattle

Foundation on Communities of Opportunity (COO). COO is based on the latest research and evidence regarding the impact of place on a child's success and the importance of supporting communities in building their own capacity to create positive change.

### **Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention**

A portion of the first year's levy funds would be used to create a youth and family homelessness prevention initiative modeled on a successful pilot implemented by organizations serving survivors of domestic violence.

### **Outcomes-Focused and Data Driven**

Five percent would support evaluation, data collection and improving the delivery of services and programs for children and youth. This will ensure Best Starts for Kids strategies are tailored for children from every background in King County and that we deliver on the results for every child in King County.

### **Advisory Boards**

An oversight and advisory board comprised of county residents and stakeholders with geographically and culturally diverse perspectives would be established. The advisory board will make recommendations and monitor distribution of levy proceeds.

### **Implementation**

In order to reduce inequities in our County, Best Starts for Kids strategies are designed to be both universal and targeted, with the large majority of Best Starts for Kids levy funding competitively bid in outcomes-focused contracts to community-based organizations. This will help ensure that the strategies are implemented in a manner that is appropriate for all cultural and ethnic groups and that each child and her caregivers receive the tools and level of support they need. Should the voters approve it, the county will refine outcomes and indicators through development of a detailed implementation plan with input and consultation from the community.