



King County

# Equity and Social Justice Annual Report

October 2013



Affordable, safe, quality housing  
Access to parks and natural resources

Equity in County practices  
Access to affordable, healthy, local food

Community and public safety

Equitable law and justice system

Access to safe and efficient transportation

Quality education  
Family wage jobs and job training

Early childhood development

Strong, vibrant neighborhoods

Access to health and human services  
Healthy built and natural environments

Economic development

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## Letter from Executive Dow Constantine

I am proud to present this *2013 King County Equity and Social Justice Annual Report*.

This report on Equity and Social Justice shows the progress of the King County Strategic Plan and our “fair and just” ordinance, which requires that we intentionally consider equity and integrate it into our decisions and policies, our county practices, and our methods for engaging communities.

This report shows how King County is changing. Our county has many strengths and assets, including a strong business sector and diverse communities. However, significant portions of our society are being left behind – especially if we look at King County by race and ethnicity, income, and ZIP code. This is unacceptable, especially for a county that boasts Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as its namesake.

This report is a tool for us to continue our work and inspire others to join us. It provides a vision for creating a stronger and more vibrant King County for all.

Our earlier reports on Equity and Social Justice pushed us to ask questions and dig deeper to better understand the inequities that exist. This report makes strides in a different direction, by highlighting the work our employees, policy-makers and communities are doing to find innovative ways to improve how we work together and to make a difference in people’s lives.

Through creatively addressing the root causes of our problems and finding better ways to conduct business, we will create a more inclusive and prosperous King County.

My commitment to Equity and Social Justice is unwavering. We are learning the strategies needed to address these challenges before us, and now is the time to redouble our long-term commitment. I ask fellow elected officials, county employees, and our residents, communities and partners to walk with me on this journey toward a fairer and more just King County.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

## Why equity?

King County's ability to remain a leader in our global economy and society depends on everybody being able to reach her and his full potential.

King County's population is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. These demographic changes bring a new richness to local communities. But these changes cease to become assets when we leave behind our communities of color, our low-income populations and our limited English-proficient neighbors.

In King County, where you live, how much you make, and the color of your skin are major predictors of your life experience and your chances of living well and thriving.

Inequities hurt everybody—not just people in the lower rungs of the social and economic ladder. Regions and countries with greater economic equality, for example, have more sustained and robust economic growth.

We all gain from creating a place where all people can lead better lives and contribute their best. Equity enables everyone to help grow and strengthen our county.

The challenge for King County and our partners is creating a fair and just system where the optimum conditions exist for residents.

The solution needs to be comprehensive. A skilled workforce is important for the jobs of the future. A quality educational system can meet the needs of tomorrow's economy. Families benefit, are healthier, and can succeed if they have strong and vibrant neighborhoods, access to affordable and healthy foods, safe and efficient transportation, and affordable and quality housing. ■

## A changing King County with strengths and challenges

In 1990, 17 percent of the county's population was made up of "people of color." By 2010, 35 percent of the population of King County was made up of people of color.

The composition of the young population in the county is a good indicator of how the overall population will look in the future.

When looking at people under age 18 in our county, nearly half (47 percent) are people of color. Already in the 19 King County school districts, more than 50 percent of the students are people of color.

Many people have heard the incorrect claim that the ZIP code for Rainier Valley (98118) is the most racially and ethnically diverse in the nation. The outlook is more complex. There are two other ZIP codes in King County—98178 (Skyway) and 98188 (SeaTac-Tukwila)—that rank similarly with 98118 in racial and ethnic diversity.

Although none of those three ZIP codes is the most diverse in the nation, they rank in the top 30 nationally in one common measure of diversity: the probability that two persons selected at random are of a different race and ethnicity.<sup>1</sup>

### Uneven diversity, disparate opportunity

While King County is increasingly ethnically and racially diverse in many neighborhoods, this trend is not seen throughout the county.

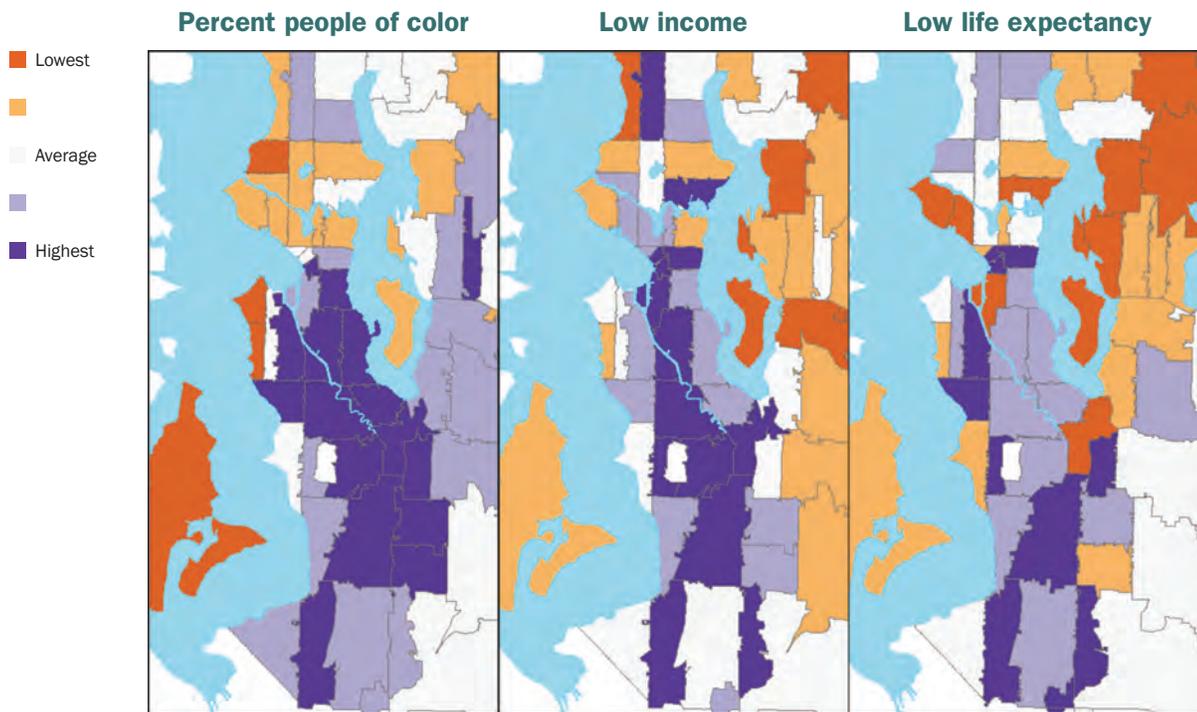
Ethnic and racial diversity varies dramatically by ZIP code in King County. The 10 ZIP codes with the highest diversity have more than 7 in 10 people of color. On the other hand, the 10 ZIP codes with the lowest diversity have, on average, less than 1 of every 10 people being a person of color.

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<sup>1</sup>"Gini-Simpson" Diversity Index, analysis by Diana Canzoneri

## WHY EQUITY?

### Strong connection among place, race, income and health



Data Sources: Public Health-Seattle & King County; US Census Bureau, Census 2010 and 2007-2011 American Community Survey.

So, while King County has some of the most diverse neighborhoods in the United States, it also has a significant number of communities with a super majority of whites.

Why are these differences important? These racial and ethnic differences by geography are a concern because they also correspond with significant differences in opportunity. Place and race matter in King County. They are predictors of income and many important outcomes such as life expectancy and education.

When comparing the 10 ZIP codes with the highest household incomes to the 10 ZIP codes with the lowest household incomes, there is more than a \$100,000 difference in household income within King County.

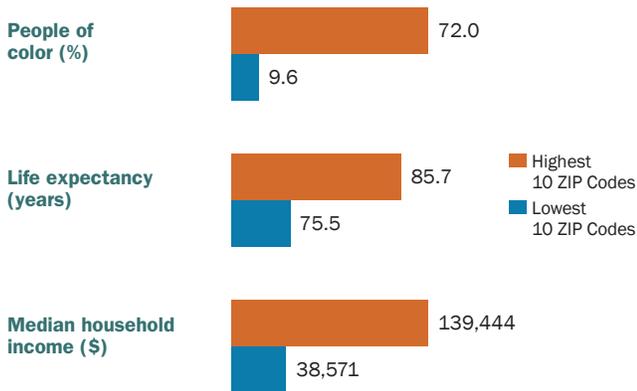
Similarly, looking at the 10 ZIP codes with the highest life expectancy compared with the 10 ZIP codes with the lowest life expectancy, there is more than 10 years of difference.

Life expectancy also varies by race and ethnicity. Compared with the race group with the highest life expectancy in King County (Asians at almost 86 years), American Indians and Alaskan Natives have a life expectancy that is 12 years lower. And blacks/African Americans have a life expectancy that is more than nine years lower.

Similarly, education outcomes—if measured by on-time high school graduation—are disparate throughout King County. On-time graduation rates are lower for students in south King County and for African Americans, Latinos, American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders.

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**Place matters: Stark differences by ZIP code**



Data Sources: Public Health-Seattle & King County; US Census Bureau, Census 2010 and 2007-2011 American Community Survey

Of particular concern: Many of the inequities are increasing.

Median incomes for African Americans and Latinos are significantly lower than incomes for whites and Asians. And when viewed across time, between 1999 and 2010, median household income increased for King County’s whites, Asians and Latinos but not for African Americans.

Clearly, not all communities of color have similar experiences and outcomes. And being white does not mean one does not face challenges. Whites still make up the largest number of poor individuals in King County.

However, these trends show there is a deep connection between place, race/ethnicity and opportunity. These findings complement last year’s *King County’s 2012 Equity and Social Justice Annual Report*. It showed similar and recurring patterns by place and race/ethnicity for other determinants of equity, such as access to affordable, safe, quality housing; affordable, healthy local foods; and parks and natural resources.

# Equity as a new and essential approach for the region

The future demographics of our county point to the need to understand the complexities of our population and our differences. While doing that, we also must find common ground, values and agendas for the region.

King County’s “fair and just” ordinance, the basis for the County’s work on Equity and Social Justice, offers a way forward and an approach for local governments and partners. Our Equity and Social Justice work is grounded in national and international research that points to addressing inequities as the strongest path for regions to flourish.

King County’s approach is based on the following foundational practices.

**Increase focus on the determinants of equity:**

King County has defined 14 determinants of equity, which are the conditions in which people live, work and play. Equal access to these determinants is necessary for all people to thrive and achieve their full potential. These determinants, pictured in the cover of this report, include economic development; affordable, safe, quality housing; access to safe and efficient transportation; and early childhood development.

King County is working to increase the focus on our determinants of equity, with essential questions such as: *Which determinant or determinants of equity does our work affect? How can we increase access to these determinants? And when there are barriers to determinants for communities, how can we remove or address them?*

**Eliminate the root causes of inequities:**

Traditionally, local governments have focused many of their services on treating “downstream” conditions, such as homelessness, disease and incarceration. Creating sustainable changes in outcomes for King County requires a long-term vision that looks “upstream” and examines root causes and structural factors.

Continued

## WHY EQUITY?

Instead of focusing at the individual level, we need to look at the community level and beyond, such as the neighborhood conditions we are trying to create. In addition, instead of people and offices working alone in silos, we must collaborate across agencies, departments and organizations to come up with effective, comprehensive solutions.

To eliminate the root causes of inequities, essential questions include: *What upstream pro-equity policies, structures and systems do we need to promote opportunity for all? Instead of looking at a simpler response to a complex problem, what is the comprehensive approach we need to get at the root causes? What other areas and sectors must we engage and work with to be part of the solution?*

**Consider equity and social justice impacts in all phases of decision-making:** The inequities that exist today are the result of past decisions and policies that benefited and continue to benefit some people over others. The decision-making process (or *process equity*) must be inclusive of broad community considerations. As we reach this increased inclusiveness, we must then accompany it with a more even distribution of assets as well as greater access to the determinants of equity for all (or *distributional equity*). This distribution equity, in turn, can stop the cycle of inherited inequities from one generation to the next, thus creating a system in which the future generations benefit (or *intergenerational equity*).

To consider equity in all phases of decision-making, essential questions include: *In process equity, is the decision process inclusive, fair and open? Does it consider all communities? In terms of distributional equity, is there fair and just distribution of benefits and burdens to all residents in the community? And for intergenerational equity, do the decisions and actions today break the cycle of inequities so there is equity for future generations?*

**Focus efforts on people of color, low-income communities, and people with limited English proficiency:** As in communities across the nation, people in King County have unequal access to the determinants of equity. After reviewing data that

point to particular needs and challenges in certain communities, King County's Equity and Social Justice is prioritizing impacts on people of color, low-income communities, and people with limited English proficiency. To move all communities forward, we must target programs and investments that benefit the people and places most left behind.

To make sure we address conditions for the communities with the greatest needs, essential questions include: *How are people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency affected by the county programs, policies and decisions? Are they negatively affected? If so, why? Can we avoid or mitigate these negative impacts? And what can we do to increase opportunities for these populations?*

### **Build capacity to engage all communities:**

Community engagement must offer opportunities for communities to express their views and have a meaningful role in the County's decision-making. Effective engagement removes barriers for communities that may have previously prevented residents from successfully working with county government. Building capacity to engage all communities fosters trust; leads to more effective policies, processes and services; and supports communities' efforts to develop solutions.

As the County engages with communities, essential questions we are asking include: *Who is being engaged? Who is not? Who is being overlooked? And how can engagement become more inclusive? How is the County's capacity being built to better engage communities? And how is capacity being built in the community? Importantly, are the solutions based on community involvement and interests?*

Following three community profiles that examine demographics and determinants of equity, the next section of this report highlights how King County departments and agencies are implementing these foundational practices of Equity and Social Justice. 

## WHY EQUITY?

The following community profiles highlight three areas of King County:

- ➔ City of Kent
- ➔ City of Bellevue
- ➔ Northgate in City of Seattle

The profiles examine race, income and poverty, as well as the status of key determinants of equity in each community.

They also examine what local governments, school districts and community partners are doing to address equity.

### Community Profiles:

## City of Kent

### Demographics

The city of Kent in south King County has more people of color, lower median household incomes and less access to the determinants of equity when compared to King County as a whole. Even so, significant differences exist among Kent neighborhoods.

The median household income is \$50,000 in West Hill and Kent Valley while \$79,000 to \$90,000 in the Soos Creek Trail-Lake Meridian area. More than 1 in 3 residents struggles near poverty in the West Hill and Kent Valley area, twice as many as in the Soos Creek Trail-Lake Meridian area.

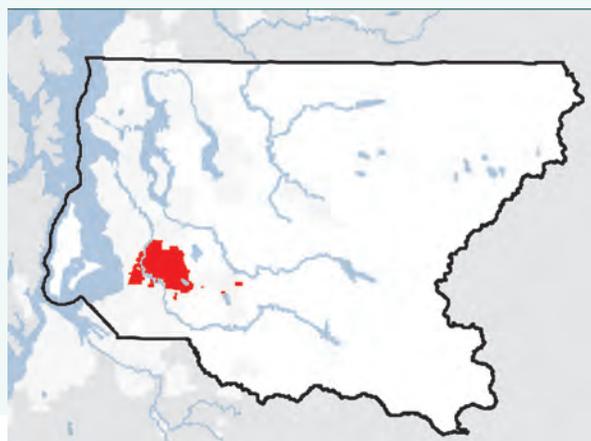
Differences in income in neighborhoods are closely associated with race. The East Hill, Panther Lake and West Hill/Kent Valley residents are 50-54 percent people of color. The Soos Creek Trail-Lake Meridian area has fewer people of color (32 percent).

These East Hill, Panther Lake and West Hill/Kent Valley areas also have a high proportion of residents who speak non-English languages (60-64 percent). Spanish, the most commonly spoken language in King County other than English, is used by almost 1 of every 5 residents of the West Hill/Kent Valley area. Other frequently spoken languages include Tagalog, Vietnamese, Somali, Russian and Ukrainian.

### Determinant of equity: Quality education

The Kent School District, which also includes parts of unincorporated King County and several

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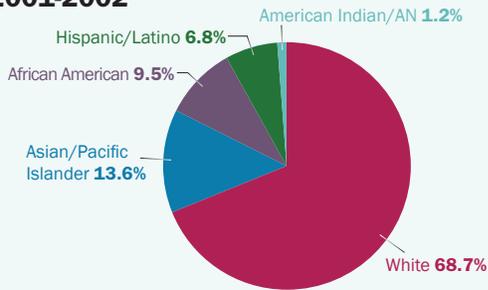


## WHY EQUITY?

### Kent School District students are increasing in racial diversity:

#### More than half are students of color

##### 2001-2002



##### 2011-2012



Data Source: Kent School District

other cities, is increasingly diverse. Over the past 10 years, school district enrollment has increased and student population demographics have shifted. Students and their families speak more than 130 languages.

Additionally, the Kent School District has seen a significant increase in students qualifying for free and reduced lunches, rising from 35 percent to 53 percent in the past decade.

Responding to the changing needs, the school district has developed a holistic and family-centered approach that supports students' success. For example:

➡ Through a combination of individualized student attention and focusing on the performance

data of language and ethnicity groups, the Kent School District has been successful in identifying and reducing barriers to academic achievement for children of color. There has also been a growth in the academic achievement of students of color. Strategies have included student-centered decision making, extensive staff development in language and cultural awareness and skills, targeted re-engagement strategies for drop-outs, and culturally relevant parent engagement.

➡ In addressing disproportionality in discipline, an ad hoc discipline committee of administrators, principals, parents and community members met over the past year to revise the procedures and guidelines for student discipline. The new approach encourages administrators to consider extenuating circumstances within a consistent range of sanctions. Also, a Student Behavior Support Planning Team identified the need for a formalized district-wide behavior support system for students to help identify at-risk students. This team put interventions in place to reduce the amount of class time students miss because of disciplinary issues.

➡ Parent Academy for Student Achievement (PASA) was piloted in two elementary schools in 2012 and is being added to two schools each year for the coming decade. PASA assists young parents of elementary students engage with their schools through a nine-week course focusing on academic, home and social strategies that will increase the likelihood of success in school. It gives newcomers to the U.S. educational system a roadmap of the expectations and opportunities available. It uses local cultural leaders as peer instructors and is interpreted in real-time to multiple languages during evening sessions. ■

**Community Profiles:**

# Northgate

## Demographics

The Northgate area in Seattle—the area immediately surrounding the Northgate Mall and King County’s Northgate Transit Center—is substantially more racially diverse than the City of Seattle as a whole. In several ways, the area is changing rapidly.

The Northgate area has about 20,000 residents. About 1 in 7 Northgate residents lives in poverty. Well over 1 in 3 Northgate residents is a person of color. Between 2000 and 2010, this area, compared with the City of Seattle as a whole, experienced more than twice the percentage increase in people of color (28 percent increase in Northgate vs. 13 percent increase in Seattle).

This rapid 10-year change was particularly marked among children; Northgate had a 31 percent increase in children of color compared with only a 2 percent increase in children of color for Seattle overall.

Northgate is rich in languages, with more than 1 in 4 residents speaking a non-English language at home. Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese and African languages (primarily Somali and Amharic) are the most frequently spoken languages among area residents.

The Northgate area is also home to North Seattle Community College, Northwest Hospital & Medical Center, Northgate mall, the Northgate branch



VIA Architecture

of the Seattle Public Library, and the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department’s Northgate Community Center. Students travel to this area to attend classes, and commuters travel through this area by transit and bicycle. Residents from within and outside the area use Northgate to support their daily needs.

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## WHY EQUITY?

### Determinant of equity: Safe and efficient transportation

Northgate is home to one of the region's busiest transit centers; it includes adjacent park-and-ride lots. Transit plans, not yet final, include a new Sound Transit light rail station and call for redevelopment of this area with mixed uses: multifamily homes, retail stores and offices along with bus operations and park-and-ride spaces.

Key equity considerations that are part of the Northgate redevelopment and planning:

➡ Both the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative and King County's Equity and Social Justice provide useful lenses through which to view equity in planning decisions. Especially important is the principle of involving local residents outlined in the inclusive community-engagement guides.

➡ The Growing Transit Communities process provided a chance for the Puget Sound Regional Council, King County and the City of Seattle to review the Northgate planning efforts through the lenses of public health, livability and equity. The purpose of this effort was to identify strategies to help realize the best possible neighborhood development outcomes for the Northgate Urban Center as Sound Transit builds a light rail station during the next several years and connects with existing services.

➡ King County's ownership of a single large transit property next to the future rail station enhances both the potential to influence positive outcomes and the responsibility to seek well-designed forms of development. Doing that will accomplish neighborhood-planning objectives for a healthy and livable urban center environment.

➡ The City's Comprehensive Plan seeks high-quality mixed-use neighborhoods with a livable, walkable character and public facilities oriented to people's needs. Also, the Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (the City's neighborhood plan) emphasizes achieving more human services, community facilities, open spaces and transportation facilities. ■



VIA Architecture

Community Profiles:

# City of Bellevue

## Demographics

Bellevue is changing. In race and ethnicity, it is now more diverse than Seattle, the largest city in King County.

More than 40 percent of Bellevue’s population now consists of persons of color, up from 15 percent in 1990 and 28 percent in 2000.

People of color are distributed widely throughout the city. In two neighborhoods, Factoria and Crossroads, more than 60 percent of the population consists of persons of color. In five other neighborhoods, more than 40 percent are persons of color. In most of the rest of Bellevue, people of color make up more than 30 percent of residents.

An important aspect of Bellevue’s change can be seen generationally—with a very diverse young population and overwhelming white senior population. Asians make up the second largest racial group in Bellevue behind whites.

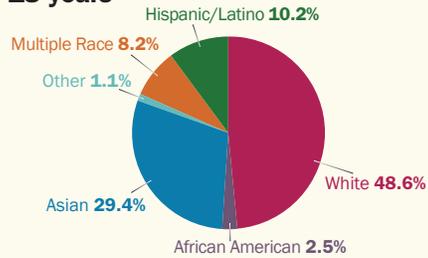
One-third of Bellevue’s population speaks a language at home other than English, compared with about 23 percent in King County and 17 percent in Washington state, with large numbers of people in Bellevue speaking Chinese and Spanish. In some neighborhoods, such as Crossroads, the percentage speaking a language other than English is as high as 51 percent.

Bellevue’s poverty rate, although lower than that of many King County cities, has increased since 2000. Poverty rates were lowest (less than 3 percent) in the Somerset, northeast Bellevue and northwest Bellevue neighborhoods. The poverty rate was highest (17 percent) in West Lake Hills.

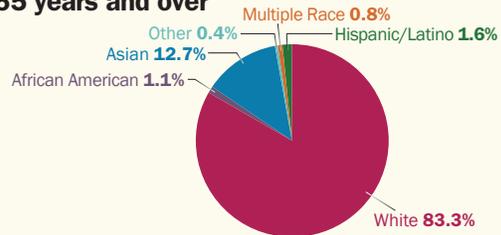


## Race/ethnicity of Bellevue’s population

### Under 18 years



### 65 years and over



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2010

## Determinant of equity: Affordable, safe quality housing

One important determinant of equity is access to safe and affordable housing. Though lower than the countywide rate, one-third of Bellevue households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Many of the cost-burdened households spread in an arc of neighborhoods from Factoria through West Lake Hills and Wilburton to northwest Bellevue. Efforts by the City of Bellevue to address local changes include:

- ➔ Partnering in Eastside Pathways, a cradle-to-career community collaboration. Families, providers, schools and cities unite around common goals, measurements and strategies to maximize each child’s opportunity for a productive, fulfilling life.

- ➔ Establishing a mini city hall in the heart of Bellevue’s most diverse neighborhood,

Crossroads. Mini City Hall has staff and volunteers six days a week who speak a total of nine languages. Its “cultural navigators” provide one-on-one assistance to residents.

**In early 2012, King County agencies made commitments and created work plans for Equity and Social Justice. This section includes notable achievements plus a series of stories that provides a more in-depth illustration of the work by King County.**

## Consider equity impacts in all decision-making

### Countywide actions

The County's multi-billion dollar budget is an important reflection of priorities, policies and resource allocation. Over time, ESJ analysis and evaluation has become more integrated as the standard work of the budget process. In 2012, the **Executive's Office** held all agencies accountable for including ESJ impacts in 2012 budgets and business plans. The **King County Council** also incorporated specific consideration of ESJ impacts into its annual budget deliberation process.

#### Among the budget changes:

➔ The **Natural Resources and Parks** budget included equity considerations, especially in the geography of investments. For example, the 2013 capital budget contained increased funds for building the Lake to Sound Trail in South King County, connecting Lake Washington in Renton and Puget Sound in Des Moines.

➔ The County continued its south county Gang Intervention Project, which includes Avanza, an early intervention program for Latino/Latina youth who are dropping out of school. The project also includes the Back to School and Employment Training Program. It worked to prevent or reduce gang involvement and other high-risk behaviors by focusing on education and employment opportunities. Both programs predominantly serve youth of color (95 percent) and provide opportunities for at-risk youth to get on a

path to a healthier, more productive future. Also, the gang prevention project supports two nurses in the Nurse Family Partnership program, which is a highly successful, evidence-based intensive home-visiting program for first-time, low-income mothers. Its work results in demonstrably lower rates of involvement in the criminal justice system and better outcomes for the children.

➔ The County restored funding for the storefront **Sheriff's** officers in White Center and Skyway. Storefront officers work directly with community members to identify crime hotspots, address neighborhood concerns, and strengthen the relationship between residents and law enforcement. White Center and Skyway both have a relatively high proportion of low-income residents and people of color, and the earlier loss of the storefront officers affected the Sheriff's Office's ability to effectively communicate and police the neighborhoods.

#### Business and planning tools:

➔ The **Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget (PSB)** formally imbedded a deliberate ESJ analysis into the Line of Business planning process. The initial pilots included **Office of Risk Management, Department of Information Technology, Department of Assessments, and Airport Division.**

➔ **PSB, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Public Health, and GIS Center** created a series of maps that show key demographic features of the county related to equity: income, race/ethnicity, and languages spoken. These maps are for use by county staff for community engagement, program planning and equity analyses. These maps also can help other jurisdictions and members of the community better understand the county's population. See [www.kingcounty.gov/exec/equity/toolsandresources/maps.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/equity/toolsandresources/maps.aspx).

➔ The demographics website was updated with county data that includes languages spoken, income levels, and foreign-born population.

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## Agency-specific actions

### ESJ was central to many decisions and policies during 2012:

➔ In **Public Health**, the 2014-19 Emergency Medical Services levy under consideration first by the King County Council and then by voters in 2013 includes a strategic initiative to improve 9-1-1 dispatcher communications with patients who have limited English proficiency.

➔ In addition, Public Health is relocating centers with ESJ considerations in mind: The White Center Public Health Center moved to Greenbridge in a partnership with the King County Housing Authority. The new site in the heart of the Greenbridge development enables better access for low-income and ethnically diverse residents. The clinic's new design also incorporated the Lean principles, which strive for more efficient service delivery.

➔ The Renton Public Health Center is moving to Renton Technical College, which also enables co-location with the Renton Dental Clinic. The new site better suits multiple service users and has improved public transportation access. Similarly, the Kent Public Health Center is moving to a more urban setting that has better transportation access for low-income residents using services.

➔ The revenue shortfalls from a declining sale tax led **King County Metro** to eliminate the downtown Seattle Ride Free Area in 2012. This change had potent impacts on a low-income, diverse customer base that depends on transportation assistance and support from service agencies, many of which are located in the Ride Free Area. To mitigate these impacts, the City of Seattle and King County Metro opted to launch a free downtown circular service, based on community feedback and work with human services agencies. The term of the downtown circulator pilot project will run until the end of 2013, and the City of Seattle will evaluate the project to determine whether it should continue beyond 2013. In addition,

Metro is seeking a county wide long-term solution for low-income populations through its work with the Low Income Fare Options Advisory Committee, which is examining fare options for people with low incomes.

### Agencies are also taking steps to more comprehensively consider the root causes of inequities and coming up with longer-term strategies and plans. For example:

➔ **King County Superior Court** held an ESJ Judicial Action Planning Retreat on Feb. 27, 2012. This full-day retreat for all Superior Court judicial officers considered the fundamental causes of a disproportionate number of contacts between people of color and the justice system. Participants also discussed opportunities for improvement and action plans for implementing change. A work group met for several months after the retreat, developed key components of a consolidated work plan, and gathered important data. In late 2012, the Criminal Justice Council, chaired by the Superior Court presiding judge, convened a Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Workgroup to develop a systemwide justice plan for addressing DMC. A multi-year work plan is expected to emerge in the summer of 2013.

➔ The Juvenile Division of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention now uses objective criteria before youth may be removed from school. A due process hearing is provided for each removal, with students engaging as active participants. In some situations, school removals have been overturned, and youth have returned to school. Overall, the new procedure has reduced the number of youth removed from school.

➔ In 2012, **Adult and Juvenile Detention** had 83 participants earn a GED Certificate of Completion. The department continued to show its commitment to equity and social justice by entering new partnerships and providing funds to maintain women's access to GED programming after federal budget cuts to the federal AmeriCorps service threatened to shut down the GED program. Ending the program would have precluded access to educational services for many women in detention. ■■■

**Our Stories:**

## Working to keep youth and adults out of jail

**Determinants of equity:** Equitable law and justice system, community and public safety, access to health and human services.

**Who:** Department of Public Defense, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, Executive's Office, Community and Human Services, Public Health and Superior Court, with partner agencies and organizations.

**What:** Working for one King County to reduce involvement in the justice system and address racial disproportionality.

Last year in King County, people who are African American represented 30 percent of all bookings even though they only represent seven percent of the total population. Similarly, according to the Sentencing Project, "three-fourths of all persons in prison for drug offenses are people of color."

More alarmingly, in Seattle, blacks were more than 21 times more likely to be arrested for selling serious drugs than whites in 2005-2006, despite the fact that multiple data sources suggest that whites are the majority of sellers and users of serious drugs in Seattle.

The outcomes for youth are no better. According to King County juvenile detention data, two-thirds of all individuals booked in 2012 were youth of color. Of this, 40 percent of the youth were black and almost 14 percent were Latino.

The disproportionate number of youth and adults of color in the justice system locally and across the country perpetuates a cycle of racial inequity that contributes to multiple, long-term and harmful consequences. These trends can be changed by addressing the systemic causes of disproportionality and using strategies that are centered on the individual, their families and their communities, as well as the institutional and systemic factors contributing to justice system involvement.

Following are examples for the adult and juvenile justice system that demonstrate how King County is working internally and with partners to reduce justice system involvement and address disproportionality.

### Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) for adults

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion ("LEAD") is a diversion program that allows police officers to redirect those involved in low-level drug and prostitution activities to community-based services, instead of incarceration. African Americans have historically been overrepresented in these kinds of police bookings, thus this program has the potential to reduce disproportionality.

The pilot program began operating in Seattle's Belltown neighborhood at the end of 2011, and recently it expanded to unincorporated King County. LEAD relies on two central elements: complete buy-

in and extensive training of participating police officers, and immediate access to needed services for program participants.

Law enforcement officials are supportive of LEAD

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*Participants in youth programs.*



because it gives them another way to handle public safety issues. Instead of jailing every person booked on a low-level drug or prostitution offense, veteran police officers determine whether someone is an appropriate candidate and eligible to receive services from LEAD.

Evaluation of the program will begin in October of this year, and anecdotal evidence suggests that the program will demonstrate reductions in justice involvement for participants who engaged with the program. For example, according to “James,” who was previously regularly arrested in Belltown for drug activity, is now housed and engaged in treatment:

**“LEAD helped me get back to my true self. I got out of jail last year and I was getting high every day. You lose yourself. It’s like another character, a monster. You lose your self-esteem, your mind. Since I started this program I can walk through Belltown and keep going. I can keep walking because I have a place to go. A roof over my head. Read my books. Take a shower. I can look in the mirror and say, ‘That’s me.’”**

### Juvenile justice prevention and intervention

King County serves approximately 338,000 youth through almost 100 programs ranging from education and youth development to community and mental health services.

Many of these programs are specifically designed for youth involved in or at high risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system. The primary goal of these programs is to reduce overrepresentation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system and to provide the conditions so youth can make responsible choices.

As an example, starting in the fall of 2011, King County began funding a set of programs in response to gang activity in south King County. Besides focusing on law enforcement and intervention (helping youth immediately at risk

of gang involvement), the funding aimed at prevention – “up-stream” investments to reduce the risk of gang involvement.

The South King County Gang Intervention Program provides education, employment and violence prevention and intervention services to youth with moderate-to-high risk assessment scores and/or gang involvement in order.

The Avanza program, located at New Start High School in Burien, is an early intervention program to address the high rate of Latino/Latina youth dropping out of school and prevent gang involvement.

Data show that the Gang Intervention Program has served 147 youth in south King County since the program began. Of those youth, 82 percent are youth of color, and 78 percent are young men.

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**“I first heard about the program from a judge. They told me that this would help me get occupied for the summer while I earn some money... I would like to share to others that coming to this program helps you learn more about our world... that was cool.”**

*—Rene, 15-year old student*

**“This program has been like family to me. I’m not sure what I would be doing if it weren’t for this (summer job). I have learned so much and overcame so much to be here.”**

*—TJ, 16-year old student*

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At enrollment, 97 percent were educationally at-risk and 96 percent were unemployed. For the youth completing the program, 84 percent increased their employability by completing a work experience, completing job readiness training and/or completing their high school credential. Of the youth currently active in the program, 94 percent are in school or have employment. ■

**Our Stories:**

## Opening new roads for youth

**Determinants of equity:** Healthy built and natural environments, access to safe and efficient transportation, access to parks and natural resources, strong vibrant neighborhoods.

**Who:** King County Department of Transportation and Cascade Bicycle Club.

**What:** The County's Equity and Social Justice vision compelled the Cascade Bicycle Club to redirect its efforts. Cascade now runs the Major Taylor Project, which introduces youth in underserved communities to cycling and to all the freedom, social awareness, and exploration that comes with it.

The Major Taylor Project, named for the African-American cycling champion of the late 19th century, promotes cycling among young people in King County's neighborhoods with greatest needs. The program is credited for increasing on-the-ground access to transportation and physical activity for youth. But development of the program also shaped the outreach policies of an entire organization.

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**“Metro has been proud to partner with Cascade Bicycle Club in launching the Major Taylor Program, providing an opportunity for young people in diverse communities to learn the basics of bicycling, including how to use bikes and transit to get around King County. One of the primary goals is for Major Taylor graduates to take their experience back to their families and others in the community to increase the program's impact even further.”**

*—Eileen Kadesh, King County Metro*

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Cascade Bicycle Club was already “rolling” along when former King County Executive Ron Sims approached its director. Cascade has thousands of members, various bike classes and events, and robust advocacy for better bike access in the county.

Continued

*Ed Ewing, Cascade Bicycle Club, Director of the Major Taylor Project*



## 2012 COUNTY ACTIVITIES

However, Ron Sims wondered, as a person of color, “Why am I the only guy who looks like me on a bike?” He posed the question to the Cascade Bicycle Club, suggesting that they start bike clubs in new areas of King County.

These conversations prompted Cascade to look at the demographics of its membership. Its members were primarily upper-middle-class, older, white males living north of the Lake Washington Ship Canal. Cascade leaders thought, “We can reach further.” Cascade refocused its outreach policies to concentrate on youth in other, more diverse neighborhoods. From there began the Major Taylor Project.

To advance Equity and Social Justice and increase access to transportation, the King County Department of Transportation (DOT), with the support of Director Harold S. Taniguchi, provided the seed money for the project. Eileen Kadesh and Cheryl Binetti from King County DOT offered technical assistance during the process.

The director of the Major Taylor Project, Ed Ewing, said, “This program would not be nearly as successful without the support of the County.”

The first two youth bike clubs began at the Yes Foundation in White Center and Global

Connections in SeaTac. Instructors, often former pro cyclists, lead curriculum in hard skills such as bike safety and mechanics but also in social awareness skills. Students started asking, “Why does Ballard have so many more bike lanes than White Center?” Students have come up with and implemented ideas such as doing a bike-a-thon to raise funds so more of their peers can own bikes. Local teachers even see a difference in their students after they join, noticing they become more alert and aware in class.

Diversifying the cycling community by focusing on underrepresented demographics and geographic areas is now described in Cascade’s strategic plan. The County’s DOT and Cascade’s attention to equitable policies and practices gives more than 500 youth in our county a chance to ride a bike, be part of a community, and explore their neighborhoods with a new perspective. ■



## Promoting fairness and opportunity in county government practices

King County aims to foster an organizational culture among employees that promotes opportunity and provides fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents and other people who do business with the County. Critical to integrating ESJ into the fabric of King County's work is raising awareness among employees about equity and social justice and how their work relates to it.

### Countywide actions

In November 2012, the King County Equity and Social Justice Inter-Branch Team organized a Leadership Forum in Benaroya Hall with Maya Wiley from the Center for Social Inclusion. The forum, attended by hundreds of county employees, centered on racial equity and what agencies can do to advance their work.

➔ **Executive Services** and its Office of Alternate Dispute Resolution developed and provided a full-day training for 16 mediators to incorporate social justice principles in mediation practices. In addition, they provided training for Human Resources staff in all departments on micro-aggressions in the workplace. Micro-aggressions training was also provided to all Parks Divisions staff, King County Sheriff's Office supervisors and Public Health's Environmental Health Services staff.

➔ In 2012, **Public Health** Human Resources provided "Countering Bias" training to hiring panels and supervisor and manager groups. Public Health collaborated with **Executive Services** to produce a 12-minute online video presentation. It is being shown throughout the County.

➔ Many agencies, departments and divisions continued to offer Basic ESJ Training to all of their employees.

### Agency-specific actions

➔ The **King County Council**, the **Department of Judicial Administration**, **King County Information Technology, Elections**, the Parks Division of **Natural Resources and Parks**, and the **Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget (PSB)** now have staff ESJ teams.

➔ The **Department of Judicial Administration** has started an Attendance Policy Six-Month Pilot Project. Hourly employees are allowed a 30-minute grace period from the start of their regular shift time. If the employee arrives within the grace period, he or she now can make up the missed time on the same day without it becoming a performance issue. The department approved the enhanced grace period specifically to accommodate people caring for children or aging parents, traveling great distances to work, and dependent on public transportation.

Other important agency activities in 2012 include:

➔ In **Natural Resources and Parks** and the **Executive's Office** established a Parks Levy Task Force with diverse ethnic and geographic representation. The final levy focused on historically disadvantaged communities in south county.

➔ The **Department of Transportation** Fleet Administration's Personal Property Section coordinated the distribution to nonprofit organizations of 1,644 pieces of surplus property valued at \$546,036 to about 400 additional nonprofits that may be eligible to take part in the program.

➔ To assure information access to all employees, the Facilities Management Division in Executive Services translated Employee Health and Wellness materials as well as Chinook Gym information. The Division also provided increased computer access for employees without computers by making computers available in the basement of the King County Courthouse and other locations. ■■■

**Our Stories:**

## Removing barriers to diversify the workforce

**Determinants of equity:** Family wage jobs and job training, equity in county practices, community and public safety.

**Who:** Public Health – Seattle & King County’s Emergency Medical Services.

**What:** King County’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) adjusted its recruitment and training strategies to develop an emergency medical technician (EMT) workforce that better reflects our county’s diverse population.

Jim Duren of King County EMS has worked in emergency medical services for 30 years. He knows firsthand the importance of providing the best service to connect on a human level with people in crisis. Such a connection builds trust and cooperation, and it helps make meeting their medical needs easier and more efficient.

Over the years, Jim noticed that EMS personnel were not matching the cultural diversity of the community. He was not alone in this observation; it turns out the entire local industry, including all the fire chiefs of King County, saw a need to diversify their workforce.

Twice a year, King County EMS conducts an intensive three-month 150-hour EMT certification course with about 30 students from response agencies in the county. Last year, for the first time, EMS sponsored five scholarship slots for students from a diversity of backgrounds; “diversity” was

not explicitly defined. The recruitment process was simple: Tina Abbott from Human Resources sent a one-page flier advertising the scholarships to a broad and varied list. The team expected a handful of applications; it received more than 300. The stories of why the applicants wanted to be an EMT were powerful:

**“The community of Seattle and King County has given me a welcome that I never thought imaginable. For this, I am forever grateful and owe my service to the community.”**

**“I know there are many people that need not only physical assistance but also emotional support, and the skills that I acquire in this program can give me the opportunity to be the uplifting presence in the time of need.”**

**“I will combine my new skills as an EMT with my passion in human health. I will work for a diverse population and to serve all future patients in our community with high level of quality.”**

The EMS team selected five scholarship recipients: a young Filipina woman from the Highline neighborhood, a Nepalese refugee, a Nigerian woman, a Latina mother working two jobs, and a young man living in his car. Each brought a unique perspective to the group.

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**The team expected a handful of applications, it received more than 300.**

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The EMS team worked to remove three specific barriers that prevented a wider variety of students from attending: knowing about the course, financial burden, and feeling out of place. EMS quickly remedied limited awareness of the course and financial burden with a flier and a handful of scholarships. One barrier for scholarship students was potentially feeling out of place because they had not been paid or volunteer firefighters.

Continued

## 2012 COUNTY ACTIVITIES

Typically, most EMT trainees come from a local fire department where they already know each other and wear the same uniform. Again, though, the remedy was relatively simple: T-shirts. The five selected scholarship students entered the class of 30 students wearing their own uniform, a unique T-shirt. They were able to find each other, establish a small social group, and feel connected to something bigger.

At each detailed step along the way, many county departments stepped up ready, willing and able to ensure the success of the program. When one student had barriers to getting necessary vaccines, the Public Health vaccination program offered to help. When transportation presented a potential barrier, King County Metro Transit assisted. In short, every King County department that was asked to help to remove a barrier readily did so.

### Results

Three of the five students passed the class and their national Registry exam. The other two were not able to finish the training but are hoping to come back next round.

The exam is not the last step, however. Jim Duren, manager of the program, is working with each of the scholarship recipients to connect them to jobs. Then he will feel that the barriers of recruitment, financial means, sense of belonging, and finally job opportunity have been removed.

An unexpected benefit rose out of the scholarship program. When Training Instructor Mike Helbeck asked for feedback at the end of the course, a woman raised her hand and said, “What I really liked about the class were the students from King County.” More chimed in, saying they appreciated the new perspectives



*Training instructor, Mike Helbeck*

these students brought. The future EMTs said they are going to carry these perspectives with them in their future work.

King County EMS and its partners across the county recognized and removed barriers to attract King County residents with a diversity of backgrounds. These residents gave back with an eagerness to learn and a new perspective that enriched the whole class of future EMTs. EMS is now accepting applications for a new round of this scholarship program.

“There is a great deal of talent in our community,” said Jim Fogarty, EMS division director “We must take this opportunity to include the best and brightest within our public safety response system.”



*King County scholarship students*

**Our Stories:**

## Helping smaller firms compete for county contracts

**Determinants of equity:** Equity in county practices, economic development, family wage jobs, and job training.

**Who:** King County Department of Executive Services, Finance and Business Operations Division.

**What:** The Small Business Accelerator offers opportunities for certified small contractors and suppliers (SCS) to compete among businesses of like size for county contracts.

A few years ago, small-business owners approached County Councilmembers and the County Executive with two requests: streamline and simplify the county procurement process and find legal ways to direct procurement dollars to smaller firms. As part of the County's Procurement Reform efforts to make the system more equitable and efficient, King County Executive Services examined the best ways to propel small businesses forward.

In response, King County Executive Dow Constantine and the County Council approved a small-business set-aside program, aptly named the **Small Business Accelerator**. Now, firms like O'Brien & Co. are serving King County's prime contracting needs.

**Small Business Accelerator benefits:**

The Small Business Accelerator increases the competitiveness of smaller companies to seek certain types of contracts. These small-business opportunities create jobs and stimulate growth in the local economy.



➔ **More contracts to small businesses.** Since April 2012, King County has awarded **six** technical consulting contracts using the Small Business Accelerator. **Half are women-owned.**

➔ **Increased competition.** There is now an average of **five** proposals for these contracts.

The Small Business Accelerator is the latest innovation in the County's Procurement Reform efforts that Executive Constantine spearheaded. Other ESJ results include:

➔ The use of Job Order Contracting for construction has **more than doubled the dollars paid to Minority/Women Business Enterprises.**

➔ From 2009-2011, there has been a **70 percent** increase in total number of SCS-certified firms

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**“The County’s procurement office encouraged my agency to use the Small Business Accelerator, but I was worried the contract’s complexity alone would be an obstacle to finding small-business respondents. The procurement office helped overcome our concerns. We received almost a dozen responses! We were able to select two firms and completed our contracts within deadline. Thank you for your encouragement and support in our use of the SBA.”**

*–Gwen Clemens, Office of Strategy and Budget (now with Department of Public Defense)*

**“Thank you for offering this work through the Small Business Accelerator Program. The opportunity is significant to our business development.”**

*–Elizabeth A.D. Powers, O'Brien & Co.*

## Advancing equity through community engagement, partnerships and communications

To effectively enhance equity and work with residents, King County must establish partnerships and gain active support both for its program and ESJ goals. This objective requires county programs to effectively listen to the members of the community and engage them.

### Countywide actions

In 2012, King County's ESJ Inter-Branch Team led and collaborated with other organizations and jurisdictions to hold many events and conferences, such as the Governing for Racial Equity Conference.

The Inter-Branch Team also led production of the County's first *King County Equity & Social Justice Annual Report* and then produced a video in conjunction with KCTV to highlight this work.

Inter-Branch Team members staff gave presentations on ESJ in many local and national venues and provided technical support to and shared experiences with partners and other jurisdictions. Those connections included Montgomery County in Maryland, the City of San Francisco, the Washington State Department of Health, and Multnomah County in Oregon. King County ESJ's work was also featured in publications by PolicyLink, the American Public Health Association, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and others.

### Agency-specific actions

King County has a Community Engagement Guide and a Translation Policy to promote consistent and effective outreach and communication with the community.

County agencies have done important work to more effectively reach and interact with local communities and clients. For example:

- To meet the needs of clients with limited English proficiency, **King County Superior Court** installed multiple-language way-finding signs at Juvenile Court and the Maleng Regional Justice Center. The Court also evaluated interpreter needs at Juvenile Court to ensure appropriate access, streamlined the interpreter assignment process for adult offender matters, developed a protocol for translating into Spanish reports for Dependency Court Appointed Special Advocates, and developed plain-language versions of selected Family Law Facilitator instruction packets.
- The Solid Waste Division of **Natural Resources and Parks** conducted recycling outreach to communities with higher concentrations of residents for whom English is a second language. For example, the division has adjusted its Spanish language recycling outreach strategy and included radio advertising and other strategies. See "Recicla mas es facilisimo" at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/reciclamas/index.asp>.
- The **King County Council** has created a new opportunity for the public to speak at Council meetings each month. In addition, some common Council brochures available at the front desk were translated into four non-English languages commonly spoken in King County.
- The **Department of Transportation** translated a total of 13 publications into 13 non-English languages to provide project or service information to more people. The department also maintains dedicated language phone lines (Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali and Russian) for questions and comments about ongoing projects.
- The **Office of Economic and Financial Analysis** produced a plain-language summary of its final economic and revenue forecast.

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➔ As part of health-care reform, **Public Health** along with **Community and Human Services** provided formal written comments to the Washington State Health Care Authority recommending standards that ensure screening, assessments and proven treatment protocols are culturally adapted to serve diverse populations.

### Several county agencies have expanded partnerships with the community:

➔ In **Superior Court**, the Courts and Community Committee sponsored multiple events during the year to recruit court-appointed special advocates of color. This was a collaborative effort with Dependency CASA (Superior Court and Family Law CASA (a nonprofit) to increase the number of CASA volunteers of color in both programs. In juvenile dependency cases, about 24 percent of affected youth are African American, but only 9 percent of CASA volunteers are African American. There are similar disparities in cases involving Latino and Asian youth. To recruit volunteers of color, the group visited churches serving mostly communities of color, minority bar associations, and other groups. The number of volunteers of color was up fairly significantly by the end of the year, and the work continues.

➔ **Public Health** collaborated with the *Seattle Chinese Times* to produce a quarterly health column in Chinese. The department also worked with Washington State Department of Health, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and New America Media on an ethnic media briefing on pertussis, since communities of color were disproportionately affected by a pertussis outbreak.

➔ To reduce “failure to appear” warrants and ultimately detention for youth of color, **Superior Court**, in conjunction with **PSB**, is leading an effort to use a community organization to work with court-involved youth.

King County Elections made significant strides in expanding partnerships and strengthening civic engagement:

➔ **Elections** partnered with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and King County community organizations to ensure that voter registration forms were available in different languages at all naturalization ceremonies for new citizens with limited English proficiency.

➔ **Elections** also collaborated with the Youth Source Division of **Community and Human Services** to offer an internship opportunity for a youth to gain both civic education and on-the-job skills.

➔ **Elections** conducted a pilot program with the Community Corrections Division of **Adult and Juvenile Detention** to provide clients with voter education information and opportunities to register to vote.

**Elections** staff attended more than 40 voter outreach events and provided education about the voting process. Elections staff registered eligible citizens to vote in conjunction with more with 530 nonprofit organizations, service providers, community advocates and groups. Elections also supported Chinese and Vietnamese voters with language assistance, videos and other educational materials in compliance with Federal Voting Rights Act requirements. This work resulted in increased registration and participation among Chinese voters (6 percent) and Vietnamese voters (7 percent). ■■■

**Our Stories:**

## Educating about chemical safety through mini-telenovelas

**Determinants of equity:** Access to health and human services, healthy built and natural environments.

**Who:** The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program is a partnership of local governments including King County, Seattle and other cities in the county. They work together to manage hazardous waste and protect health and the environment.

**What:** Working closely with community members and partner organizations, the local program developed a series of telenovela-style public service announcements (PSAs) to better reach the county's Spanish speakers. The PSAs tell stories to educate residents about hazardous materials and health.

"Many parents do not realize some common products may be toxic, and others are safer to use," said Mary Rouborn, project manager for the program in the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. "I have heard many stories from parents about mixing cleaners and accidentally making toxic gasses, as well as close calls their children have had after drinking or eating a toxic product."

Program staff conducted interviews with bilingual outreach professionals and residents in King County. They found a gap in awareness and knowledge about how to keep children safe from dangerous chemicals and

how to access waste-management information. Most product labels are not easy to read, particularly for non-English speakers. Health and safety information for workers can vary in quality, and it's rarely translated. In many cases, the burden is on consumers to know what is in their products and how to use them. To help King County's Spanish-speaking residents protect themselves and their children, the program worked with community members and nonprofit groups to design telenovela-style public service announcements that show safe product use.

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**In 2010, the most common reason among non-English speakers to call the Washington Poison Center was accidental exposure to cleaning products for children under 5 years of age.**

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One of the ads—featured in video, radio and print—shows how easily "Maria" gets sick from mixing cleaning chemicals. Her friend "Laura" explains how to stay safe. The piece also features local people talking about their experiences with household chemicals.

"This is safety information that many people have not heard before," said Paulina Lopez, community activist and project assistant. "I know many women who are professional cleaners who are happy to hear there are safer products and ways to clean."

The program's collaboration with non-English speaking communities has shaped more effective and entertaining educational outreach. ■



*The Spanish public service announcement*

**Our Stories:**

**Engaging with the Somali community**

**Determinants of equity:** Community and public safety, access to health and human services.

**Who:** Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget; Public Health – Seattle & King County.

**What:** King County programs are collaborating with Somali residents to improve both health and criminal justice outcomes for Somali residents.

King County is now home to the third-largest Somali population in the United States, with an estimated population of 30,000 that continues to grow. Like much of King County’s immigrant and refugee population, Somali residents face unique challenges in navigating the vastly different health and criminal justice systems in the United States. Public Health – Seattle & King County and the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget are collaborating with Somali communities to improve health and criminal justice outcomes.

The following examples of King County Somali outreach incorporate the voice of Somali residents into county practices. They, in turn, improve chances for our county’s Somali communities to thrive.

**Somali Health Board**

In 2006, King County faced a large winter power outage. More than 200 people were hospitalized in King County, and eight people died. Immigrants and ethnic minorities were most at risk. They had no options for keeping warm and did not know the dangers of using charcoal grills indoors for heating and cooking.

Right before a large 2011 storm, Robin Pfohman at Public Health reached out to Mohamed Ali. Ali, a refugee of Somalia with a master’s degree in public health, knew the Somali population would be at risk again and needed options. Ali got to work quickly and convened leaders from a local Somali mosque. They set up a rapid communication strategy with an automated phone call to thousands of Somali residents in King County. They also ranked the transportation needs of affected community members and sheltering for families with nowhere else to stay.

Not one person died because of carbon monoxide poisoning during that storm, and hospital admissions dropped 90 percent from the 2006 outage. The 2011 storm drew out strengths in the partnership between Somali communities and Public Health and strengthened people in the Somali communities. The fact that the Somali communities had the systems and social networks in place to “activate” during a crisis showed significant community resilience.

Public Health had developed a relationship with Somali community members a couple of years earlier during the outbreak of the H1N1 flu virus. Public Health learned then of multiple barriers to Somali residents being vaccinated. Those barriers included distrust of vaccines and their purpose and issues with acceptability (or Halal) of the vaccine under Islamic law.

Because of Public Health’s learnings from H1N1, Robin Pfohman and Mohamed Ali, in partnership with the Somali Community Services Coalition, interviewed 17 Somali community leaders and ran a focus group. They wanted to learn how to strengthen message development and dissemination mechanisms to Somalis in King County. To maintain a communications mechanism and reinforce relationships built during the interviews and engagement, one suggestion was that Public Health meet quarterly with Somali

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leaders. As a result, Mohamed Ali and Public Health established the Somali Health Board in July 2012.

The **Somali Health Board** meets quarterly for a two-way exchange of stories and information focusing on a community-identified issue. The board is run by Somali community members with staff support from Public Health. It is composed of Somali health professionals, Public Health staff, community leaders and social service providers. It also has representatives from health systems including Harborview Medical Center, University of Washington Medical Center, Swedish Hospital and International Community Health Services.

This collaboration among Public Health, health-care providers and the Somali community not only reinforces mechanisms in place for the next disaster. It also deals with current health issues faced by the Somali community.

### Somali Juvenile Justice Program

In 2010, the King County Prosecutor’s Office filed more than 3,000 cases in juvenile court. While youth of color make up about 37 percent of youth aged 10-17 in the general population, they represent 65 percent of the juvenile court filings.

The experience for Somali youth and families in the juvenile justice system can be particularly traumatic. A comparable juvenile justice system does not exist in Somalia, so families end up at a complete loss for how to navigate the local one. Marcus Stubblefield of the King County Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget sought to ease the process and in turn reduce the number of Somali youth involved in the criminal justice system.

Working with the Somali community, Stubblefield developed the **Juvenile Justice 101** (JJ 101) program.



*Mohamed Ali, Somali Community Services Coalition; and Robin Pfohman, Public Health*

JJ 101 uses a peer-support model to educate justice-involved families about the juvenile court process and community resources. Because of the need within Somali communities, in particular, Stubblefield took the JJ 101 workshops on the road to reach Somali residents in four different regions of the county: Greenwood (North), New Holly and Yesler (Central), Tukwila and Kent (South), and High Point and White Center (West).

In 2012, Stubblefield held five large workshops and 10 follow-up sessions for Somali families, reaching about 600 people. Somali parents, selected by the community, were hired to run workshops offering peer support and guidance. By engaging families early in the court process and building community support for court-involved Somali families, JJ 101 is expected to:

- **Improve attendance at scheduled hearings (reducing warrants and warrant-related detention)**
- **Improve compliance with court orders**
- **Increase engagement in treatment and intervention services**
- **Ultimately, reduce disproportionate youth of color contact and confinement.**

Somali community members and Stubblefield are now forming a Somali Juvenile Justice Board, similar to the Somali Health Board. Its goal is continuing the two-way exchange of information between the Somali community and the juvenile justice system.

## Equity and Social Justice cross-agency work for 2013

During the first years of King County Equity and Social Justice (ESJ), county departments and agencies have focused on commitments and strategies to improve community conditions and resident well-being. Much of the work has been by individual departments and agencies, but some activities have reached across agencies, such as with the budget and procurement.

In late 2012 and early 2013, the Inter-Branch Team for ESJ set cross-agency work goals involving all departments and agencies as the priority strategy for greater and more sustained impact.

Criteria for the choosing the areas of work included:

- ➔ Is there a SMART objective (Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)?
- ➔ Are there short-term and long-term changes that can be achieved?
- ➔ Does a King County agency or agencies have major and direct influence over the issue or determinant?
- ➔ Would this objective benefit from the collaboration and support of more county departments and agencies?
- ➔ Is there community support for the objective and activities, and could partners be engaged in the work?

Here are the five interagency work items that the ESJ Inter-Branch Team prioritized for county wide work in 2013:

### 1. Health-care reform and enrollment:

In 2014, an additional 180,000 uninsured King County residents will become eligible for free or subsidized health-care coverage as part of federal health reform. The Inter-Branch Team is harnessing the resources of all departments and agencies in reaching eligible residents in order to enroll them in health coverage. See the next section of this report for more information.

### 2. Boards and commissions:

King County has 49 boards and commission that are venues for engaging communities and recommending actions and policies. The County, supported by the ESJ Inter-Branch Team, is examining these boards and commissions and looking for ways to make them more representative of our communities and work more effectively as a form of community engagement.

### 3. King County Strategic Plan and Performance Management System:

As part of the County's effort to incorporate equity into its policies, budget and service delivery, the ESJ Inter-Branch Team is advising on how an ESJ focus can be built into all aspects of the County's management systems and plans. In addition, the team is ensuring that ESJ is integrated into community engagement efforts related to the update of the King County Strategic Plan.

### 4. Baseline measures of determinants:

To develop baseline measures and guide future planning on county strategies and priorities, the Inter-Branch Team is defining and assessing measures for access to the determinants of equity in the county by race, income, language and geography.

### 5. ESJ training and employee development:

King County strives to be a learning organization with its employees at the center of change and innovation. The ESJ Inter-Branch Team is supporting a robust set of ESJ trainings to give departments and agencies learning opportunities that develop their workforce. In addition, the team is sponsoring and organizing employee and community events that build awareness and advance equity. ■■■

## Health reform's coverage expansion and health enrollment

A central provision of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) is the requirement that most individuals in the United States have health coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2014. For many individuals, health coverage will be available through their employer. For others, private and public coverage options made possible by the ACA will be available.

Now, one in six adults age 18-64—or about 217,000 people—are uninsured.

➔ People who live in south King County cities are more likely to be uninsured. For example, adults in Des Moines are seven to eight times more likely to be uninsured than adults in Mercer Island or Sammamish.

➔ Latinos are nearly four times as likely and Black/African Americans more than twice as likely to be uninsured as whites.

➔ Just over 18.2 percent of adult males are uninsured, compared with 14.0 percent of adult females.

For many of these King County residents, the ACA offers great opportunity to gain access to affordable health coverage. Beginning Jan. 1, 2014, new coverage options will be available in Washington State through expansion of the Medicaid program and Washington Healthplanfinder, the state's Health Benefit Exchange.

With better access to coverage, people will be able to get the care they need before their conditions become more serious. Eligible individuals—many for the first

time—will get needed vaccinations, cancer screenings and mental health services. Through the program, they also will be able to manage chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Ultimately, this access will reduce costly visits to emergency departments and hospital stays. On a societal level, this access will lead to a healthier King County population and result in broader social and economic benefits. That will mean greater equity in health in our county and increased productivity in our workforce.

Enrollment in the expanded Medicaid program and Washington Healthplanfinder begins Oct. 1, 2013, for coverage that will go into effect Jan. 1, 2014. All told, at least 180,000 uninsured adults in King County stand to gain coverage through expansion of the Medicaid program and launch of Washington Healthplanfinder.

King County has initiated a countywide effort to make the most of federal health-care reform and enroll uninsured King County residents into affordable health coverage. To maximize enrollment, King County Executive Dow Constantine has created a Leadership Circle of representatives from sectors throughout the county including business, labor, education, healthcare, faith-based and community organizations, among others. These representatives will lead outreach in their sectors, advise on the enrollment initiative, and help shape outreach strategies.

As part of the County's Equity and Social Justice efforts, all county departments and agencies are playing a role in the enrollment. They are using county locations, communications and general points of contact with the public as opportunities to connect residents with health enrollment information and resources.

Even after these great coverage opportunities become available in January 2014, some people will remain uninsured. For example, the undocumented immigrant population will not be eligible for Medicaid coverage

Continued

## LOOKING AHEAD: 2013 ACTIVITIES

nor coverage through Washington Healthplanfinder. Moreover, some individuals will simply choose not to enroll, paying the penalty for not having coverage instead. Other individuals are exempt from the ACA requirement to have coverage, such as people for whom health insurance is considered unaffordable. Although these individuals could enroll, they may choose not to be insured.

King County's Public Health Centers and community health centers will continue to provide services to all residents regardless of their insurance status, with reduced fees adjusted by family size and income.

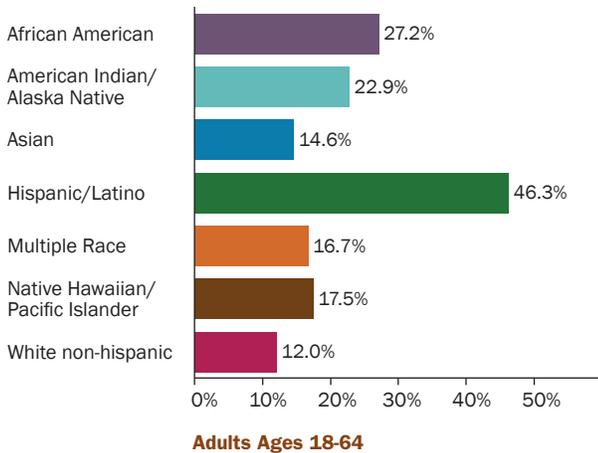
To leverage the opportunities under federal health reform and improve outcomes for King County residents, in early 2013 King County prepared a proposed "Health and Human Services Transformation Plan." The plan is grounded in the value that all King County residents should have the opportunity to thrive

and enjoy long lives regardless of where they live, their income, education, race, or ethnic background. The plan was prepared in response to County Council Motion 13768, which requested a plan for an accountable, integrated system of health, human services, and community-based prevention.

The Transformation Plan establishes a goal that, by 2020, the people of King County will experience significant gains in health and well-being because our community worked collectively to make the shift from a costly, crisis-oriented response to health and social problems, to one that focuses on prevention, embraces recovery, and eliminates disparities. With our community partners, the County is working on initial strategies and next steps to begin implementation of the Transformation Plan. ■

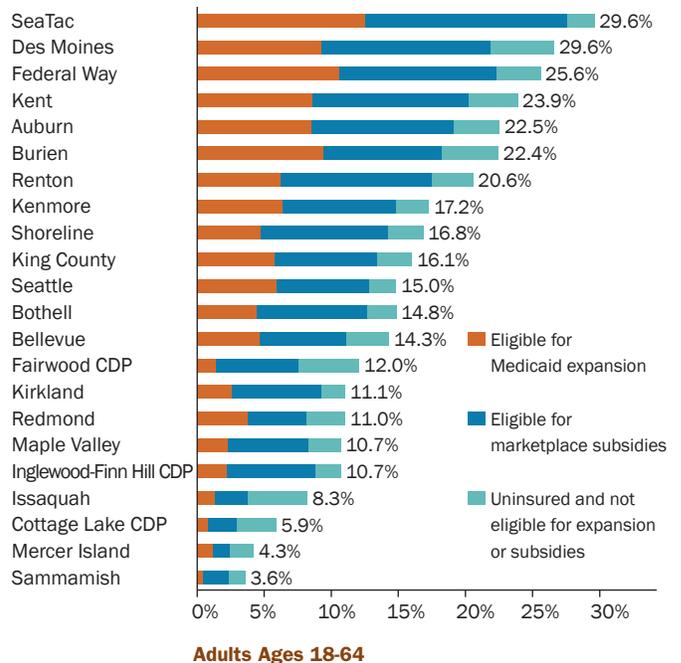
### Adults without health insurance:

#### Wide differences in coverage by race



Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

#### Wide differences in the uninsured by city



Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2011 Combined. CDP=census-designated place. Data available at this time only for areas with a population of at least 20,000. Does not exclude undocumented or those not meeting residency requirements.

## **King County Equity & Social Justice** **[www.kingcounty.gov/equity](http://www.kingcounty.gov/equity)**

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## **Alternative Formats Available**





**King County**



- Affordable, safe, quality housing
- Access to parks and natural resources
- Equity in County practices
- Access to affordable, healthy, local food
- Equitable law and justice system
- Community and public safety
- Access to safe and efficient transportation
- Quality education
- Access to health and human services
- Healthy built and natural environments
- Family wage jobs and job training
- Early childhood development
- Economic development
- Strong, vibrant neighborhoods