

# VETERANS, SENIORS AND HUMAN SERVICES LEVY GOVERNANCE PLAN



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**Department of Community and Human Services**

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## Overview

King County Ordinance 18555 requires the Executive to develop and transmit a Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) Governance Plan. This plan envisions one advisory board to oversee the VSHSL.

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## 1. Executive Summary

Enacted on July 21, 2017, Ordinance 18555 presents King County voters with a ballot measure for the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (“VSHSL”). Ordinance 18555 requires the Executive to transmit a proposed plan for VSHSL governance.

In addition to requiring the transmittal of the VSHSL Governance Plan, Ordinance 18555 lists the following requirements of the VSHSL Governance Plan:

- The creation of the board or boards shall be contingent upon voter approval of the VSHSL.
- The board or boards shall be charged to oversee the distribution of VSHSL proceeds.
- The board or boards shall report annually to the Executive and Council on the fiscal and performance management of the VSHSL.
- The plan may describe additional matters on which the board or boards are empowered to provide advice to the Executive and Council.

This plan proposes the creation of one advisory board, the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy Advisory Board (VSHSL Advisory Board) to fulfill the requirements of Ordinance 18555.

## 2. Requirement for a VSHSL Governance Plan

In July 2017, Ordinance 18555 placed a six-year Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (“VSHSL”) on the ballot for voter consideration in November 2017. If approved by voters, proceeds from the VSHSL would be used to plan, provide, administer and evaluate a wide range of regional health and human services and capital facilities for veterans and military servicemembers and their respective families, seniors and their caregivers, and vulnerable populations.

Section 6.A. of Ordinance 18555 requires the Executive to develop and transmit for Council review and adoption by ordinance a governance plan for the VSHSL. The VSHSL Governance Plan must provide for the creation, composition and duties of a board or boards to provide oversight of the expenditure of VSHSL proceeds.

Section 6.B. of Ordinance 18555 mandates that the duties of the board or boards proposed in the governance plan include overseeing the distribution of VSHSL proceeds consistent with sections 4.A. and B. of Ordinance 18555 and reporting annually to the Executive and Council on the fiscal and performance management of the VSHSL. Section 6.B. additionally invites the Executive to propose additional matters on which the board or boards may be empowered to advise the County.

## 3. Background

This plan proposes the creation of one advisory board to oversee the distribution of VSHSL proceeds for all three of the levy’s priority populations as well as the distribution of technical assistance and capacity building funds. This plan departs from the Veterans and Human Services Levy’s structure of separate boards to oversee spending on each of the levy’s priority populations. Instead, this plan’s proposed single board employs a committee structure to provide coordinated oversight of levy proceeds that affect all populations while still allowing for

groups of county residents with specialized experience and expertise to exercise focused oversight of the levy's investments in each of its three priority populations. The following subsections provide background information about the two existing Veterans and Human Services Levy boards and the state-mandated veterans' advisory board.

### **A. Creation of the VHSL's Existing Boards**

In 2005, Ordinance 15279 placed the 2006-2011 Veterans and Human Services Levy (VHSL) on the ballot and provided for two citizen oversight boards to oversee and report on expenditures of levy proceeds. Voters approved the VHSL, enabling the creation of the Veterans Citizen Oversight Board ("VCOB") and the Regional Human Services Board ("RHSB"):

**VCOB:** The Veterans Citizen Oversight Board was created to oversee levy funds for veterans and military servicemembers and their respective families. The VCOB has 12 members:

- Nine members nominated by Councilmembers
- Three Executive appointees drawn from the membership of the Veterans Advisory Board
- Members must be "residents of King County with a diverse, balanced representation of private and public sectors, veterans, community leaders, jurisdictions and human service representatives."

**RHSB:** The Regional Human Services Board was created to oversee funds that serve a "wide range of low-income people in need of such services." The RHSB has 12 members:

- Nine members nominated by Councilmembers
- Three Executive appointees who are "poor or represent an organization that is composed of the poor, such as Welfare Rights, Retired Senior Citizens, Seattle Young People Project and others. These at-large members shall also be from three geographic areas of King County representing: south King County; east King County; and Seattle and north King County."
- Members must be "residents of King County with a diverse, balanced representation of private and public sectors, veterans, community leaders, jurisdictions and human service representatives."

In 2011, Ordinance 17072 placed a renewal of the VHSL on the primary election ballot. Ordinance 17072 contained a provision providing for continuation of the VCOB and RHSB by incorporating the provision of Ordinance 15279 that created them. Voters renewed the VHSL, effecting continuation of both boards until the expiration of the VHSL.

### **B. King County Veterans Program Advisory Board (KCVP VAB)**

In addition to the VHSL's VCOB, which was required by Ordinance 17072, RCW 73.08.035 requires counties in Washington to maintain a veterans' advisory board to oversee each county's state-mandated veterans assistance program.<sup>1</sup> King County's existing veterans

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<sup>1</sup> Dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Washington has required in various forms that counties maintain a program to assist indigent veterans. RCW 73.08 is the current embodiment of this requirement. RCW 73.08.010 requires each

assistance program is the King County Veterans Program (“KCVP”). Currently, King County’s Veterans Advisory Board (“VAB”) exists to fulfill the duties of the state-mandated veterans’ advisory board; however, it was not constituted in accordance with state law.

King County’s VAB was created in its current form in 1991 by CPM 11-1 (PR); this was prior to the adoption of RCW 73.08.035, which requires the county legislative authority to establish a veterans’ advisory board to oversee counties’ veterans assistance programs.<sup>2</sup> Under CPM 11-1 (PR), the duties of the current VAB include reviewing the activities and plans of the KCVP, acting in an advisory capacity on behalf of veterans organizations in King County, advising the county government on matters concerning veterans in King County, and hearing and ruling upon KCVP grievances brought before the VAB. The membership of the current VAB is drawn from representatives elected by various veterans’ service organizations throughout King County. Since at least 1991, VAB membership has not been subject to Executive or Council nomination or confirmation; rather veterans assemble at an annual meeting to elect members to any open positions.

As described in CPM 11-1 (PR), the VAB has 17 member positions. Under CPM 11-1 (PR), the board’s composition is selected pursuant to a process run at the annual meeting of representatives from various congressionally chartered veterans’ service organizations throughout the county.

The VHSL’s VCOB had three Executive-appointed positions. Those Executive-appointed positions were required to be members of the VAB.

## 4. Governance Planning Process

The King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) has historically staffed the VHSL’s two boards, the VCOB and the RHSB. DCHS also staffs the VAB. DCHS staff facilitated conversations and input sessions with both VHSL boards and the VAB to discuss what an oversight structure might look like for the VSHSL.

### A. VHSL Boards’ Input into VSHSL Governance

The topic of possible VSHSL board structure was discussed at two separate joint meetings of the VCOB and RHSB. Neither board voted to make a formal recommendation about possible VSHSL board structure. Key input from both VHSL boards included:

- **Boards should remain close to their current size.** Both boards recognized the value of including diverse perspectives. Both boards also recognized the risk of losing board cohesion if board membership were to grow too large. Members of both boards ultimately concluded that any boards that might oversee the VSHSL should remain close in size to the current 12-member board structures while also

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county to have a “veterans’ assistance program to address the needs of local indigent veterans and their families.” RCW 73.08.035 goes on to additionally require each county’s legislative authority to establish “a veterans’ advisory board.”

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to RCW 73.08.035(1), the board is to advise the council on the needs of local indigent veterans, the resources available to local indigent veterans, and programs that could benefit the needs of local indigent veterans and their families. Because no ordinance has yet been adopted to replace CPM 11-1 (PR), this plan proposes and provides for the establishment by ordinance of a new veterans advisory board to comply with this statutory requirement.

recognizing that modest growth could be appropriate to increase membership diversity.

- **Boards should retain their focus on resident oversight.** Elected or appointed government officials are not eligible for membership on the VCOB or RHSB. Members of both boards valued the ability to gather as a group of King County residents who would otherwise not typically have oversight over a county-administered resource like the VHSL. Both boards felt that resident oversight is an important component of community partnership in administering the VHSL and should be carried forward into an oversight structure for the VSHSL.
- **Boards should have a general advisory capacity on matters affecting the populations that the levy serves.** Members of both boards welcome the opportunity to provide advice on matters that affect veterans and vulnerable populations in King County. Both boards also emphasized the importance of maintaining an advisory scope broader than just the levy—while maintaining a focused oversight scope specific to the levy—to promote awareness of and coordination with the larger community, set of issues, and service system in which the levy exists.
- **Both boards expressed interest in promoting racial, ethnic, age, gender, orientation, identity, geographic, economic and experiential diversity in the composition of their boards.** Members of both boards recognized the importance of maintaining boards that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. Both boards discussed the merits of various mechanisms by which characteristics a board’s mandatory structure might encourage or stifle diversity.

#### **B. Veterans Advisory Boards’ Input into VSHSL Governance**

Additionally, DCHS staff facilitated conversations between both county veterans boards, the VCOB and VAB. Discussion focused on whether DCHS staff should consider integration of the VCOB and VAB and, if so, what characteristics an integrated board structure should include. In July and August 2017, members of the VCOB and VAB held three workgroups to specifically discuss the possibility of integrated board structures. Neither board formed a quorum at these discussions, and neither board acted to officially take a position based on these discussions. Members in attendance at the workgroup did agree on the integrated board structure. Board members who participated in these discussions included the Chair of the VAB, the Vice Chair of the VCOB, two of the dually-seated members who sit on both the VAB and the VCOB, as well as one additional member of each board. During these conversations, members identified key characteristics of a possibly integrated veterans board:

- **An integrated veterans board should have a blend of Council-nominated, Executive-nominated, and elected members.** Members of the VAB emphasized that they value the independence enabled by the VAB’s practice of electing members who are directly accountable to the veterans community. Members of the VCOB emphasized that they value their roles as Councilmember and Executive appointees and felt that these nominations and appointments ensured geographic representativeness as well as connection to both the Council and Executive.

- **An integrated board should have an advisory function for King County on all matters affecting veterans.** Members agreed that bringing together the two separate veterans boards offers an opportunity to strengthen the voice of veterans in advising the County on matters affecting veterans and servicemembers and their respective families. Board members emphasized that the potential increase in veterans investments embodied by the proposed VSHSL would elevate the importance of having integrated and coordinated resident oversight of and advice on veterans resources in King County.

## 5. The Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy Governance Plan

The VSHSL Governance Plan envisions the creation of one advisory board to oversee the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy. This board would be called the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy Advisory Board (VSHSL Advisory Board), and would consist of three, ten-member committees: 1) the Veterans Committee; 2) the Seniors Committee; and 3) the Vulnerable Populations Committee. The proposed composition, eligibility criteria and board committees, selection processes, terms, and duties of the VSHSL Advisory Board are detailed in the sections below. Additionally, below are described the proposed relationship between the VSHSL Advisory Board and the Veterans Advisory Board and the proposed timeline for constituting the VSHSL Advisory Board moving forward.

### A. VSHSL Advisory Board Composition, Eligibility Criteria and Board Committees, Selection Process, and Terms

#### 1. Composition

The VSHSL Advisory Board will consist of 30 members. The board will be constituted in a committee format, with three, ten-member committees, each representing a VSHSL priority population identified in sections 4.B.1. through 4.B.3. of Ordinance 18555. These committees will be as follows: 1) a Veterans Committee, which will represent the VSHSL priority population of veterans, servicemembers and their respective families; 2) a Seniors Committee, which will represent the VSHSL priority population of seniors and their caregivers; and 3) a Vulnerable Populations Committee, which will represent the VSHSL priority population of vulnerable populations<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Ordinance 18555 defines “vulnerable populations” for the purposes of the VSHSL as persons or communities that are susceptible to reduced health, housing, financial, or social stability outcomes because of current experience of or historical exposure to trauma, violence, poverty, isolation, bias, racism, stigma, discrimination, disability or chronic illness. Examples of vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to survivors of domestic violence; survivors of sexual assault; survivors of human trafficking, including labor trafficking and sex trafficking; survivors of commercial sexual exploitation; persons who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex; persons with a disability; family caregivers for persons with a disability; African Americans and other persons of color who have been disproportionately impacted by policies and practices resulting in housing instability or housing insecurity; immigrants and refugees; low-income residents of rural communities; persons living in poverty; persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness; youth involved in the child welfare system, including youth in the foster care system, and young adult alumni of the child welfare system; minors who have been separated from both parents and other relatives

## 2. Eligibility Criteria and Board Committees

- a. A board member may be representative of several of the VSHSL priority populations. However, board eligibility and committee composition will be as follows:
  - i. **Veterans Committee:** The ten-member Veterans Committee will also constitute the entirety of the County's Veterans Advisory Board required by RCW chapter 73.08. Members serving on the Veterans Committee must be selected in accordance with requirements identified in RCW 73.08.035(2). Members of the Veterans Committee must be veterans as currently or hereinafter defined in accordance with RCW 73.08.005.
  - ii. **Seniors Committee:** At least a majority of the ten members serving on the Seniors Committee must be seniors, as defined in Ordinance 18555. The Seniors Committee will be comprised of seniors (as defined in Ordinance 18555), caregivers for seniors or other community members with relevant expertise or experience serving seniors or their caregivers.
  - iii. **Vulnerable Populations Committee:** The ten-member Vulnerable Populations Committee will be comprised of individuals who are members of a vulnerable population (as defined in Ordinance 18555) or other community members with relevant expertise or experience serving vulnerable populations. A potential board member's contribution to the Vulnerable Populations Committee's representativeness of a diverse set of vulnerable populations shall be considered in selecting a potential board member for nomination or appointment.
- b. Elected officials are ineligible for board membership while they hold office.
- c. All board members must reside in King County.

## 3. Selection Process

- a. Nomination of Eligible Persons
  - i. **King County Council Nominees:** The King County Council shall nominate to the executive for appointment to the VSHSL Advisory Board eighteen persons, six persons to serve on each of the three committees: the Veterans Committee, the Seniors Committee and the Vulnerable Populations Committee. Each councilmember shall nominate for appointment two persons who reside in their council district in order to ensure the VSHSL Advisory Board has broad geographic representation.
  - ii. **City of Seattle Nominees:** The City of Seattle shall nominate to the executive for appointment to the VSHSL Advisory Board three persons,

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and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so; persons reentering society from criminal justice system involvement; and persons at risk of criminal justice system involvement due to disproportionate practices of enforcement, mental illness or substance use disorders.



one to serve on each of the three committees: the Veteran's Committee, the Seniors Committee and the Vulnerable Populations Committee.

- iii. **Sound Cities Association Nominees:** The Sound Cities Association, or its successor, shall nominate to the executive for appointment to the VSHSL Advisory Board three persons, one to serve on each of the three committees: the Veteran's Committee, the Seniors Committee and the Vulnerable Populations Committee.
- iv. **Seattle-King County Advisory Council for Aging and Disability Services Nominees:** The Seattle-King County Advisory Council for Aging and Disability Services, or its successor, shall nominate to the executive for appointment to the VSHSL Advisory Board two persons who meet the eligibility criteria to serve on the Seniors Committee of the VSHSL Advisory Board.

b. Executive Appointments:

- i. If the executive does not appoint a person nominated by an entity listed in subsection 3.a. of this section, then the executive shall request that the entity nominate another person. In order to keep track of each nominee, it is expected that the executive shall identify in the appointment letter for each proposed board member both the nominating entity and to which of the three board committees the person is being appointed.
- ii. In addition to those appointees who are individuals that were nominated pursuant to subsection 3.a. of this section, the executive shall appoint the remaining four positions on the VSHSL Advisory Board. Those individuals must meet the eligibility criteria to serve on the committee to which they will be appointed.

**4. VSHSL Advisory Board Member Terms**

Seven of the members of each committee of the initial board shall serve an initial partial term of two years; and three of the members of each committee of the initial board shall serve a full term of three years. Board members may serve no more than one additional full three-year term after completing their first term, whether the first term is a partial or full term.

If a board position becomes vacant, then the entity that nominated the person to that position shall nominate a replacement to serve out the balance of the term of the vacated member.

**B. VSHSL Advisory Board Duties**

**1. VSHSL Proceeds Investment Oversight:**

Generally, the VSHSL Advisory Board will oversee the distribution of VSHSL levy proceeds dedicated to promoting housing stability, healthy living, financial stability, social engagement, and service system access and improvement for veterans and military servicemembers and their respective families, seniors and their caregivers, and vulnerable populations, which are controlled by sections

4.B.1. through 4.B.3. of Ordinance 18555. The VSHSL Advisory Board will also have oversight of technical assistance and capacity building investments under Section 4.A. of Ordinance 18555. Committees shall have the following responsibilities with regard to VSHSL proceeds investment oversight; however, in order to maximize the impact of VSHSL funds, all committees will collaborate on achieving increased investment and oversight coordination across the investment portfolio regardless of which priority population the investments are designed to benefit.

- a. **The Veterans Committee:** The Veterans Committee shall oversee the distribution of the portion of the VSHSL's proceeds controlled by Section 4.B.1. of Ordinance 18555.
- b. **The Seniors Committee:** The Seniors Committee shall oversee the distribution of the portion of the VSHSL's proceeds controlled by Section 4.B.2. of Ordinance 18555.
- c. **Joint oversight by the Veterans and Seniors Committees:** Until such time that the conditions in either of the subsections in Section 4.B.2. of Ordinance 18555 are satisfied, the Seniors Committee and Veterans Committee will jointly oversee the distribution of the portion of the VSHSL's proceeds restricted by subsections in Section 4.B.2. of Ordinance 18555, which sets aside funds for capital facilities and regional health and human services for seniors who are also veterans or military servicemembers and their respective caregivers and families. After the conditions in either of the subsections in Section 4.B.2. of Ordinance 18555 have been satisfied, the Veterans Committee will not have any oversight responsibility regarding funds expended under Section 4.B.2. of Ordinance 18555.
- d. **The Vulnerable Populations Committee:** The Vulnerable Populations Committee shall oversee the distribution of the portion of the VSHSL's proceeds controlled by Section 4.B.3. of Ordinance 18555.
- e. **All Committees:** Oversee the VSHSL's technical assistance and capacity building investments, as specified in Section 4.A. of Ordinance 18555.

**2. Other VSHSL Advisory Board Responsibilities:**

- a. Advise King County on matters affecting the VSHSL as a whole. Additionally, each committee may provide advice to the King County Executive and King County Council on matters uniquely affecting their respective VSHSL priority population.
- b. Transmit a report, beginning in 2019, by the first day of July of each year to the King County Executive, the King County Council and the Regional Policy

Committee, or its successor committee, on the state of the VSHSL, the fiscal and performance management of the VSHSL, and on the VSHSL's accomplishments from January through December of the preceding year.

- c. Annually elect from its entire membership a chair and two vice chairs. The vice chairs shall be elected from each of the two committees to which the elected chair does not belong in order to ensure board leadership is representative of all three committees.

### **C. The King County VSHSL Advisory Board and the Veterans Advisory Board**

As envisioned in this plan, the Veterans Committee members of the VSHSL Advisory Board would also serve as members of the statutorily required Veterans Advisory Board (“VAB”). It is anticipated that these two boards will be created contemporaneously and may be by separate legislation such that upon a person’s confirmation to the VSHSL Advisory Board as a member of the Veterans Committee, that person shall also be confirmed as a member of the VAB.

## **6. Timeline**

If the Council adopts by ordinance this VSHSL Governance Plan, the timeline below describes the steps that the Executive shall take to transmit proposed ordinances that would execute this VSHSL Governance Plan:

### **A. Transmit the VSHSL Governance Legislation**

Not later than sixty days after Council passage of the ordinance adopting the VSHSL Governance Plan, the Executive shall transmit for Council consideration and passage proposed legislation that would effectuate the VSHSL Governance Plan. The proposed legislation will create the VSHSL Advisory Board consistent with this plan and prescribe the composition and duties of the VSHSL Advisory Board consistent with this governance plan. As envisioned in this plan, confirmation of appointees to the VSHSL Advisory Board Veterans Committee would occur concurrent to confirmation of appointees to the Veterans Advisory Board.

### **B. Transmit the King County Veterans Program Advisory Board Creation Ordinance**

Not later than sixty days after Council passage of the ordinance adopting the VSHSL Governance Plan, the Executive shall transmit for Council consideration and adoption a proposed ordinance creating the Veterans Advisory Board. As envisioned in this plan, confirmation of appointees to the VSHSL Advisory Board Veterans Committee would occur concurrent to confirmation of appointees to the proposed Veterans Advisory Board.

### **C. Rescind CPM 11-1 (PR)**

On the date Council adopts an ordinance creating the VAB, the Executive will rescind or otherwise terminate the 1991 Public Rule that created the current Veterans Advisory Board.