



2015-2016 KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE PROPOSED BIENNIAL BUDGET

King County

In Brief:

- ◆ King County is committed to applying an Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) lens in its decision-making to achieve more equitable outcomes for all its residents, regardless of race, income or geographic location.
- ◆ The ESJ lens helps decision-makers understand the impacts of the decisions on the people they serve, allowing decision-makers to improve decisions to better serve marginalized populations.
- ◆ The county – including agencies, the Executive and Council – has expanded its ESJ lens in decision-making and planning for the 2015/2016 Proposed Budget; specific examples include the elimination of “driving while poor” prosecution practices and increased access to government services for residents with limited English proficiency.

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN KING COUNTY— AN OVERVIEW

King County is committed to achieving more equitable opportunities and outcomes for all residents. This commitment is outlined in the 2010 King County ESJ ordinance – a law which calls for the integration of equity and social justice practices into all County decision-making, planning, budgeting, and reporting – and in the “fair and just” principle of the King County Strategic Plan.

The budget is a planning tool that articulates the county’s priorities, allocates limited resources to address public needs and demonstrates accountability to the public. Applying an equity and social justice lens to the budget process can help ensure that allocation of limited resources is equitable for all residents.

King County will continue to strengthen its ESJ lens in all the county does, from policy and decision-making (including budget development), to organizational practices (including hiring and increasing workforce diversity) and inclusive community outreach and engagement.

EXPLAINING THE ESJ LENS IN THE BUDGET

For the 2015/2016 Executive Proposed Budget, PSB worked intentionally with agencies, Executive Office leadership and Council to deepen and expand the ESJ lens within the budget development process. For example, King County analysis included:

- ◆ Working across the government to better understand the equity and social justice impacts of base budgets and budget decisions on the most marginalized populations in King County.
- ◆ Deepened ESJ analysis, using demographic data of county services and the populations they impact, including use of U.S. Census data, other survey data and mapping.
- ◆ Embedding equity and social justice considerations into planning process and guidelines, including the development of the Capital Improvement Program budgets.

To further King County's equity and social justice efforts, the Executive directs county departments to develop an ESJ strategic plan and to take specific actions related to budgeting and other county practices.

APPLYING THE ESJ LENS CHANGES DECISION-MAKING

Increasing Access for Residents with Limited English Proficiency

In response to input provided by leaders and members from King County's limited English proficiency (LEP) communities, the 2015/2016 budget funds an additional 1.0 FTE to increase coordination of the county's typically-siloed translation and translation services and to improve outreach and engagement efforts with LEP communities. Contract funding is included to help build capacity of community organizations that serve LEP populations.

Eliminating "Driving While Poor" Prosecution

The Prosecuting Attorney's Office stopped filing DWLS 3 cases August 1, 2014, which eliminates a practice that primarily penalizes low-income individuals who often cannot afford to pay outstanding traffic tickets. The change ends the expensive prosecution of what is frequently referred to as "Driving While Poor." Individuals will be directed to District Court's Relicensing Court to pay fines and reinstate legal driving privileges.

Training for Local Nonprofits that Serve Marginalized Populations

The King County Training & Development Institute (KCTDI) will create training opportunities for qualifying local non-profit organizations that provide services to disadvantaged populations and that may lack adequate financial resources to provide or purchase workforce training. KCTDI will grant 100 scholarship vouchers annually to 20 small non-profits who serve low income and disadvantaged clients.

Expanded Support for Mental Health and Veterans Court

The 2015/2016 Proposed Budget expands staff and funding for the Regional Mental Health Court and the Regional Veterans Court. These programs provide support, including structure and treatment options, for people with mental illness and substance abuse problems who have become involved in the criminal justice system. The goal is to find a long-term solution for the defendant, rather than to punish him or her for a given crime.

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Funding

Superior Court's Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) task force coordinator is made permanent with the proposed budget. This important position establishes and sustains CSEC multidisciplinary teams across King County to recover prostituted children and youth, and to engage these youth in needed services. Low-income children and children of color are disproportionately impacted by commercial sexual exploitation. The CSEC task force coordinator works with ethnic-specific youth and family service providers to reach these populations.
