

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Briefing on the King County “Best Starts for Kids” Levy

STAFF CONTACTS

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POLICY ISSUES

On November 3, 2015, King County voters approved a six-year property tax levy to fund Best Starts for Kids (BSK), a prevention-oriented regional plan aimed at supporting the healthy development of children and youth, families and communities across the county. The property tax is levied at a rate of 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation (AV) with a potential increase of up to three percent for each of the five subsequent years of the levy—2017 through 2021. The BSK levy is projected to generate a total of approximately \$400 million over the six-year levy period.

King County Ordinance 18088 set aside \$19 million out of the first year's levy proceeds to fund the Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative which was adopted by the King County Council earlier this year—the first major program funded under the levy. Appropriation of the first allotment of these funds is expected this fall.

The levy ordinance also directs that the implementation plan identify the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the levy proceeds. The draft Implementation Plan was transmitted to the King County Council in June for its review and consideration. The plan was developed in collaboration with the oversight and advisory board (Children and Youth Advisory Board) and the Communities of Opportunity interim governance group.

No Council action is requested tonight. King County staff will attend tonight’s meeting and provide an overview of the levy and its proposed uses. Terry Smith, Assistant Director, Parks and Community Services who represents Bellevue on the Children and Youth Advisory Board will also be present. The briefing is intended to provide an opportunity for Council to be informed about the progress of the levy and the implementation timeline, ask questions and give direction or feedback to staff if it wishes.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

<u> </u>	Action
<u> X </u>	Discussion
<u> X </u>	Information

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Rationale for the Levy

Emerging neuroscience demonstrates that the first five years are critical for brain development, and as brain development (including regions of the brain that govern self-regulation and impulse control) continues through the teen-age years. The idea behind the BSK levy is to strengthen early development, invest in programs to support key developmental milestones, and help create healthy communities that will support youth and families.

The premise is that by investing in prevention and early intervention, more costly future problems can be prevented (e.g., substance abuse, mental illness, chronic disease and incarceration). King County spends approximately 75% of its General Fund budget supporting the law and justice system, and many cities devote a similar percentage of their General Fund budgets to public safety. One goal of the levy is to invest early in the health and wellbeing of children instead of waiting until there is a crisis.

What the Levy Proposes to Fund

The proceeds be allocated as follows over the 6 year levy:

- 50 percent, or an estimated \$189,997,000 for the Invest Early Allocation (0-5 year olds)
 - 35 percent, or an estimated \$129,483,000 for the Sustain the Gain Allocation (5-24 year olds)
 - 10 percent, or an estimated \$36,996,000 for the Communities Matter Allocation
 - 5 percent, or an estimated \$18,498,000 for the Outcomes-Focused and Data-Driven Allocation
- Bellevue children and youth providers and human service agencies will have the opportunity to apply for funding in the areas identified above and more specifically outlined in the implementation plan. Bellevue staff have been working with agencies and Eastside Pathways to provide information on the process and timeline, encouraging them to review the RFP's when they become available this fall, and to apply for funds. Eastside Pathways has also been working to coordinate potential proposals through their networks. This supports one of the key implementation drivers—that funding be guided by data and outcomes, grounded in science and research and led by community priorities and delivered through partnerships.

Governance and Levy Oversight

The Youth Action Plan Advisory Group recommended that the County establish an advisory board to assist the Executive and County Council as they consider outcomes, policies and investments for children, families, youth and young adults. The County Executive recommended that this body also be the advisory board for the levy except for the portion focused on Communities of Opportunity (COO). Communities of Opportunity (COO) was launched by King County and the Seattle Foundation in 2014 to address inequities in health, social, racial, housing, and economic outcomes that exist across the region so that communities with the most to gain can thrive, on the evidence that gains made in those communities will benefit the economic and social engine of the entire region. The Executive recommended that the existing COO governance group serve as the advisory board for the COO portion of the levy. In addition to responsibility for these advisory boards, the County's Department of Community and Human Services is accountable for financial oversight and reporting for the levy.

Children and Youth Advisory Board

King County Ordinance 18217, enacted in December 2015, created the King County Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) for the purposes of serving as the advisory body recommended by the youth action plan and serving as the oversight and advisory board with respect to the portion of the BSK levy proceeds set aside for the Children and Youth Under Five Allocation, the Children and Youth Ages Five through 24 Allocation, and the Data and Evaluation Allocation. As noted earlier in this briefing, Terry Smith, Bellevue's Assistant Director of Parks and Community Services represents Bellevue on this group. The CYAB is charged with the following duties:

- Assisting King County policymakers as they consider outcomes, policies, and investments for children, families, youth and young adults; and
- Serving as the BSK strategies oversight and advisory body, including making recommendations on and monitoring the distributions of levy proceeds under Ordinance 18088.

Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative

As noted earlier in this briefing, the BSK Levy includes \$19 million for a Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative that is intended to “prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming homeless.” The Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative is based on a highly successful pilot program implemented by the Washington State Coalition against Domestic Violence and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Medina Foundation. This plan was adopted recently by the King County Council. Key components to the Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Model include:

- Client-centered intervention
- Progressive engagement approach to case management
- Flexible funding to prevent homelessness
- Targeting approach to address the root causes of homelessness among youth and families

Implementation Strategies and Funding Allocations:

In order to reduce inequities across King County, the BSK strategies are designed to be both universal and targeted, with a significant majority of levy funding competitively bid in outcomes-focused contracts to community-based organizations. This will help ensure that the strategies are implemented in a manner that is appropriate for all cultural and ethnic groups and that each child and his/her caregivers receive the tools and level of support they need. Through the work and recommendations of the Children and Youth Advisory Board outcomes and indicators have been refined and an implementation plan with input and consultation from a variety of stakeholders has been drafted for review and approval by the King County Council.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

REFERENCES

Best Starts for Kids (Draft Implementation Plan)

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/elected/executive/priorities/best-starts-for-kids/documents/BSK-implementation-plan.ashx?la=en>

Best Starts for Kids Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative Implementation Plan
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/elected/executive/priorities/best-starts-for-kids/documents/BSK-and-Family-Homelessness-Prevention-Initiative-Implementation-Plan-Final-March-2016.ashx?la=en>

King County Youth Action Plan
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/council/issues/YouthActionPlan.aspx>