



Eastside Human Services Forum

2012 Legislative Agenda

www.eastsideforum.org

The effects of the economic downturn are still deeply affecting many East King County residents, some of whom were previously financially stable, middle class individuals and families. Some have now exhausted all of their options and are on the brink of crisis, just providing for basic needs such as food, healthcare, and housing has become a challenge.

The Eastside Human Services Forum recognizes the state of the budget crisis throughout all jurisdictions and recommends a balanced approach to addressing the budget shortfall. The Forum has prioritized the following legislative recommendations to ensure the well being of the growing number of vulnerable people in our community.

Preserving Services for Basic Needs

- Maintain programs that provide basic needs for all residents, such as food (State Food Assistance Program for legal immigrants) health care (the Basic Health Plan, Children's Health), and mental health counseling (Medicaid and non-Medicaid funds).
- Maintain funding for the Washington Information Network (WIN) 2-1-1.

Preventing and Ending Homelessness

- Maintain the State investment in the Housing Trust Fund.
- Ensure adequate funding for the Home Security Fund, generated by fees on the recording of real estate documents. These funds provide resources for an array of effective programs, such as homelessness prevention and other services.
- Maintain the Housing and Essential Needs Program which replaced the Disability Lifeline.

Supporting Early Learning and School Readiness

- Maintain the current investment in home visiting funding for evidence-based home visiting programs such as Healthy Start.
- Protect current investments in early learning for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), WaKids (the new State kindergarten learning assessment), the Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and the Working Connections Child Care Program which provides subsidies for low-income working families or families seeking work. Improve systems that will make these programs even more cost-effective, effective and efficient.

Supporting the Most Vulnerable Older Adults and People with Disabilities

- Support services that enable older adults to remain in their homes and in the community.
- Protect vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect.
- Maintain medical services for older adults and people with disabilities and their families.

Issues to Monitor

- Support the Local Government Flexibility and Impact Fee Exemption Bill (HB 1398/SB 5524) which would allow cities to waive impact fees like sewer hookups for affordable housing without having to replace those lost funds from another source.
- Preserve funding for naturalization services.
- Maintain Funding for medical interpretation.



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East King County Needs Data

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Preserving Services for Basic Needs

- *As of October, 2011, there have been 4,868 calls to King County 2-1-1 from East King County residents. The top needs documented for Eastside callers included assistance with rent, heat & lights, and emergency shelter. (Source: Crisis Clinic, 2-1-1.)*
- Legal immigrants who are not eligible for federal food stamps (SNAP) currently receive state-funded benefits through the State Food Assistance Program. This program provides food assistance to nearly 14,000 people statewide, and 6,328 in King County. The average benefit is \$114 each month. The State Food Assistance program is targeted for elimination. (Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management; Linda Stone, Children's Alliance.)

For more information:

United Way of King County: www.uwkc.org; WIN 2-1-1: www.win211.org; Children's Alliance: www.childrensalliance.org

Preventing and Ending Homelessness

- In East King County, Friends of Youth and Imagine Housing (formerly St. Andrew's Housing Group) were two of the non-profit agencies that received Housing Trust Fund grants to develop low-income and homeless housing. Together they will create 68 units of housing. (Source: A Regional Coalition for Housing, ARCH)
- Funding from the Home Security Fund, generated by fees from the recording of real estate documents, provided support for Hopelink, Sophia Way and Congregations for the Homeless, all programs that provide services for shelter and transitional shelter residents in East King County. (Source: A Regional Coalition for Housing, ARCH)

For more information:

United Way of King County: www.uwkc.org; King County Committee to end Homelessness: www.cehkc.org; Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance: <http://salsa.democracynaction.org>; Housing Development Consortium: <http://housingdevelopment.org>

Supporting Early Learning and School Readiness

- Ninety-four percent of families served in 2010 by Healthy Start, a home-based parenting education and support program for young families with children birth to three improved their knowledge of age-appropriate child development, parental roles and responsibilities, and utilizing strategies that foster secure attachment. (Source: Healthy Start Program Report, 2011.)
- Changes to eligibility for the Working Connections Child Care Program during the 2011 State Legislative Session have made it more difficult for many working families to obtain subsidies, putting them at risk for losing their jobs or their children at risk if safe, quality alternatives are not found. Child care for an East King County family with an infant and a pre-schooler can cost between \$20,640 and \$27,216 a year on average. This is 31-41% of the county's median household income. As of October 2011, 54% of the available child care providers accept families receiving child care subsidies. Sometimes families are eligible for subsidies but cannot find a provider who accepts it. Nearly half of centers and family homes do not accept any children on subsidy. (Source: Child Care Resources, Child Care Facilities and Rates in King County October 2011)

For more information:

United Way of King County: www.uwkc.org; Early Learning Action Alliance: www.childrensalliance.org/our-current-work/early-learning-now/early-learning-action-alliance; WIN 2-1-1: www.win211.org; Child Care Resources www.childcare.org.

Supporting the Most Vulnerable Older Adults and People with Disabilities

- Volunteer Chore Services, a program of Catholic Community Services, which provides shopping, transportation, rides to medical appointments, and yard work to isolated older adults and people with disabilities, could not continue if funding was eliminated as proposed in the State budget. Service requests increased by nearly 50% for the first six months of 2011 compared to the same period in 2010. In the past year, 42% of tasks provided for Eastside residents were for housework help; 21% shopping assistance, 23% transportation, and 13% yard work help. With a 20% cut in state funds, it might become necessary to prioritize the type of services provided to help meet more critical needs. (Source: Catholic Community Services).
- The Senior Citizens Services Act funds a number of services critical to keeping older adults living in their homes, such as Meals on Wheels, Volunteer Transportation and Senior Information and Assistance. In King County, Senior Services provides these services; in 2010, 17% of Volunteer Transportation Services clients resided in East King County, about 313 people. (Source: Senior Services).
- In King County, 275 families who care for their developmentally disabled family members would potentially lose small cash grants for respite and other needed services if the State Family Support Program was eliminated. Additionally, the very cost effective "Parent 2 Parent" (P2P)-program provided by the Arc of King County would also be eliminated. P2P programs train volunteer mentor families to support other families with members who have developmental disabilities which serves thousands of people in King County. (Source: Arc of King County)
- AtWork! provides supported employment for people with disabilities in East King County. Of 260 clients currently served, over half of them will lose their eligibility for state funding for this service if the proposed cuts in the budget are passed. (Source: AtWork! Newsletter, October, 2011)

For more information:

Washington Area Agencies on Aging: www.agingwashington.org; *WA Senior Lobby:* www.waseniiorlobby.org; *Bellevue Network on Aging:* www.cityofbellevue.gov; *Kirkland Senior Council:* www.cityofkirkland.gov; *AtWork!:* www.atworkwa.org

Issues to Monitor

- Hopelink is the provider for DSHS medical interpreter services throughout King County. State funding for this program is eliminated in the 2012 Governor's proposed budget. Hopelink staff report that in 2010 27,706 individuals were provided interpreters for medical appointments.
- Naturalization Services are critical to help people gain citizenship and thus access to needed benefits. State funding for this program is eliminated in the 2012 Governor's proposed budget. In East King County, Jewish Family Service receives State Naturalization funds and serves about twelve students in their Bellevue office annually. (Source: Jewish Family Service.)
- CISC also received funds from the State for Naturalization Services. This was eliminated in the second half of 2011. In 2010, they served 226 students in classes held in Seattle. Of these, 6 travelled from Bellevue and 1 from Redmond because of the culturally specific services offered. 47 of the students became US citizens, including 2 from Bellevue. (Source: Chinese Information and Service Center)
- If the Impact Exemption Bill is passed, for example, for a project in the City of Kirkland, this would allow up to \$276,000 to be saved in impact fees by a non-profit housing developer, **Imagine Housing**, that is developing 76 new units of affordable senior housing in Totem Lake. This is not only a significant amount in savings but provides for a range of housing types and opportunities to meet the needs of a wide range of populations. (Source: City of Kirkland, City Manager's Office Brief)