



October 21, 2011

Dear Governor Gregoire and State Legislators,

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

Richard Bryan  
Vice President,  
Quality & Patient Safety,  
Overlake Hospital

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Councilmember,  
City of Bellevue

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United Way of King  
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Councilmember,  
City of Redmond

*The mission of the  
Eastside Human Services  
Forum is to foster strong  
public and private  
partnerships to assure a  
stable network of health  
and human services for  
the benefit of all East King  
County residents.*

425-587-3324  
505 Market Street  
Kirkland, WA 98033  
www.eastsideforum.org

There is always another way.

The undersigned organizations and coalitions represent the collective voice of human service professionals and the residents we serve throughout Washington. We urge you to work together to create a solution to the latest budget crisis that does not further penalize our most vulnerable residents. For the last four years, those of us in the field of human services have been struggling to do more with less as the recession has created more people in need, and funding to meet those needs has eroded drastically on all fronts. We have embraced the notion of “crisis is opportunity” and have formed countless work groups focused on thinking outside the box in search of creative approaches to filling the widening gaps.

Now it is your turn. It is not acceptable to say “this is all that’s left to cut.” We need you--our elected leaders-- to think outside the box and find a way to avoid dissolving the last remnants of the safety nets still in place and instead begin rebuilding a new infrastructure needed for social sustainability. The proposed cuts just released by the Governor include elimination of the State Food Assistance and the State Family Assistance Programs. In King County alone these cuts would result in 4,400 additional families without access to sufficient food and 637 families without cash assistance needed for basic survival. These are not just numbers. They are mothers and fathers, children and seniors who will not have enough to eat and who will have no resources to help them survive, never mind thrive.

The Governor has also proposed termination of both the Basic Health Plan and the Disability Lifeline Medical Program which would eliminate coverage of 51,000 individuals statewide. Even as Director Porter offered up these programs, he also stated that such reductions “are not good policy, since people who lose access to care often wind up with more serious and more expensive conditions.”

You know that such devastating cuts are short sighted. In addition to wreaking havoc on the lives of those already struggling, they will cost the state more in the long run. Many of us have been actively involved in the King County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness which is now well into its sixth year. With the scarcity of current resources, meeting the goals of the plan has become increasingly challenging. But additional cuts that continue to force more people into homelessness will make our task impossible.

There is no back-up plan. Adopting these cuts will cause real harm to real people; loss of food, loss of housing, even loss of life. They will also serve to dismantle a social safety net that has taken years to build and would likely take even longer to try to re-build.

Do these choices reflect your priorities for Washington? Surely not.



*It is time to find another way.*

Signed,

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- Alliance of Eastside Agencies*
- Bill Block, Project Director, Committee to End Homelessness*
- Columbia Legal Services - On behalf of clients*
- Council for the Homeless of Clark County*
- Crisis Clinic*
- Eastside Community Network*
- Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee*
- Eastside Human Services Forum*
- Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition*
- Emergency Feeding Program of Seattle & King County*
- Faith Action Network*
- Friends of Youth*
- Hopelink*
- Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County*
- King County Human Services Alliance*
- North Urban Human Services Alliance*
- Parents Organizing For Welfare and Economic Rights*
- Policy for the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance*
- Seattle Human Services Coalition*
- Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness*
- South King Council of Human Services*
- Statewide Poverty Action Network*
- Tacoma Chapter of the NAACP*
- Washington Asset Building Coalition*
- Washington Community Action Network*

