



October 5, 2016

Good Evening, Chairman McDermott and members of the King County Council, my name is James Kelly, Fund Development Manager, The Emergency Feeding Program, Seattle and King County. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you about hunger and the King County Budget.

In the King County Executive, Dow Constantine address to the King County Council, he unveiled his proposed \$11.3 billion, two-year budget, which again maintains costs below the rate of population and inflation.

His Executive Budget provides on demand and same-day access to care. And why wait for a crisis when data and science confirm what we knew all along, that a little early care and nurturing can prevent problems before they start?

This year, the County will implement Best Starts for Kids, which, thanks to King County voters, seeks to ensure that every baby born in our community and every child raised here has a strong start in life.

The Emergency Feeding Program is asking you to approve the County Executive Budget and we would like to talk to you about inclusion of our program in the 2017-2018 biennial budget.

We need to fund this but we need to fund hunger as well.

Let me take a moment to talk about Hunger.

- Washington is the 23rd hungriest states in the nation.
- 1 in 5 kids in Washington state lives in a household that struggles to put food on the table.
- 1 in 7 Washingtonians relies on SNAP (food stamps), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is severely threatened by budget cuts. Half of all people on SNAP are kids.
- 1 in 5 Washingtonians relies on their local food bank.

Our mission here at Emergency Feeding Program is to provide emergency food assistance to individuals and families experiencing a hunger crisis. Fifteen varieties of nutritionally balanced, diet specific food packs are distributed through 240 partner agencies across King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

We build our food distribution network on the existing human services agencies where people are likely to go first when crisis strikes, so that people can receive several services, including food, at the same visit instead of having to travel to different locations for each service. We make nutritious food readily available throughout King and Snohomish Counties for anyone who needs assistance through our distribution partners. Our service method helps prevent people from slipping through the service gap and being left behind without food. Our program is a critical safety net for the most vulnerable residents.

Since its beginnings in 1977, the Emergency Feeding Program has provided tens of millions of meals to people that are in much need of assistance. We package over 600,000 meals per year and we serve over 120,000 meals to children. Hungry Kids Can't Wait. Thank you.