

King County Council  
Council Meeting, October 18, 2016  
Norm Maleng Regional Center  
Kent, Washington

Good evening King County Executive Constantine and King County Councilmembers,

My name is Kerry Cooley-Stroum and I'm with Catholic Community Services of King County.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our King County community, including your awareness and dedication to our poor and vulnerable people.

I come to specifically thank you for raising the cap on the quantity of available tickets through the Human Services Ticket Program, it's hugely beneficial, but we urge you to do more to improve access to transit through the Metro Human Services Ticket Program.

Transportation is central to everything we do. We must ask ourselves what we would do if we could not access the services we need to keep our minds, bodies and spirits healthy and those of the people we love and care for.

Catholic Community Services operates over 25 programs in King County that serve residents facing homelessness, illness, recovery, unemployment, discrimination, and other unanticipated hardships and unjust systems. Our clients rely on bus tickets to find housing, get to their jobs, look for work, go to the doctor, get to school or trainings, and take other steps towards basic health and stability.

We urge you to continue to grow the number of tickets available and to lower the match price of these tickets from 20% to 10%, and, in doing so, increase the number of tickets social service agencies can realistically purchase in order for clients to access their lifelines.

We ask, also, that all tickets are combination tickets—bus, light rail and trolley with transfers and that transfers between our buses, Sound Transit and Metro, are provided to allow transportation throughout all our counties.

We join the Transit Riders Union in urging King County to continue to be a leader in transit equity. We applaud the choices the County has made to implement the ORCA LIFT program and Human Services Ticket Program, and we ask you to continue working with transit riders, service providers, and very low-income and homeless people to make our public transit system truly affordable and accessible to all.

We very much appreciate your great work in service to King County and its people.

## Catholic Community Services (CCS) South King County Family Center

### Submitting for Review to the King County Council

October 18, 2016

We respectfully request the King County Council to **INCREASE the amount of low-cost bus tickets** available to local non-profits for the coordination of care to those that are homeless with children, homeless single adults, and those that are homeless living with a disability.

#### Who is served by bus tickets

- Disabled homeless individuals seeking shelter and needing medical appointments
- Homeless individuals seeking employment and education opportunities
- Low income homeless families

#### Why an increase is needed

##### *Movement of individuals to suburban areas*

There is an increase in bus ticket request over the last year due to more individuals moving to areas in the county that are less costly. **This means that they are farther away from needed services that they used to access more easily.**

##### *For disabled individuals to maintain health and benefit requirements*

For disabled individuals, the issue is providing clients their next appointment. This is critical for them to maintain on state funded disability programs such as the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Temporary Assistance for Needy families (TANF) and Age Blind and Disabled (ABD) programs and Supplemental Nutritional Program (SNAP). All of these benefit programs require that clients maintain their appointments with their medical doctors, mental health counselors, and physicians. Additionally, many programs require on site appointments for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) utility assistance, and Coordinated Entry for All (CEA). **These government programs require documents to be submitted and may or may not require on site appointments.** Without a way to get to these programs, clients lose out on beneficial programs. This sets a client back, and creates a more costly situation for the local communities to continue to serve clients in shelters and other public assistance simply because they cannot make it to their appointments to get better. At CCS Kent family center, we cannot keep up with demand. Each Monday, we distribute bus tickets for disabled clients. Approximately 75% of these clients are homeless with a disability. By Tuesday, the week allotment is gone. **Increasing the tickets would allow us to provide clients with a way to get to their appointments, increasing their health and that of the community.**

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*For individuals seeking work*

CCS Men's shelter in Kent provides intensive case management services with the focus on job training and employment. **Providing bus tickets to these clients enables them to get to job interviews, attend education programs, and get to work each day.** About two thirds of the clients in this shelter are either working, or seeking out work. After clients leave the shelter, approximately 60% to 70% have found and maintained employment. As the winter months come, there is an increased turn over in the shelter. Increasing the bus tickets will allow all those that enter the shelter the same opportunity to access bus tickets to seek employment. Without an increase, supplies must be rationed, and when there is not enough, clients simply miss out. This increases the time they will spend in the shelter.

*For those entering into the shelter*

CCS operates three shelters located in Kent, Renton and Federal Way. Clients must attend an intake appointment and then check in at the shelter the same evening or risk losing their shelter bed for that night. The issue is that they must use that shelter bed for three nights in a week. However, there are only enough tickets for the clients to get one bus ticket, their first night. Clients must then find other means to get to food banks, medical appointments, or get to the mobile medical can, or complete program requirements for services. This creates an unnecessary burden on people trying to improve their lives.

***Increasing bus tickets is a win-win***

***Without increasing bus tickets to non-profits, there continues to be a large and growing gap in services.***

**Providing transportation for those that are most vulnerable and those that are working towards improving their lives exponentially increases the impact that social services.**

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