

Investing in **People** & Communities

King County's 2016 Federal Agenda

King County is fortunate to have a strong economy fueled by innovation, and a skilled workforce that is drawing jobs and job-seekers to our region. However, structural obstacles and increased population growth have created challenges that leave the county in an ongoing struggle to address critical problems, including the county's aging roads and bridges and public health programs. We have worked to provide local solutions, like Best Starts for Kids, but King County must continue to have a strong partner in the federal government if we are to achieve the future we seek for all King County residents.

Our 2016 agenda includes protecting funding levels for critical programs and services, investing in infrastructure, partnering on solving the homelessness crisis, and advancing prevention and upstream solutions for both people and the environment.



A Strong Investment

Our primary federal objective is to ensure continued, robust investment in King County and its 2.1 million residents. King County effectively leverages federal resources to foster vibrant and healthy communities, serve our most vulnerable, and facilitate innovation across the region. In the 2015/2016 budget, King County relied on \$300M in federal grant funding for transportation programs; \$90M in federal funding for public health programs; and \$70M in federal funding for developmental disability, substance abuse, mental health, and housing programs.

We would like to see these investment levels increased or maintained, and in exchange we are committed to achieving continued positive outcomes as a return on that investment.



Infrastructure for the Future

Investments in transportation, flood control infrastructure, and systems to ensure the clean-up and health of Puget Sound are needed to keep King County a thriving hub of economic development and healthy communities. King County appreciates assistance included in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, and now we must go beyond maintaining basic transportation levels.

Our rapidly growing economy calls for vastly expanded transit services; and population growth has increased demands on our 1,500 miles of county roads and 181 county bridges (57 are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete). Increased federal investments are needed to ensure people can continue to get to work, school, and back home safely, quickly, and affordably.



Homelessness

More than 10,000 people are without permanent housing each night in King County, including 4,500 who are unsheltered, living in cars, tents and on the streets.

We need a multi-faceted federal partnership that addresses the immediate emergency, and makes homelessness rare, brief, and one-time. Our approach must include strategies around opioid addiction and substance abuse, mental health, traumatic life experiences, ability to work, and adjusting to life-altering changes, such as veterans returning home.



King County

Mobility and Infrastructure

King County seeks to partner with the federal government to maintain and expand infrastructure in the following ways:

- Support dedicated funding for maintenance, repair and replacement of aging roads and deficient bridges.
- Protect businesses and people by expanding flood protection infrastructure. Develop clean water and habitat protection projects in coordination with the King County Flood Control District. Support the Flood Control District in securing Army Corps of Engineers cooperation on the Lower Green River Corridor Plan, including Programmatic Section 7 consultation.
- Increase funding for programs that help local governments fund and finance road, bridge, and transit projects, such as the TIGER and TIFIA programs.
- Improve failing Army Corps of Engineers infrastructure, including the Ballard Locks, Howard Hanson and Buckley Diversion Dams.
- Invest in regional efforts to realize the Eastside Rail Corridor's potential for innovation in mobility and land use.

Addressing Homelessness

Homelessness has reached crisis levels in King County, with thousands of individuals and hundreds of families spending each night on the streets. King County seeks to partner with the federal government on permanent solutions:

- Support federal efforts to increase funding for combating opioid addiction, and invest in medication assisted treatment to transition people safely off heroin and prescription opiates.
- Prioritize increasing permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing resources to help communities address family, youth, chronic, and veteran homelessness.
- Fully fund the Tenant Based Rental Assistance and Homeless Assistance Grant programs.
- Increase funding for the Veterans Affairs Supported Housing Program by \$75 million and the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program by \$200 million.
- Increase CDBG and HOME funding by 20% in 2017, and restore CDBG to its 2001 level and HOME to its 2004 level by 2020.
- Approve Washington's Medicaid Transformation Waiver request.
- Increase intensive employment and education services to homeless individuals.

Realizing King County Potential

King County supports policies and investments that will create safe and sustainable communities, accessible justice systems, and equitable opportunities for all residents:

- Develop approaches to reduce gun violence and programs to encourage safe storage of guns.
- Address laws that exacerbate disproportionality in the criminal justice system and improve post-prison opportunities.
- Support local governments in the continuing effort to enroll uninsured individuals in health insurance plans.
- Support federal programs and initiatives that address gender pay equity, paid family leave, immigration reform, and sex trafficking.
- Revise the federal Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion rule to allow Medicaid to be used to reimburse providers for evaluation and treatment of mental health and substance abuse care at facilities that are larger than 16 beds; and to exempt stays of up to 30 days.
- Align restrictive federal confidentiality rules specific to substance abuse treatment with the HIPAA and other related regulations, which will support our work to integrate behavioral and physical health care.
- Encourage responsible and innovative stewardship of King County watersheds, the Puget Sound, and our other natural resources like the lower Duwamish River.
- Clarify that rebates provided by utilities to private property owners for water efficiency and storm water related improvements are not subject to federal income tax.
- Designate the Mountains to Sound Greenway as a National Heritage Area.
- Request that federal decisions relating to coal and oil include complete lifecycle costs and benefits of mining, transport, and export, including economic, environmental, and health impacts.
- Adopt policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as outlined in the County's Strategic Climate Action Plan.
- Increase funding and incentives for renewable energy technology, and reallocate unspent Federal Qualified Energy Conservation Bond authorization to states that have fully distributed their allocations.