

Best Start for Kids Implementation Plan: 2022-2027

July 2021



King County

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I. Executive Summary

This *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan is provided pursuant to Ordinance 19267 and Motion 15888.^{1,2} It provides a history of the 2016-2021 *Best Starts for Kids* levy and describes the proposed 2022-2027 *Best Starts for Kids* levy. This plan outlines *Best Starts*' impacts, framework, and results. It identifies *Best Starts* investment areas and strategies and serves as the Implementation Plan for the renewal and expansion of *Best Starts*, subject to voter approval of the new levy in 2021.

Best Starts Introduction

History, Values and Frameworks

Best Starts for Kids (*Best Starts*) is King County's community-driven initiative to support every baby born and child raised in King County to be happy, healthy, safe, and thriving. Initially approved by voters in 2015 and in place since 2016, *Best Starts* invests in comprehensive supports for children, youth, young adults, and families and caregivers, catalyzing strong starts in early childhood, and sustaining those gains as children progress to adulthood.

By promoting positive outcomes for children, intervening early when kids and families need support, and building on family and community strengths, *Best Starts* launches King County's young people on a path to lifelong health and well-being. Since 2016, the initiative has pursued three overarching results:

Best Starts for Kids' Results

- 1. Babies are born healthy and given a foundation for a happy, healthy life**
- 2. Young people have equitable opportunities to be safe, healthy, and thriving**
- 3. Communities offer safe, welcoming environments for their kids**

Anticipating the first *Best Starts* levy expiration, the Executive transmitted a proposed ballot measure Ordinance in January 2021 to the King County Council, to renew and replace the expiring *Best Starts* levy.³ To accompany the proposed Ordinance, the Executive transmitted a Blueprint Report summarizing the key principles of the proposed ballot measure Ordinance.⁴ Ordinance 19267 in April 2021 authorized the placement of the measure on the ballot.

Best Starts is driven by the foundational value that centering the voices and lived experiences of communities across the region most impacted by systemic racism is critical. In 2016, the King County Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) created an equity statement and later a set of equity

¹ Ordinance 19267. [[LINK](#)]

² Motion 15888. [[LINK](#)]

³ Ordinance 19267. [[LINK](#)]

⁴ Best Start for Kids Blueprint Report (2021). [[LINK](#)]

statement questions that hold *Best Starts* accountable and shape its work. The full equity statement and questions are outlined in Table 6 on page 16.

Accomplishments

The first *Best Starts for Kids* levy reached 490,000 of King County's youngest children and new parents/caregivers and 40,000 youth and young adults, catalyzing strong starts in a child's earliest years, strengthening communities, and helping families remain housed and meet basic needs. The focus on evaluation and achieving outcomes is important for programs to track and report on their performance, while demonstrating successful outcomes. Select outcomes can be found in Appendix D.

Best Starts also promoted changes in policies and systems, including improvements in County processes, and supporting community ownership of data. These system and policy changes impacted long standing racial inequities in health outcomes, such as inequities in maternal and infant health and lack of quality, affordable childcare for working families.⁵ Communities also saw greater efficiencies and ease in their experiences with the County, though much work remains.

Implementation Plan Background & Methodology

Department Overview

The King County departments of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and Public Health–Seattle and King County (PHSKC) share an important vision grounded in the King County Strategic Plan:⁶ that all King County residents achieve optimal health and well-being and that communities thrive. *Best Starts* supports equitable and comprehensive early development supports and needed supports throughout childhood to assure that all children and families can thrive and prosper. Through *Best Starts for Kids*, DCHS and PHSKC jointly administer *Best Starts* to realize this vision.

Foundational Policies and Plans

King County is committed to making a welcoming community where every person, business, and organization can thrive.⁷ *Best Starts for Kids* emulated this commitment by developing its theoretical framework and strategies based on key King County policies, plans, and initiatives, including the King County Strategic Plan, the Health & Human Services Transformation Plan, the Youth Action Plan, and the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.^{8,9,10}

⁵ Motion 15769. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁶ The King County Council approved the King County Strategic Plan [\[LINK\]](#) by Ordinance 16897 in 2010, and adopted the corresponding vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, and priorities by Motion 14317 in 2015.

⁷ King County Strategic Plan [\[LINK\]](#).

⁸ The King County Council approved the King County Strategic Plan [\[LINK\]](#) by Ordinance 16897 in 2010, and adopted the corresponding vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, and priorities by Motion 14317 in 2015.

⁹ Motion 13768 requested the development of the Health and Human Services Transformation Plan. [\[LINK\]](#) The King County Council accepted the plan by Motion 13943 in 2013.

¹⁰ Ordinance 17738 directed the development of the Youth Action Plan. The King County Council adopted the plan by Motion 14378 in 2015. [\[LINK\]](#)

Ordinance Requirements and Requested Elements

The *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan 2022-2027 responds to the requirements outlined in Ordinance 19267 and elements requested in Motion 15888.^{11,12} Key requirements are highlighted on page 23. A comprehensive table of all requirements and requested elements along with how they are addressed within the *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan: 2022-2027 can be found in Appendix C.

Governing Board Guidance

In developing this plan *Best Starts* partnered with the Children and Youth Advisory Board and the Communities of Opportunity Governing Group, who govern *Best Starts for Kids* and provide guidance and oversight to Communities of Opportunity respectively.¹³ Strategy-specific board workgroups guided the planning in February, March, and April of 2021. Both boards hosted workdays in May 2021 to provide input and voted to endorse the *Best Starts* Implementation Plan 2022-2027 in June 2021.

Community Engagement Summary

Communities informed planning for the proposed renewal and expansion, leading to the *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027 Implementation Plan. *Best Starts* partnered with 10 regionally based coalitions of community organizations and five community stakeholder groups to host 15 listening sessions, from August through November 2020. Input from these sessions and a community survey informed the recommendations for a renewed and expanded *Best Starts* levy. Community engagement and feedback throughout a renewed and expanded, voter approved *Best Starts* levy will be crucial in responding to existing and emerging community needs. A comprehensive list of community stakeholder groups that provided feedback can be found in Appendix J.

***Best Starts* Plan for 2022-2027**

Framework and Results

Best Starts' work is conceptualized through a promotive- and protective-factors framework.¹⁴ The framework is a guidepost for identifying strategies that promote what is needed to protect children, youth and communities working to eliminate the negative risk factors or barriers. The outcomes of doing so include strong child development, thriving families, supportive networks, healthy youth, and inclusive communities. Investment areas and strategies are carefully identified to promote these outcomes for all the families, children, youth and communities. Evaluation plans and selected performance measures will be similarly grounded in this theoretical framework.¹⁵

¹¹ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹² Motion 15888. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹³ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁴ Browne, C., Notkin, S., Schneider-Muñoz, A., & Zimmerman, F. (2015). Youth Thrive: A Framework to Help Adolescents Overcome Trauma and Thrive. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 25, 33-52. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁵ The Data and Evaluation section. [\[LINK\]](#)

Fiscal Overview

Revenue estimates for *Best Starts* from 2022-2027 are based on an increase in the levy rate from \$0.14 per \$1,000 of assessed value to \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The revenue and expenditure estimates reflect the proposed levy rate, the taxable assessed valuation, and the projected assessed valuation growth rate based on the July 2021 forecast from the King County Office of Economic and Financial Analysis.¹⁶ Over the six years of the levy, an estimated \$883.8 million of revenue is expected to be received to invest in increasing positive outcomes for families, children, youth, and families.

Allocations to Investing Early, Communities of Opportunity, and Evaluation for 2022-2027 remain similar to those in the first levy, with an increase to Technical Assistance and Capacity Building and Sustain the Gain investments. This increase is based upon identified need from community feedback and learnings about *Best Starts* 2016-2021 described in the *Best Starts For Kids* Assessment Report transmitted in response to Motion 15651.¹⁷ A new investment in Child Care Subsidies and Wage Boost Programs for the 2022-2027 *Best Starts* to support access to high quality care is based upon recommendations from the Children and Families Strategy Task Force.¹⁸ Also, a new category of capital grants has been added to support improvements to facilities and development of new facilities.

Ordinance 19267 requires that 22.5 percent of first-year revenues and at least \$240 million over the life of the levy be invested in Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative, Child Care Subsidies and Wage Demonstration Project, and Technical Assistance and Capacity Building. Contingent on revenue projections exceeding \$822 million, up to \$50 million is allocated for capital grants.¹⁹ Remaining levy proceeds are allocated according to the following percentages:

- Investing Early at 50 percent, supports programs for children ages prenatal to five,
- Sustain the Gain at 37 percent, supports services for children and you aged five to 24,
- Communities of Opportunity at eight percent to impact racial and economic equity;
- Data and Evaluation at five percent. This includes evaluation, stipends for children and youth serving on the CYAB, and prorationing mitigation to replace any lost fire, hospital, and parks districts in the event this levy suppresses their levies.²⁰

Figure 1 shows proportional spending in the seven categories of operating investment, over the total six-year life of *Best Starts*' 2022-2027 levy, based on current projections, excluding capital investments. Investing Early (prenatal to five) is the largest investment at a projected \$291 million over the life of the levy, followed closely by Sustain the Gain (five to 24) at \$215 million and Child Care Subsidies and Wage Boost Demonstration project at \$199 million.

¹⁶ King County Assessor. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷ *Best Starts for Kids* Assessment Report Recommendations, page 139. [\[LINK\]](#)

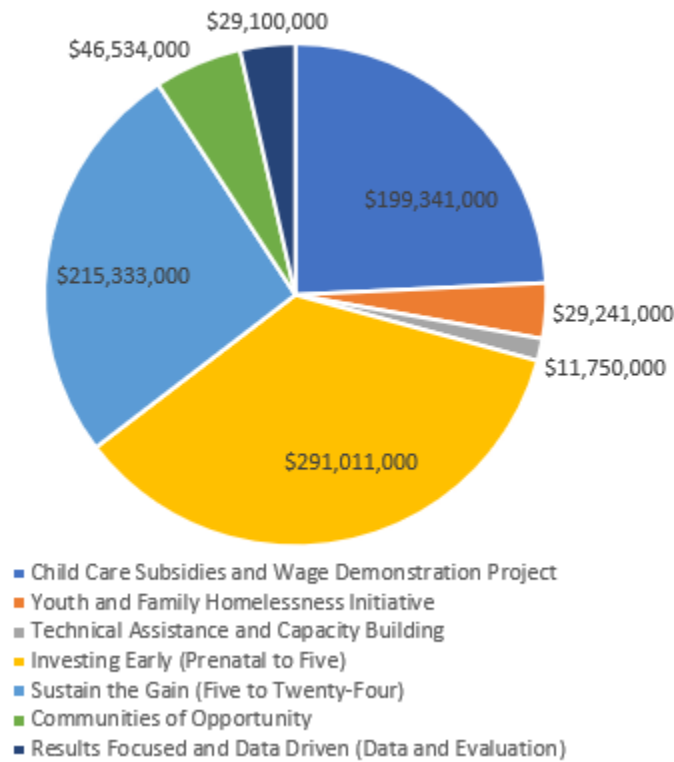
¹⁸ Children & Family Strategy Task Force report [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁹ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁰ Current modeling does not suggest prorationing will occur during this levy period given current levy rates countywide, though economic trends reducing assessed property value or rate increases from other taxing districts may change that forecast. For more information about prorationing mitigation, see Section IV.M.

Figure 1: Projected Total Expenditures 2022-2027 Excluding Capital Projects

Total Operating Expenditures Over Life of Levy*



*Does not include capital projects

Investment Areas

The *Best Starts* 2022-2027 levy maintains and builds upon the first *Best Starts* levy’s investments, while also adding new strategies to address the region’s critical child care needs, deepening investments in youth, and including opportunities for capital projects. The following investment areas are detailed within this Implementation Plan and briefly outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Investment Area Descriptions

Investment Areas	Description
Child Care Subsidies and Wage Boost Demonstration Project	Expand access for children and their families who are not eligible for existing federal, state, or local subsidy programs or for whom these programs are insufficient. Support investments in the child care workforce through a wage boost demonstration project.
Investing Early²¹	Support pregnant individuals, babies, and very young children during their critical developmental years, and their parents with a robust system of support services and resources that meet families where they are: home, community, and in child care to increase optimal child development.
Sustain the Gain²²	Continue progress made with school- and community-based opportunities for children to learn, grow, and develop through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood.
Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative²³	Prevent young people and their families from losing housing.
Communities of Opportunity Capital Projects	Support communities to create equitable conditions so that children and families can thrive. Provide monies for facility/building repairs, maintenance, upgrades and new construction or expansion to improve access to high quality programs and services for low income children, youth, families and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).
Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	Offers free provision and co-creation of information, tools, resources to strengthen the infrastructure of <i>Best Starts</i> -awarded organizations, and opportunities for areas with service gaps to build capacity. Offers free writing support when applying for <i>Best Starts</i> dollars.
Data and Evaluation	Use data and evaluation to understand how strategies are benefiting children and communities.

Child Care Subsidy & Wage Boost Demonstration Project | 2022-2027 Funding Estimate: \$199,341,000
Best Starts funding provides a new opportunity for King County to lead in strengthening child care as critical infrastructure. *Best Starts* will partner with one or more intermediaries to administer subsidies to expand access to child care at licensed centers or family child care sites for approximately 3,000 children aged birth to 12 and their families. The proposed *Best Starts for Kids* Wage Boost Demonstration Project will allocate at least \$5 million annually to provide a salary supplement to up to 1,400 low-paid child care providers working with children aged birth to 12 in King County.

²¹ The Heckman Equation: The Economics of Human Potential [\[LINK\]](#).

²² Browne, C., Notkin, S., Schneider-Muñoz, A., & Zimmerman, F. (2015). Youth Thrive: A Framework to Help Adolescents Overcome Trauma and Thrive. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 25, 33-52. [\[LINK\]](#)

²³ As described above, Ordinance 18088 directed investing \$19M from 2016 revenue, and \$2M were added in 2017 to support additional program needs.

Investing Early | 2022-2027 Funding Estimate: \$291,011,000

Best Starts invests early to support pregnant and parenting families, infants, very young children, and caregivers during the critical first five years of life. *Best Starts'* robust system of support services and resources meet families where they are, either at home, in the community, or wherever children are cared for. Table 2 summarizes Investing Early strategies.

Table 2: *Investing Early Strategies Funding Estimates*

Strategy	2022-2027 Funding Estimate
Maternal and Child Health Services provide a range of vital supports at home, clinic, and community settings to pregnant individuals and parenting families.	\$89,024,000
Home-Based Services provides relationship-based support to expecting parents and parents of children aged birth to five in the places they live.	\$63,398,000
Community-Based Parenting Supports (CBPS) provides community-centered, peer-based services to pregnant individuals, parents, and caregivers of children aged birth to five.	\$24,091,000
Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) promotes equitable outcomes for families with children, aged birth to three, who have developmental delays or disabilities.	\$28,529,000
Universal Developmental Screening provides information, training, tools, and connections among providers to ensure all King County children receive culturally appropriate, high-quality developmental screening throughout early childhood.	\$19,020,000
Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC) promotes the health, safety, and development of children and caregivers in child care settings.	\$21,555,000
Systems Building for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health focuses on improving social and emotional outcomes of young children aged birth to five.	\$9,510,000
Workforce Development provides training, technical assistance, and peer learning opportunities to build the knowledge and skills of early childhood practitioners.	\$8,305,000
Innovation Supports leverages the expertise and creativity of community to design, develop, and lead effective programs and interventions serving children aged birth to five and their families.	\$6,340,000
Help Me Grow empowers families to support their children's health by connecting them to what they need, when and how they need it.	\$16,484,000
Environmental Supports: Lead and Toxics builds on this leadership to prevent childhood lead poisoning, identify and reduce exposures to environmental toxics, and equitably improve health outcomes.	\$4,755,000

Sustain the Gain | 2022-2027 Funding Estimate: \$215,333,000

The Sustain the Gain investment area supports programs that empower youth; support social-emotional development, mental wellbeing, positive identity, health, academics and employability; and provide safe and healthy spaces for youth to connect with peers and supportive adults in and out of school. Table 3 summarizes the strategies in the Sustain the Gain investment area.

Table 3: Sustain the Gain Strategies Funding Estimates

Strategy	2022-2027 Funding Estimate
Expanded Learning provides high-quality and culturally responsive programming to children and youth, including access to a range of activities from academic enrichment to cultural and social development activities, recreation, physical activity and health promotion, arts education, and leadership skills.	\$44,094,000
Youth Development invests in mentoring, leadership and positive identity development, and opportunities to learn how to develop healthy and safe relationships (including domestic violence prevention and peer to peer support).	\$28,212,000
SB:SBIRT School-Based Screening and Brief Intervention and for Referral to Treatment/Services provides prevention, outreach, and early intervention to address mental health and substance use impacts during the critical middle school years.	\$15,691,000
School-Based Health Centers provide comprehensive medical, mental health, and dental services in school settings to children and adolescents who are often underserved by the medical community.	\$19,020,000
Liberation and Healing addresses community trauma and its impacts on young people by promoting strengths-based social and emotional supports.	\$30,748,000
Positive Family Connections strengthen parent-to-parent engagement, kinship care relationships, intergenerational and cultural heritage bonds, restorative practices, personal development for young people and parents/caregivers, and the connections among these family members.	\$8,876,000
Healthy and Safe Environments funds community partners empowering youth to transform systems, environments, and policies to decrease and prevent continued inequity in their communities.	\$6,340,000
Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline (SSPP) invests in direct service programs as an alternative to harmful punitive legal measures, and drives policy and systems change work to shift the current juvenile legal system.	\$29,480,000
Transitions to Adulthood helps young people who face major barriers to meet their education and employment goals.	\$30,019,000
Child and Adolescent Immunizations addresses systemic barriers to vaccine delivery, and communities' emergent and changing basic healthcare needs by gathering key stakeholders and implementing quality improvement in pediatric healthcare.	\$2,853,000

Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative | 2022-2027 Funding Estimate: \$29,241,000

The Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI) prevents youth and families with children from becoming homeless by intervening quickly with landlords and housing providers to assist with maintaining permanent housing. YFHPI is implemented through diverse community partners. The program combines case management with financial assistance where necessary to enable families to maintain long-term housing stability.

Communities of Opportunity | 2022-2027 Funding Estimate: \$46,534,000

COO is a network of residents, communities, decision-makers, and funders who believe every community can be a healthy, thriving community and that equity and racial justice are both necessary and achievable. *Best Starts* understands that the conditions in communities play an important role in contributing to healthy, thriving children and families. COO works to secure additional funding sources to its program strategies; thus, it is important to retain flexibility in allocating amounts to the program areas. Each program strategy outlined in Table 4 below includes an estimated funding range, expressed as a percentage of the total COO funding.²⁴

Table 4: *Communities of Opportunity Strategies Funding Estimates*

Strategy	2022-2027 Funding Estimate
Partnerships in place-based and cultural communities supporting local solutions	40-45 percent of COO funding
Policies and systems change for racial, economic, and health equity	40-45 percent of COO funding
Capacity building in community-based groups , testing innovative models and leveraging collective knowledge to accelerate change	Minimum 10 percent and up to 20 percent of COO funding

Capital Grants Program | 2022-2027 Funding Estimate: \$50,000,000

Best Starts' Capital Grants Program will provide contracts for building repairs, maintenance, upgrades and new construction or expansion to improve access to high quality programs and services for low-income children, youth, families and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). The program will focus on equitable community-driven development to ensure projects are aligned with and serve the community's needs. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to, recreational, early learning, and child care facilities and housing for youth, young adults, and families.²⁵ As directed by Ordinance 19267, funding will be available for capital contracts when *Best Starts* levy revenues are anticipated above \$822 million.²⁶ Revenue forecasts will be evaluated annually to determine the amount of funding available. If projections are less, then the Capital Grants Program will be reduced accordingly.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building | 2022-2027 Funding Estimate: \$11,750,000

Best Starts recognizes that many organizations, and the communities they serve, have historically experienced barriers to funding opportunities from government agencies such as King County. To address this, *Best Starts* provides free technical assistance to remove linguistic, cultural, and procedural obstacles that might prevent qualified organizations from seeking *Best Starts* funding.

Best Starts Capacity Building Support (CB) is available to *Best Starts*-awarded organizations to provide and co-create information, tools, and resources to strengthen their infrastructure, address service gaps,

²⁴ Funding levels will be determined by the COO Governance Group and the sum of the percentages allocated will equal 100 percent. Ordinance 18422. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁵ Grant funds will be offered annually through competitive procurement informed by community engagement.

²⁶ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

and build capacity. Capacity builders offer individualized, responsive coaching and training to support organizations' capabilities.²⁷

Data and Evaluation | 2022-2027 Funding Estimate: \$29,100,000

Best Starts evaluation investments will support a team of highly technical and skilled staff, the development and maintenance of robust data systems, and partnerships with external evaluators with deep expertise. With this investment, *Best Starts* will continue to develop insight that enables providers, communities, and policymakers to make more data-informed decisions and engage in continuous quality improvement. *Best Starts* assesses its results beginning with Results Based Accountability (RBA), and supplements RBA with additional evaluation activities. The resulting framework includes population indicators, performance measurement, and in-depth evaluation for a subset of strategies.

The Executive will provide the *Best Starts* Annual Report on Levy Expenditures, Services, and Outcomes (*Best Starts* Annual Report) no later than July 15 each year from 2023 through 2028, covering the prior calendar year.²⁸ *Best Starts* Annual Reports will provide data for the Investing Early, Sustain the Gain, COO, YFHPI, child care, capital grants, and technical assistance and capacity building strategy areas, and will phase in the additional geographic detail required by Ordinance 19267 starting in 2023 and 2024.²⁹

Investment Considerations

Investment Flexibility

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, *Best Starts* worked with partners to revise scopes of work within contracts to enable community agencies to be more flexible to meet the needs of families. Through community conversations held in October and November 2020, *Best Starts* partners expressed that the flexible funding during the COVID-19 pandemic was essential for them to survive unprecedented times.³⁰ Therefore, *Best Starts* intends to continue that type of flexibility as communities rebuild from the pandemic in the coming years.

Geographic Distribution and Targeted Universalism

Best Starts is committed to directly addressing regional, racial, and economic disparities in King County and addressing the systems that create these disparities. To do this, *Best Starts* services are planned with geographic distribution throughout the county and racial equity and social justice (ESJ) in mind, responding to the community's ideas and feedback, and reflecting the results of competitive procurement processes.³¹ To achieve these aims, a targeted universalism³² approach guides *Best Starts'* service distribution; this approach recognizes that services must be focused where the need is greatest.

²⁷ Areas of support include financial management, human resources, data and evaluation, IT, marketing, board governance, equity and social justice, legal services, and organizational development.

²⁸ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Best Starts for Kids COVID-19 Impacts Report. [\[LINK\]](#)

³¹ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Social Determinants of Health. [\[LINK\]](#)

³² See further discussion of targeted universalism in Section IV.L.

Prorationing

Current modeling as of mid-2021 suggests that no related metropolitan park, fire, or local hospital district prorationing will occur during *Best Starts*' 2022-2027 levy period given current levy rates countywide. If prorationing occurs, *Best Starts* will partner with jurisdictions to identify eligible services to fund that improve health and wellbeing outcomes of children, youth, families, and communities.^{33,34}

Conclusion

The *Best Starts for Kids* levy and the programs and services it supports reflect the fundamental beliefs that King County is a region of considerable opportunity; that all residents benefit when the King County community supports each child, youth, and young adult to achieve their fullest potential; and that lives of health, prosperity and purpose must be within reach for every King County resident. To create these opportunities for King County's young people, in 2022-2027 *Best Starts* will maintain its investments strategies from the first 2016-2021 levy while expanding upon these successes to build new programming such as child care subsidies, and increasing funding for programs for older youth, and capital investments in facilities serving children and youth. To assure transparency and accountability, *Best Starts* will report on its outcomes, expenditures, and program implementation annually.

³³ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

³⁴ RCW 84.52.010. [\[LINK\]](#)

II. Best Starts for Kids Introduction

History, Values and Framework

Best Starts for Kids (*Best Starts*) is King County's community-driven initiative to support every baby born and child raised in King County to be happy, healthy, safe, and thriving. Initially approved by voters in 2015 and in place since 2016, *Best Starts* invests in comprehensive supports for children, youth, young adults, and families and caregivers, catalyzing strong starts in early childhood, and sustaining those gains as children progress to adulthood. By promoting positive outcomes for children, intervening early when kids and families need support, and building on family and community strengths, *Best Starts* launches King County's young people on a path to lifelong health and well-being. Since 2016, *the initiative* has pursued three overarching results:

Best Starts for Kids' Results

4. **Babies are born healthy and given a foundation for a happy, healthy life**
5. **Young people have equitable opportunities to be safe, healthy, and thriving**
6. **Communities offer safe, welcoming environments for their kids**

Through a voter-approved levy lid lift that Washington law limits to six years,³⁵ *Best Starts* takes a disciplined, proactive approach to meet kids and families with the right support at the right time, rather than reacting to crises. Voters approved the first *Best Starts* levy in 2015 with a first-year levy rate of \$0.14 per \$1,000 of a property's assessed value.³⁶ The renewal of this Levy, described in this plan, is subject to voter approval on August 3, 2021.

Anticipating the first *Best Starts* levy expiration, the King County Council passed Motion 15651, requesting the Executive to prepare an assessment report to inform Council deliberations regarding possible renewal of the *Best Starts for Kids* levy.³⁷ In December 2020, Motion 15769 approved the *Best Starts* Assessment Report.³⁸ Building upon the findings and recommendations of the Assessment Report, in January 2021 the Executive transmitted a proposed ballot measure Ordinance to the King County Council to renew and replace the expiring *Best Starts* levy.^{39,40} To accompany the Ordinance, the Executive transmitted a Blueprint Report summarizing the key principles of the proposed ballot measure Ordinance. Ordinance 19267 in April 2021 authorized the placement of the measure on the ballot.

The *Best Starts for Kids* levy and the programs and services it supports reflect the fundamental beliefs

³⁵ [RCW 84.55.050](#)

³⁶ Ordinance 18088 outlined the goals and uses of the original *Best Starts* Levy and provided for its submission to voters. [\[LINK\]](#)

³⁷ Motion 15651. [\[LINK\]](#)

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁴⁰ Motion 15769. [\[LINK\]](#)

that King County is a region of considerable opportunity; that all residents benefit when the King County community supports each child, youth, and young adult to achieve their fullest potential; and that lives of health, prosperity and purpose must be within reach for every King County resident.

Over the last six years, *Best Starts* has worked to assure that neither ZIP code nor family income constrain people from pursuing lives of promise and possibility, while advancing equity in systems and policies that affect families across King County.⁴¹

Best Starts designed its 2016-2021 investment areas and strategies through community feedback and backed by research on human development. *Best Starts* advances each investment area through strategies and programs that are described in section IV of this plan. Each investment area from the 2016-2021 *Best Starts* Levy is described below in Table 5.⁴² These investments areas set the foundation for *Best Starts* and will remain foundational if the Levy is renewed.

Table 5: Investment Descriptions

Investment Strategy	Description
Investing Early ⁴³	Support pregnant individuals, babies, and very young children during their critical developmental years, and their parents with a robust system of support services and resources that meet families where they are: home, community, and in child care
Sustain the Gain ⁴⁴	Continue progress made with school- and community-based opportunities for children to learn, grow, and develop through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood
Communities of Opportunity	Support communities to create equitable conditions so that children and families can thrive
Data and Evaluation	Use data and evaluation to understand how strategies are benefiting children and communities
Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative ⁴⁵	Prevent young people and their families from losing housing

Best Starts is driven by the foundational value that centering the voices and lived experiences of communities across the region most impacted by systemic racism is critical. The Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) that provides governance for *Best Starts* represents an array of King County

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² List of programs funded by *Best Starts* is available online [\[LINK\]](#).

⁴³ The Heckman Equation: The Economics of Human Potential [\[LINK\]](#).

⁴⁴ Browne, C., Notkin, S., Schneider-Muñoz, A., & Zimmerman, F. (2015). Youth Thrive: A Framework to Help Adolescents Overcome Trauma and Thrive. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 25, 33-52. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁴⁵ As described above, Ordinance 18088 directed investing \$19M from 2016 revenue, and \$2M were added in 2017 to support additional program needs.

residents with geographically and culturally diverse perspectives.⁴⁶ In 2016 the CYAB created an equity statement and later a set of equity statement questions that hold *Best Starts* accountable and shape its work. Both are outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 6: CYAB Equity Statement

CYAB Equity Statement	CYAB Equity Statement-Based Questions
<p>Equity is an ardent journey toward well-being as defined by the affected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity demands sacrifice and redistribution of power and resources in order to dismantle systems of oppression, heal continuing wounds, and realize justice. • To achieve equity and social justice, we must first root out deeply entrenched systems of racism. • Equity proactively builds strong foundations of agency, is vigilant for unintended consequences, and boldly aspires to be restorative. • Equity is disruptive and uncomfortable and not voluntary. • Equity is fundamental to the community we want to build. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has this proposal⁴⁷ been defined by the affected? • In what ways will this proposal lead to a redistribution of power? • How does this proposal help to root out systems of racism? • How does this proposal proactively build strong foundations of agency? • How is this proposal vigilant for unintended consequences? • How does this proposal aspire to be restorative? • What systems does this proposal disrupt and how? • How does this proposal help build a beloved community?

Since its inception, *Best Starts for Kids* strove to incorporate equity into every aspect of its development and implementation. The CYAB’s equity statement and questions have been pivotal to guiding the focus on equity throughout *Best Starts*.

Accomplishments

The first *Best Starts for Kids* levy reached 490,000 of King County’s youngest children and new parents/caregivers and 40,000 youth and young adults. The focus on evaluation and achieving outcomes is important for programs to track and report on their performance, while demonstrating successful outcomes.

⁴⁶ King County Ordinance 18217 established the Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) in January 2016 to oversee *Best Starts* and the Youth Action Plan (YAP).

⁴⁷ The question will change to reflect what is being worked on, for example a proposal, policy or request for proposal.

The Figure 2 below highlights selected outcomes and accomplishments from the first *Best Starts for Kids* levy.⁴⁸

Figure 2: Outcome Highlights

Promoting healthy starts from day one

- ✓ Breastfeeding is an important way to bond with a new baby while providing nourishment and building immunities but can be challenging for first-time moms. Among *Best Starts* programs that provide post-partum breastfeeding supports to over 1,000 families, 96 percent of parents started breastfeeding, helping their babies off to a healthy start from day one.

Supporting families navigating a child's earliest years

- ✓ Home visiting provides parents with a trusted source of support to lean on in a child's earliest years. Across *Best Starts* programs, home visitors have provided over 212,000 visits to new families. Kids whose families participated in the ParentChild + home visiting program showed a 57 percent improvement in kindergarten readiness compared to when they started the program.
- ✓ 99 percent of families in community-designed home visiting programs reported that they felt more concrete support, and 96 percent said they increased their knowledge of parenting and child development.

Building the capacity & knowledge of child care workers

- ✓ *Best Starts for Kids* equipped over 17,000 people who care for King County's youngest children with information and skills to support healthy development. Collectively, this group cares for over 70,000 children in King County. *Best Starts for Kids* provided training and support to over 8,000 people who work with King County's youth and young adults, with the potential to impact 300,000 young people in King County.

Partnering with schools to provide a foundation growth & development⁴⁹

- ✓ Prior to the pandemic, *Best Starts* partners worked with over 11,000 youth, parents, caregivers, teachers, and school staff in over 70 schools to create safe, welcoming environments for students facing trauma or adversity. 80 percent of youth in these programs said they felt safer and more valued at school, and 94 percent started coming to school more frequently. Students in Bellevue, Renton, and Vashon Island made over 16,000 visits to new *Best Starts*-funded school-based health centers since construction in 2017. Prior to the

⁴⁸ See [Appendix D](#) for a list of selected outcomes from the *Best Starts* 2016-2021 levy.

⁴⁹ The COVID-19 pandemic deeply impacted many *Best Starts for Kids* programs, performance measures, and outcomes as partners pivoted to provide services in a changing environment. When schools closed to in-person teaching in March 2020, *Best Starts* partners and staff pivoted to meet new needs and adjust strategies to continue ongoing work.

pandemic, 75 percent of students using these school-based health centers passed all their classes.

Strengthening the communities where kids grow up

- ✓ From 2018 through June 2020, Communities of Opportunity collaborated with over 150 organizations to create more than 241 new community partnerships and build the skills and capacity of approximately 2,500 people serving in leadership positions.

Preventing homelessness

- ✓ Since 2017, *Best Starts for Kids*' Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative served over 10,200 youth and families at risk of losing their housing; 96 percent of those completing the program remained housed one year after completing the program.

The first *Best Starts* levy also promoted changes in policies and systems, shifting internal county processes, and supporting community ownership of data. These system and policy changes impacted long standing racial inequities in health outcomes, such as inequities in maternal and infant health and lack of quality, affordable childcare for working families.⁵⁰ Communities have benefited from new funding, and have seen greater efficiencies and ease in their experiences with the County, though much work remains. Communities continue to confront systemic racism and other inequities the global pandemic has exacerbated. *Best Starts* continues to support families amid these turbulent times, responding to their changing needs, and undergirding their strengths to achieve community-wide health and well-being.

⁵⁰ Motion 15769. [\[LINK\]](#)

III. Implementation Plan Background and Methodology

This implementation Plan provides an overview of the *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027 levy, describes overall spending plans, and provides detail on the strategies for the renewal and expansion of *Best Starts*, subject to voter approval of the new levy on August 3, 2021.

A. Department Overview

The King County departments of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and Public Health–Seattle and King County (PHSKC) share an important vision grounded in the King County Strategic Plan:⁵¹ that all King County residents achieve optimal health and well-being and that communities thrive. *Best Starts* supports equitable and comprehensive early development supports and needed supports throughout childhood to assure that all children and families can thrive and prosper. Through *Best Starts for Kids*, DCHS and PHSKC jointly administer *Best Starts* to realize this vision.

Department of Community and Human Services

The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) manages a broad range of programs and services to help the County’s most vulnerable residents and to strengthen its communities. The mission of DCHS is to provide equitable opportunities for people to be healthy, happy, and connected to community. DCHS administers housing and homelessness investments, behavioral health treatment, and human services.

Public Health–Seattle and King County

Public Health-Seattle and King County (PHSKC) is the health department serving all of King County. The mission of PHSKC is to eliminate health inequities and maximize opportunities for every person to achieve optimal health. Overarching goals include: all children are born healthy and thrive; adults live long and healthy lives; and communities support health for all.

DCHS and PHSKC Partnership to Lead Best Starts

DCHS and PHSKC jointly administer *Best Starts* through a cross-departmental approach. This joint approach allows for stronger alignment and the ability to blend DCHS’ human services approach with PHSKC’s health strategies and leverages existing expertise and infrastructure in each department. Working together, DCHS and PHSKC, strives to create a more consistent experience for community-based partners in processes such as contracting, financial reporting, and contract support site visits.

⁵¹ The King County Council approved the King County Strategic Plan [\[LINK\]](#) by Ordinance 16897 in 2010, and adopted the corresponding vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, and priorities by Motion 14317 in 2015.

B. Foundational Policies and Plans

King County is committed to making a welcoming community where every person can thrive. *Best Starts for Kids* carries out this commitment through its framework and strategies that are based on foundational King County policies, plans, and initiatives. The *Best Starts* levy aligns and builds upon the King County Strategic Plan,⁵² the Health & Human Services Transformation Plan,⁵³ the Youth Action Plan,⁵⁴ and the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.⁵⁵

King County Strategic Plan

In 2010, the County enacted Ordinance 16897, establishing the King County Strategic Plan.⁵⁶ In 2015, Motion 14317 revised the County’s vision, mission, guiding principles and goals.⁵⁷ Among the Strategic Plan’s guiding principles is a commitment to “address the root causes of inequities,” and goals include “improv[ing] the health and well-being of all people in our community,” “implementing alternatives to divert people from the criminal justice system,” “increasing access to family wage job opportunities,” and ensuring that government is “accountable to the public.” The Strategic Plan informed the original *Best Starts* Implementation Plan as well as this plan for the 2022-2027 levy.

Health and Human Services Transformation Plan

Under direction of Motion 13768, King County agencies created the Health and Human Services Transformation Plan.⁵⁸ The Plan seeks to improve health and well-being and create conditions that allow residents of King County to achieve their full potential through a focus on prevention. The plan states King County’s commitment to addressing root causes and investing upstream. *Best Starts* focuses on investing in promotion, prevention, and early intervention.

Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan

In accordance with the 2016 Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan, King County actively seeks to eliminate racially disparate health and human services outcomes in this region.⁵⁹ The ESJ Strategic Plan has informed strategies for King County to become a more equitable employer, service provider, and regional partner. These priorities guided *Best Starts for Kids*’ original design process, as noted in this plan’s section on community engagement, and it continues to guide how *Best Starts* programs and

⁵² The King County Council approved the King County Strategic Plan [\[LINK\]](#) by Ordinance 16897 in 2010, and adopted the corresponding vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, and priorities by Motion 14317 in 2015.

⁵³ Motion 13768 requested the development of the Health and Human Services Transformation Plan. [\[LINK\]](#) The King County Council accepted the plan by Motion 13943 in 2013.

⁵⁴ Ordinance 17738 directed the development of the Youth Action Plan. The King County Council adopted the plan by Motion 14378 in 2015. [\[LINK\]](#).

⁵⁵ King County Executive’s Office of Equity and Social Justice (2016). Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁵⁶ King County Strategic Plan, 2010-2014 Plan. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁵⁷ King County Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Goals and Strategic Innovation Priorities. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁵⁸ Motion 13768, King County Council (2013). [\[LINK\]](#)

⁵⁹ King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, 2016-2022. [\[LINK\]](#)

policies are evaluated. *Best Starts* is at the forefront of the County's equity work, and its funded programs are one step toward making the ESJ Strategic Plan's vision a reality.

The Youth Action Plan

The Youth Action Plan (YAP) is a direct forebear of the *Best Starts* initiative.⁶⁰ An unflinching focus on equity is among the shared policies binding the Youth Action Plan to *Best Starts*. The YAP stipulates that the well-being of children, youth, young adults, and families should not be predicted by their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, geography, income, or immigration status. Furthermore, policy development, services, and programming should intentionally include diverse youth voices, and voices of people affected in meaningful ways by policies and services. The YAP serves as a policy frame for *Best Starts*, including this Implementation Plan for Best Starts in 2022-2027.⁶¹ The Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) oversees the County's implementation of the YAP, including *Best Starts*.⁶²

Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund (MIDD)⁶³ and Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL)⁶⁴

Revenue from Best Starts along with MIDD and VSHSL together constitutes a substantial portion of King County's local health and human service investments. These initiatives and their dedicated revenues provide vital services to those most in need in King County. They support service networks for the region's human service, physical and behavioral health, and housing needs. They support programs, services, and regional innovations that cross the lifespan and address service gaps. They also advance King County residents' access to 14 key community factors that King County has identified that every person needs to thrive, referred to in the King County Determinants of Equity Report.⁶⁵

Children and Families Strategy Task Force

The King County Council passed Motion 15521 in 2019 in response to the lack of high-quality and affordable child care.⁶⁵ This motion established the Children and Families Strategy Task Force, which analyzed and researched the potential King County child care assistance program and made recommendations for building an equitable system of child care in King County in a 2020 report.⁶⁶ The Task Force's main findings were as follows:⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Motion 14378 Adopting the King County Youth Action Plan. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁶¹ Ordinance 19267 requires this *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan to take the King County Youth Action Plan into consideration to the maximum extent possible.

⁶² See page 26 for a detailed description of the CYAB.

⁶³ Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Behavioral Health Sales Tax Initiative [LINK](#)

⁶⁴ Veterans and Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) [LINK](#).

⁶⁵ Motion 15521. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁶⁶ Equitable and Accessible Child Care in King County: Recommendations from the Children and Families Strategy Task Force. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁶⁷ Please see a detailed [child care section](#) for rationale and recommendations.

- **Child care is a potent contributor to early childhood development.** Children whose families cannot access care lose out on the benefits of high-quality early learning, which is critical since a child’s brain develops more from birth to five than during the remainder of school years.⁶⁸
- **Child care is in high demand, but supply is scarce in King County.** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Washington State had gained 3,000 child care slots since 2014, but the State’s population of children under age 6 grew by nearly 30,000 during that same timeframe.^{69,70,71}
- **Child care is expensive.** The cost of high-quality infant care at a licensed center has surpassed that of tuition at Washington’s public universities, and a typical single parent in Washington spends over half of their income on child care.⁷²
- **Child care inaccessibility hurts family budgets and the regional economy.** A 2019 study led by the Institute for Public Policy and Economic Analysis found that employee child care issues resulted in an estimated annual loss statewide of \$6.5 billion in direct and opportunity costs.⁷³
- **The essential labor of child care workers does not provide livable wages in King County.** Nearly 15 percent of child care providers live below the poverty line, and many cannot afford care for their own children.⁷⁴

The inequities identified by the County Strategic Plan, Health and Human Services Transformation Plan, Youth Action Plan, ESJ Strategic Plan, and other analyses are largely attributable to generations of public policies and practices that allocate benefit and burden in ways that have favored some while disfavoring and oppressing others.⁷⁵ Inequities that result from policy and practices can be undone by new policies and practices. *Best Starts* is committed to designing and implementing policies and practices to reduce the role that a person’s race or identity plays in whether they benefit from society and feel like they belong. Centering the voices of Black, African American, Indigenous, and other People of Color in investments and program decisions is a key way for King County to build new public policies and practices that will undo inequity and promote comprehensive well-being for the entire community.

⁶⁸ Washington State Department of Commerce Child Care Collaborative Task Force (2019). Recommendations Report to the Legislature under SHB 2367, Laws of 2018. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁶⁹ Washington State Department of Commerce Child Care Collaborative Task Force (2019). Recommendations Report to the Legislature under SHB 2367, Laws of 2018. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁷⁰ Washington State Office of Financial Management (2019). Estimates of April 1 Population by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, State Data Tables 2010-2018. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁷¹ King County *Best Starts for Kids* Health Survey (2019). [\[LINK\]](#)

⁷² Child Care Aware of America (2019). The US and the High Price of Child Care [\[LINK\]](#).

⁷³ Institute for Public Policy and Economic Analysis, Eastern Washington University (2019). Washington State Childcare Study: Analyzing the costs facing businesses due to workforce turnover and missed time associated with inadequate childcare options. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁷⁴ Economic Policy Institute (2015). Child care workers aren’t paid enough to make ends meet. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁷⁵ Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016-2022. [\[LINK\]](#)

C. Ordinance Requirements and Requested Elements

The *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan 2022-2027 responds to the requirements outlined in Ordinance 19267 and elements requested in Motion 15888. Most notably, the *Best Starts* Implementation Plan 2022-2027 includes:^{76,77}

- A description of the annual allocations of levy proceeds;
- A description of the goals and strategies that will remain in the *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan from the *Best Starts for Kids* 2016-2021 Implementation Plan;
- A description of the Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative, a new affordable child care program, a new child care wage boost demonstration project, and continuing technical assistance and capacity building programs that support community-based organizations;
- A description of a capital projects program that outlines process for distributing funds to support repairs and expansion of buildings to support activities for youth and children;
- A description of the framework to measure the performance of levy strategies in achieving their outcomes and require an annual report on levy expenditures, services and outcomes including how to report by zip code level; and
- Identification of strategies related to prevention, outreach and early intervention to address mental health and substance abuse impacts, in children and youth while considering programs and services that access to substance use disorder supports including awareness campaigns on substance abuse.

A comprehensive table of all requirements and how they are addressed within the *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan 2022-2027 can be found in Appendix C.

D. Report Methodology

The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and Public Health—Seattle and King County (PHSKC) team administering *Best Starts* prepared the *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan 2022-2027. This interdepartmental team brought together subject matter expertise, examined successes and challenges from the current Levy, cumulative community feedback, and data from each department to ensure the Implementation Plan reflected community input and governing board guidance. Community and board participation in the development of this plan are outlined in the next two sections of this report.

⁷⁶ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁷⁷ Motion 15888. [\[LINK\]](#)

E. Community Engagement Summary

Communities informed planning for the proposed renewal and expansion, leading to the *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027 Implementation Plan. In July 2020, *Best Starts* sought community input via a survey on what the public felt had gone well and what modifications they wished to see if the levy were renewed. *Best Starts* received over 180 responses to the survey. Building off this feedback, *Best Starts* then partnered with 10 regionally based coalitions of community organizations and five community stakeholder groups to host 15 listening sessions, from August through November 2020. Over 600 constituents attended the listening sessions and provided feedback. Community feedback stakeholder groups included Trauma Informed Restorative Practices Village, LGBTQ Allyship, Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC) and *Best Starts for Kids* Summit Listening Sessions.⁷⁸

Rich feedback from the community survey and listening sessions informed the recommendations for a renewed and expanded *Best Starts* levy. Community participants consistently expressed the desire to continue and expand current *Best Starts* programs, and to amplify *Best Starts*' commitment to racial equity. Figure 3 provides highlights of findings gathered from community engagement.

⁷⁸ See a complete list of Community Engagement Stakeholders in [Appendix J](#).

Figure 3: Community Partnership Key Themes

Key Themes from *Best Starts*' 2020 Community Partnership and Engagement:

What *Best Starts* priorities are most important to continue?

- **Technical Assistance and Capacity Building has been important for CBOs.** *Best Starts*' approach to equity and effective contracting often meant working with community partners that have not engaged previously with King County. The ability to support partners in developing their organizations and to invest in their infrastructure has helped provider organizations deliver better services and meet County contracting requirements.
- **Flexibility to adjust funding to meet unmet needs, especially during COVID-19, has been critical.** Contracts that focus on *what* changes and outcomes to achieve rather than on overly specific requirements on *how* to provide services equip contracted partners with the right amount of flexibility to serve clients. The ability to tailor services became even more important in 2020 as needs in communities changed quickly.
- **Clear focus on racial equity should continue and deepen.** Undoing a problem as engrained and pernicious as racism will require constant attention. Long-standing government practices have for centuries systematized racism. Government policies that will contribute to undoing racism must receive tireless support to succeed.
- **Multi-year funding structure creates needed stability.** It is difficult for a community-based provider to hire and sustain staff and form effective client and community relationships when funding patterns create too much uncertainty. Although communities want opportunities for new organizations to apply for *Best Starts* funding, funding commitments of greater than one year are stabilizing and better support effective services.

Key Themes from *Best Starts*' 2020 Community Partnership and Engagement:

How can *Best Starts* for Kids improve?

- **Streamline data collection and reporting processes.** Reporting, especially for smaller organizations, should not become so detailed or cumbersome that it distracts from service delivery.
- **Continue to expand funding to reach all areas of King County, including rural and unincorporated.** Scarcity of human services and public health funding means that programs are rarely well-funded enough to meet the level of need in the community. Expanding funding is important to allow public health and human service areas to grow and create service access, even in more remote and less traditionally well served parts of the County.
- **Provide continuity and flexible funding.** In addition to scarcity, community partners routinely experience funding instability and funding rigidity that complicate service delivery and effectiveness. Even though *Best Starts*' relatively

longer and more flexible funding approaches were identified as a strength, community members identified the importance of doing more to promote continuity and flexibility.

- **Continue to develop intentional and effective partnerships with community, incorporate parents and young people in decision-making.** The field of human services has a long history of *doing to* communities and clients instead of *working in partnership* with communities and clients. *Best Starts* should deepen efforts to support communities' and clients' agency in their own development, including a specific focus on engaging children, youth, and young adults in decision making.

Feedback from community engagement informed the Levy renewal proposal in Ordinance 19267 along with this Implementation Plan. *Best Starts* centers community voice in creating a strong policy frame and levy strategies so that the work of *Best Starts* is co-designed in partnership with community to reflect the needs and goals of the entire county.

In June 2021, *Best Starts* went back to community members and asked the question: Based on what *Best Starts* heard when engaging in the renewal process, what additional feedback do you have? *Best Starts* then partnered again with the same 10 regionally based coalitions of community organizations and five community stakeholder groups to host 15 listening sessions. Community indicated the following refinements as reflected in this Implementation Plan. During the community feedback sessions in June of 2021, the prevalent themes remained consistent. The need to support the youth and young adults' mental wellness through community driven approaches was identified along with the need and excitement for childcare subsidies.

Continued community engagement and feedback throughout a renewed and expanded, voter-approved *Best Starts* levy will be crucial to respond to existing and emerging community needs.

F. Governing Board Guidance

King County Ordinance 18217 established the Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) in January 2016 to oversee *Best Starts* and the Youth Action Plan (YAP).^{79,80} The Communities of Opportunity (COO) Governance Group (GG) serves as the COO *Best Starts for Kids* Levy Advisory Board established in King County Code chapter 2A.300 by Ordinance 18442 in 2016.⁸¹ The governance boards provide both oversight and strategic vision to *Best Starts*. Strategy-specific board workgroups guided planning in February, March, and April of 2021. Both boards hosted workdays in May 2021 to provide input and voted to endorse the *Best Starts* Implementation Plan 2022-2027 in June 2021.

⁷⁹Children and Youth Advisory Board. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁸⁰ King County Youth Action Plan Task Force (2015). *King County Youth Action Plan*. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁸¹ Ordinance 18422. [\[LINK\]](#)

By October 1, 2021, the Executive will transmit a separate *Best Starts for Kids* governance update report that will recommend changes to the King County Code to refine the composition of the boards. Refinements will include updates to better reflect the communities being served. Proposed legislation to implement these recommendations will accompany the report.

IV. Best Starts Plan for 2022-2027

A. Framework and Results

This section describes the theoretical framework and intended results for *Best Starts*, which draw upon continuous community input and national science and research. The framework identifies key promotive and protective factors as well as common risk factors that *Best Starts* programming focuses on to undo long-standing disparities. These factors, which align with the outcomes identified in Ordinance 19267, include results such as: promoting connections, improving social-emotional competence, and reducing poor birth outcomes.⁸² Research demonstrates that increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors will improve outcomes for youth and their communities, to ensure that all young people in King County are healthy, happy and safe and thriving.⁸³

The graphics below, adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy: Youth Thrive, illustrate the relationship between promotive and protective factors, risk factors, and outcomes.⁸⁴ The three versions of the graphic are adaptations of the *Best Starts* theoretical framework for three populations: youth ages zero to five, youth ages five to 24, and communities. The three applications of the framework are the basis for identifying *Best Starts* investment areas and strategies.

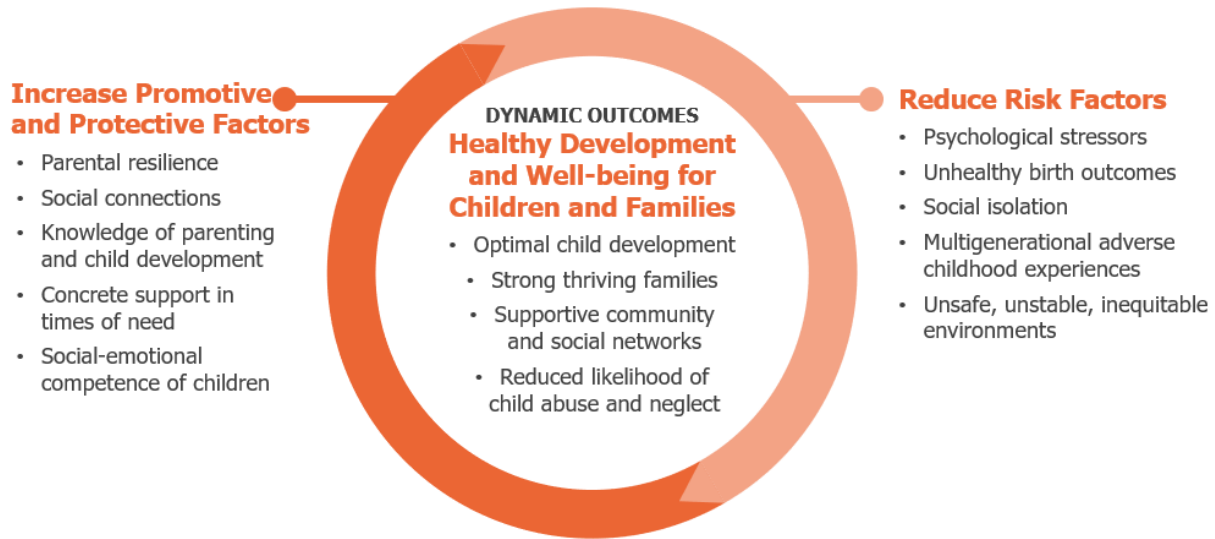
Graphic 1 depicts the intended results for *Best Starts*' programs serving prenatal to age five: increasing promotive and protective factors as shown on the left and decreasing risk factors as shown on the right. Together these interventions drive toward the dynamic outcomes identified in the middle, which include strong child development in the context of thriving families and supportive communities. This application of the framework guides the development of Investing Early strategies. It also helps to shape three *Best Starts* investment areas that span age groups: the Child Care Subsidies and Wage Boost Demonstration Project investment area, the Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative, and the Capital Grant Program.

⁸² Ordinance 19267, Metropolitan King County Council (2021) [\[LINK\]](#)

⁸³ Center for the Study of Social Policy–Youth Thrive. [\[LINK\]](#)

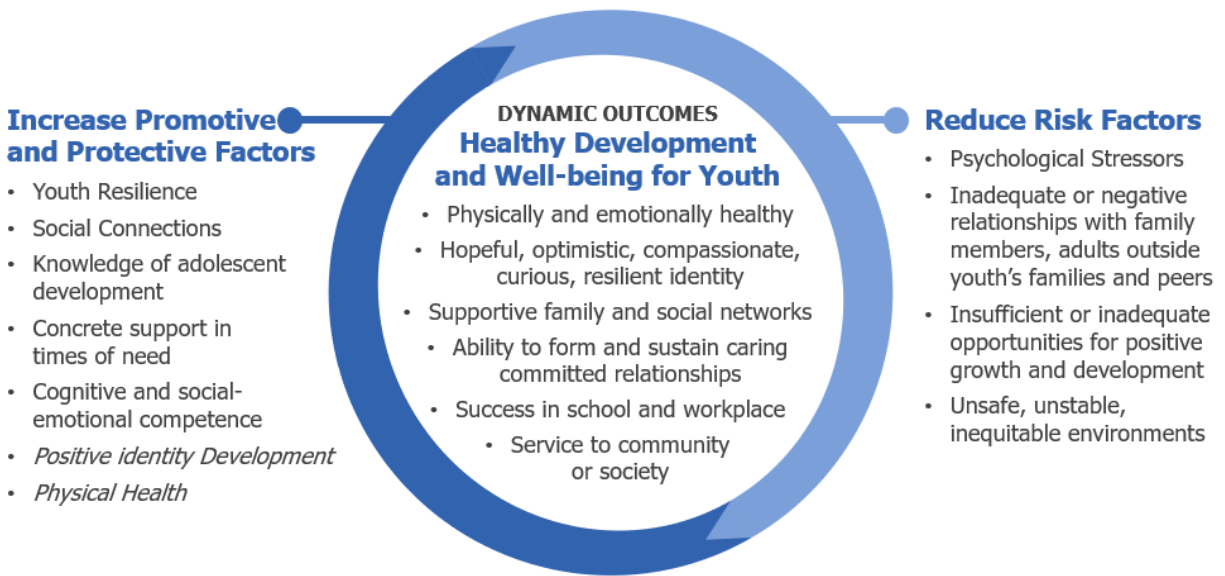
⁸⁴ Browne, C., Notkin, S., Schneider-Muñoz, A., & Zimmerman, F. (2015). Youth Thrive: A Framework to Help Adolescents Overcome Trauma and Thrive. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 25, 33-52. [\[LINK\]](#)

Graphic 1: Promotive and Protective Factors (0-5)



Graphic 2 depicts the framework as adjusted to reflect developmental needs for youth ages five to 24. At this age, dynamic outcomes include health and resilience, supportive networks, and success in school, workplace, and community.

Graphic 2: Promotive and Protective Factors (5-24)



Adapted from Center for the Study of Social Policy – YOUTH THRIVE

This application of the framework guides the development of Sustain the Gain strategies. It also helps to inform *Best Starts'* the Child Care Subsidies and Wage Boost Demonstration Project, the Youth and

Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative, and the Capital Grant Program, the three investment areas that serve multiple age ranges.

The Communities of Opportunity (COO) Governance Group met during winter 2020 through spring of 2021 to review the set of principles, strategies and investments, and expected outcomes for COO. This led to the theoretical framework for COO outlined in Graphic 3 below which reinforces the alignment with *Best Starts*. This also reflects a community-designed and research-based commitment to racial and economic equity. Similarly, the positive outcomes observable in equitable communities are shown on the left, while the factors *Best Starts* strives to reduce related to systemic barriers are shown on the right. The intended results of Communities of Opportunity are in the center, and include healthy and economically secure people, inclusive and affordable communities, and anti-racist systems. This application of the framework guides the implementation of Communities of Opportunity.

Graphic 3: Promotive and Protective Factors (COO)



This theoretical framework and its three applications guide *Best Starts*' identification of investment areas and strategies. The Investing Early, Sustain the Gain, and Communities of Opportunity investment strategies are each aligned with a single application of the framework. As noted above, Investments in Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative, Child Care Subsidies and Wage Demonstration Project, and Capital Grants span the age ranges *Best Starts* serves and thus are informed by the frameworks represented in Graphics 1,2, and 3. These investment areas aim to reduce the risk of unsafe, unstable, or inequitable environments.

The strategy selection process within each investment area was grounded in the theoretical framework and guided by community feedback. Each selected strategy reflects community feedback and addresses one or more promotive, protective, or risk factors, which often intersect. The set of strategies is

designed to address all of the dynamic outcomes in the framework. Together, they provide a framework and guide to promote positive outcomes for all *Best Starts* families, children, youth and communities. They also inform the development of performance measures and evaluation plans for all the selected strategies.⁸⁵

To achieve *Best Starts'* results, each of the initiative's eight investment areas are grounded in the framework as noted above. The eight investment areas are Child Care Subsidies and Wage Demonstration Project, Investing Early, Sustain the Gain, Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative, Communities of Opportunity, Capital Projects, Capacity Building and Technical Assistance, and Data and Evaluation. Details for each investment area are described in Section C.

B. Fiscal Overview

This section describes annual allocations of levy proceeds based on the requirements from Ordinance 19267, and the structure of the overall levy.⁸⁶ A spending plan reflecting expected revenue of \$883.8 million over the six years of Best Starts 2022-2027 is outlined in detail below.

The following assumptions are the base of the Best Starts 2022-2027 Implementation Plan fiscal requirements:

- Revenues are estimated based on the latest available forecasts. They are not guaranteed.⁸⁷
- The fiscal portion of the implementation plan meets the allocation requirements of the levy, then meets reserve requirements,⁸⁸ then makes capital project contributions to the degree sufficient revenue is available.
- Current estimates of reserves and capital project contributions assume beginning the new levy with a fund balance of approximately \$25.1 million.

Revenue estimates for *Best Starts* from 2022-2027 are based on an increase in the levy rate from \$0.14 per \$1,000 of assessed value to \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The revenue and expenditure estimates listed reflect the proposed levy rate, the taxable assessed valuation, and the projected assessed valuation growth rate based on the July 2021 forecast from the King County Office of Economic and Financial Analysis.⁸⁹ Table 7 below outlines the expected revenue per year, estimated at \$883.8 million over the six years of the levy. The revenue also includes estimated revenue from other sources (investment/interest income) in the amount of \$500,000 annually.

⁸⁵ The data and evaluation plan for *Best Starts* is described in Section IV.K. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁸⁶ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁸⁷ King County Assessor. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁸⁸ King County's comprehensive financial management policies require King County levies to keep a rainy-day reserve equivalent to 90 days of operating expenditures on hand. Motion 15250. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁸⁹ King County Assessor. [\[LINK\]](#)

Table 7: *Expected Revenue*

Expected Revenue (in millions)	
2022	\$132M
2023	\$137.9M
2024	\$144M
2025	\$150M
2026	\$156.6M
2027	\$163M
2022-2027 TOTAL:	\$883.8M

Allocation Direction from Ordinance 19267

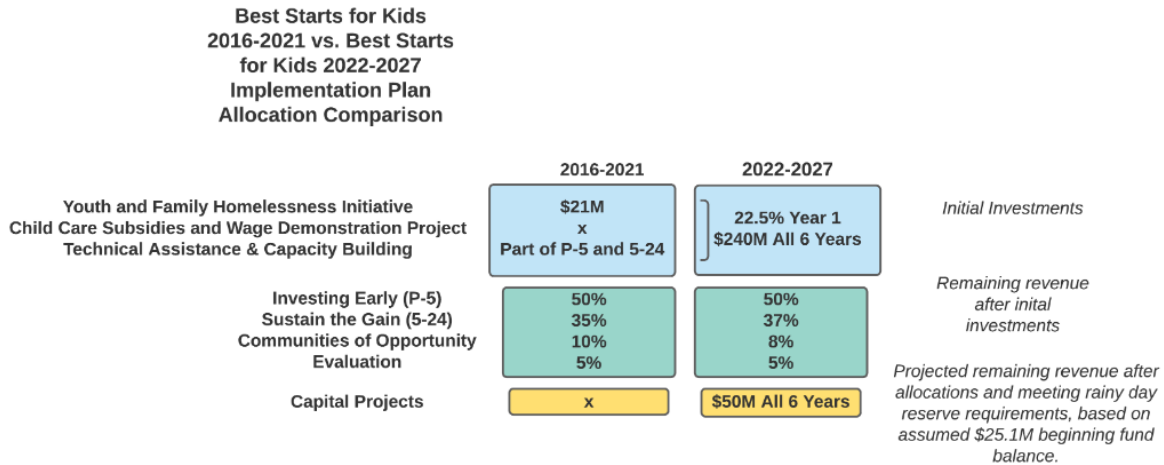
Allocations to Investing Early, Communities of Opportunity, and Data and Evaluation, remain similar to those in the first levy with an increase to Technical Assistance and Capacity Building and Sustain the Gain investments. These increases are based upon identified need from community feedback and learnings about *Best Starts* 2016-2021 through the *Best Starts For Kids* Assessment Report transmitted in response to Motion 15651.⁹⁰ A new investment in Child Care Subsidies and Wage Boost Programs for the 2022-2027 *Best Starts* levy is based upon recommendations from the Children and Families Strategy Task Force.⁹¹ Lastly, a new category of capital grants, contingent on revenue projections exceeding \$822 million, has been added to support improvements to facilities and development of new facilities.⁹² A comparison between the allocation of the two levies is outlined in Figure 4.

⁹⁰ Best Starts Assessment Report Recommendations, page 139. [LINK](#)

⁹¹ Children & Family Strategy Task Force report. [LINK](#)

⁹² Ordinance 19267. [LINK](#)

Figure 4: Allocation Comparison



Ordinance 19267 specifies that 22.5 percent of all first-year proceeds after election costs will be dedicated to the Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative, Child Care Subsidies and the Wage Demonstration Project, as well as Technical Assistance and Capacity Building. Ordinance 19267 also requires that at least \$240 million over the life of the levy be invested in these areas. When levy proceeds exceed \$822 million, the Ordinance directs up to \$50 million to support capital projects.

Remaining levy proceeds are then allocated according to the following percentages:

- Investing Early at 50 percent, to support programs for children ages prenatal to five;
- Sustain the Gain at 37 percent, for services for children and you aged five to 24;
- Communities of Opportunity at eight percent, to impact racial and economic equity; and
- Data and Evaluation at five percent. This includes evaluation, stipends for children and youth serving on the CYAB, and prorationing mitigation to replace any lost fire, hospital, and parks districts in the event this levy suppresses their levies.⁹³

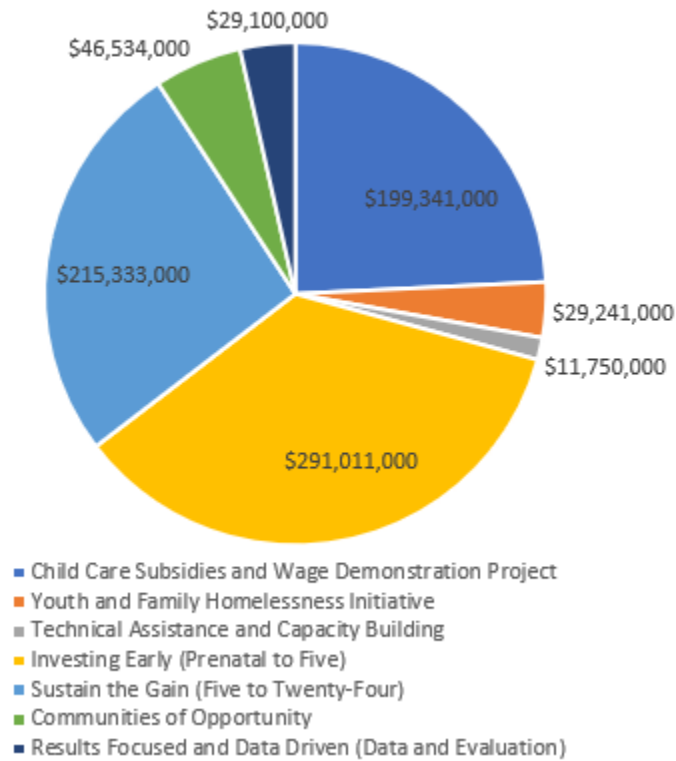
Figure 5 shows proportional spending in the seven categories of operating investment over the total six-year life of *Best Starts’* 2022-2027 levy, based on current projections, excluding capital investments. Investing Early (prenatal to age five) is the largest investment at a projected \$291 million over the life of the levy, followed closely by Sustain the Gain (ages five to 24) at \$215 million and Child Care Subsidies

⁹³ Current modeling does not suggest prorationing will occur during this levy period given current levy rates countywide, though economic trends reducing assessed property value or rate increases from other taxing districts may change that forecast. For more information about prorationing mitigation, see Section IV.M.

and Wage Boost Demonstration project at \$199 million. See below for all other projected operating expenditures for operating costs prior to capital contributions.

Figure 5: Projected Total Expenditures 2022-2027 Excluding Capital Projects

Total Operating Expenditures Over Life of Levy*



*Does not include capital projects

Annual expenditure projections for each investment area, as well as for capital project contributions, are detailed in Table 8.

Table 8: Projected Total Expenditures, Revenues, Reserves and Capital Project Contributions

Expenditures - Rounded to the nearest thousand	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total*	% Allocation for 2022, as required by Ordinance	% Allocation of all expenditures after 2022 set-asides
Child Care Subsidies and Wage Demonstration Project	23,260,000	31,136,000	32,175,000	35,145,000	38,491,000	39,135,000	\$199,341,000	\$240,332,000	22.50%
Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative	\$4,564,000	\$4,834,000	\$4,944,000	\$4,959,000	\$4,964,000	\$4,974,000	\$29,241,000		
Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	\$1,850,000	\$1,900,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$11,750,000		
Investing Early (P-5)	\$46,050,000	\$46,857,000	\$47,901,000	\$48,968,000	\$50,060,000	\$51,176,000	\$291,011,000		50%
Sustain the Gain (5-24)	\$33,965,000	\$34,712,000	\$35,476,000	\$36,256,000	\$37,054,000	\$37,869,000	\$215,333,000		37%
Communities of Opportunity	\$7,340,000	\$7,501,000	\$7,667,000	\$7,835,000	\$8,008,000	\$8,184,000	\$46,534,000		8%
Results Focused and Data Driven (Data and Evaluation)	\$4,590,000	\$4,691,000	\$4,794,000	\$4,900,000	\$5,007,000	\$5,118,000	\$29,100,000		5%
Total Expenditures:	\$121,619,000	\$131,631,000	\$134,957,000	\$140,064,000	\$145,584,000	\$148,455,000	\$822,310,000		100%
Projected Revenues	\$132,016,753	\$137,905,919	\$143,930,691	\$150,133,742	\$156,571,036	\$163,248,927	\$883,807,068		
90-Day Rainy-Day Reserve**	\$29,912,000	\$32,457,000	\$33,277,000	\$34,536,000	\$35,898,000	\$36,605,000	\$36,605,000		
Capital Projects**	\$5,000,000	\$7,500,000	\$5,000,000	\$8,750,000	\$9,500,000	\$14,250,000	\$50,000,000		

* Per Ordinance 19267, subsection 4.D, initial investments in child care subsidies and wage demonstration project, youth and family homelessness initiative, and technical assistance and capacity building must be at least \$240M over the life of the levy. Per Ordinance 19267 Section 4.E, capital expenditures may not exceed \$50 million and may be reduced if projected total levy proceeds fall below \$872 million.

**Assumes beginning fund balance of \$25.1M in addition to new revenue

In summary, the 2022-2027 Best Starts for Kids Levy builds on the investments of the prior levy by continuing many areas of investment, refining investment allocations to meet the needs of the community, increasing investments for youth, and adding important new resources for capital projects and child care subsidies and the wage boost demonstration project. All estimates in this plan for operating expenditures, reserves, and capital project contributions are based on current 2021 spending projections and the latest revenue estimates available as of July 2021. Revisions will be made, as needed, through close collaboration between *Best Starts* leaders and the King County Council. For more details, see Section IV.C for a description of each investment area and strategy, or Appendix H for a table with strategy-level annual budget allocations for *Best Starts*' operating investments.

C. Investment Area and Strategy Summary

The *Best Starts* 2022-2027 levy maintains and builds upon the first *Best Starts* levy's investments, while also adding new strategies to address the region's critical child care needs, deepening investments in youth, and including opportunities for capital projects.

Table 9 below summarizes the investment areas as outlined within this Implementation Plan. Each investment area has strategies and programs to address critical needs within the County.

Table 9: Summary of Investment Areas

Investment Areas	Description
Child Care Subsidies and Wage Boost Demonstration Project	Expand access for children and their families who are not eligible for existing federal, state, or local subsidy programs or for whom these programs are insufficient. Support investments in the child care workforce through a wage boost demonstration project.
Investing Early⁹⁴	Support pregnant individuals, babies, and very young children during their critical developmental years, and their parents with a robust system of support services and resources that meet families where they are: home, community, and in child care to increase optimal child development.
Sustain the Gain⁹⁵	Continue progress made with school- and community-based opportunities for children to learn, grow, and develop through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood.
Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative⁹⁶	Prevent young people and their families from losing housing.
Communities of Opportunity	Support communities to create equitable conditions so that children and families can thrive.

⁹⁴ The Heckman Equation: The Economics of Human Potential [\[LINK\]](#).

⁹⁵ Browne, C., Notkin, S., Schneider-Muñoz, A., & Zimmerman, F. (2015). Youth Thrive: A Framework to Help Adolescents Overcome Trauma and Thrive. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 25, 33-52. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁹⁶ As described above, Ordinance 18088 directed investing \$19M from 2016 revenue, and \$2M were added in 2017 to support additional program needs.

Capital Projects	Provide monies for facility/building repairs, maintenance, upgrades and new construction or expansion to improve access to high quality programs and services for low income children, youth, families and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).
Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	Offers free provision and co-creation of information, tools, resources to strengthen the infrastructure of <i>Best Starts</i> -awarded organizations, and opportunities for areas with service gaps to build capacity. Offers free writing support when applying for <i>Best Starts</i> dollars.
Data and Evaluation	Use data and evaluation to understand how strategies are benefiting children and communities.

The next eight sections of this Implementation Plan provides additional implementation information for each investment area, including:

- funding allocations for each strategy area;
- strategy and program descriptions;
- rationale for new or expanding investments with the strategies;
- approximate scope; and
- anticipated timeline for implementation.

D. Child Care

Child Care Subsidies and Wage Boost Demonstration Project

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$22,260,000	\$31,136,000	\$32,175,000	\$35,145,000	\$38,491,000	\$39,135,000	\$199,341,000

Best Starts funding provides a new opportunity for King County to lead in strengthening child care as critical infrastructure. *Best Starts* will expand access to care for children and their families just above the eligibility threshold for existing federal, state, or local subsidy programs, those categorically ineligible for those programs despite meeting income eligibility criteria, or those for whom other subsidies are insufficient to make care affordable. Funding will also support investments in the child care workforce through a wage boost demonstration project, with the intent of recognizing child care providers’ contributions, improving employee retention, and increasing continuity of care and quality in child care settings.

Child Care Subsidy Program

Strategy Description:

Best Starts for Kids funding will support a subsidy program to expand access to affordable and high quality child care for lower- and middle-income King County families. *Best Starts* will partner with one or more intermediaries to administer subsidies to support the cost of child care at licensed centers or

family child care sites for approximately 3,000 children aged birth to 12 and their families. *Best Starts* will establish standardized eligibility criteria for its subsidies across King County that complement other established child care subsidies.

The intent of *Best Starts*' child care subsidy programming is to build on rather than duplicate other existing subsidy programs. Several subsidy programs currently serve Washington State residents, including Working Connections Child Care (WCCC),⁹⁷ Head Start,⁹⁸ and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP).⁹⁹ The City of Seattle also has significant investments in child care programming, including the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP).¹⁰⁰ *Best Starts* plans to provide subsidies to fill eligibility gaps in these existing programs and cover families outside of these programs' income eligibility limits. By extending eligibility and filling gaps, *Best Starts* will create a coordinated net of coverage to ensure families across the County have equitable access to the care they need.

Recent increased concern about needs and gaps in the child care sector has resulted in a dynamic and quickly shifting landscape. In 2021, the Washington State Legislature passed Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5237, the Fair Start for Kids Act, which significantly expands income eligibility for WCCC and ECEAP.¹⁰¹ Increased Fair Start Act investments are expected to expand WCCC eligibility to families making up to 60 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) beginning October 1, 2021, which is approximately \$52,000 for a family of three, and to 75 percent of SMI beginning July 1, 2025.¹⁰² While these investments will greatly increase the number of families eligible for child care supports statewide, King County's high cost of living means that many families whose incomes are slightly too high for WCCC will still struggle to afford child care.

The goal of *Best Starts*' child care subsidy investment is to expand equitable access to high quality and affordable child care for more families in King County. The long-term vision for this investment is seamless and equitable access for all families, and a holistic and collaborative approach with other government and funding partners. Toward this end, *Best Starts* will coordinate closely with local and state partners to understand where gaps and needs exist, how to coordinate services, and how best to prioritize families who need access most. These dynamics will likely shift throughout the life of *Best Starts*' 2022-2027 levy, requiring King County to be nimble, flexible, and innovative to best meet the needs of children, families, and providers in this region. As a result, *Best Starts* subsidy eligibility will evolve to adjust to other program changes in child care access for low- and middle-income families. *Best Starts* will calibrate subsidies to ensure funding streams are aligned and leveraged to expand access and affordability and to ensure a seamless and easily accessible experience for families.

⁹⁷ Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). [\[LINK\]](#)

⁹⁸ Head Start. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁹⁹ Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁰⁰ City of Seattle. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁰¹ Fair Start Act E2SSB 5237. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁰² Washington State Department of Social and Human Services State Median Income Chart. [\[LINK\]](#)

Planned populations for eligibility include:

- Families living just above the income eligibility threshold for existing subsidy programs, for whom child care is still unaffordable due to the high cost of living in King County. *Best Starts* will focus on families immediately above eligibility for WCCC. *Best Starts'* eligibility cap will prioritize families whose incomes are slightly too high to meet the State's subsidy eligibility criteria,¹⁰³ and will be adjusted accordingly throughout the 2022-2027 levy to reflect any changes in state and Federal policy;
- Families whose child care copays create financial hardship;
- Families ineligible for or not well served by existing subsidy programs. This includes parents who are unemployed, students, or living homeless; parents who live or attend care in unincorporated areas; or children who are undocumented.

King County residents experience a steep “benefits cliff” when they become ineligible for child care subsidy.¹⁰⁴ The passage of the Fair Start Act eases this by significantly expanding eligibility and limiting participating families' copays to seven percent of their income.¹⁰⁵ However, without additional subsidies like the one *Best Starts* will provide, families who receive even a modest increase in pay that causes them to become ineligible for WCCC over the longer term can become responsible for a prohibitively high full cost of care. For families with two children in center-based care in Washington State, this averages \$2,183 each month, with costs often significantly higher in regions with higher cost of living like King County.¹⁰⁶ As a result, many families in King County are unable to advance professionally or financially because the full cost of child care is prohibitive once they become ineligible for the State's subsidy. A lack of access to stable child care can keep families in poverty or place them at risk of homelessness.¹⁰⁷ *Best Starts* funding will support these families to attain stability and thrive.

The child care access challenges outlined above do not impact all King County families equally. BIPOC families, families whose children have developmental delays, disabilities, or are impacted by trauma, and families who live in areas without sufficient child care slots are disproportionately harmed by inadequate access to care. *Best Starts'* child care subsidy program will work toward advancing equity and eliminating disparities by prioritizing families like these who experience additional challenges to accessing care. This includes families who live in geographic areas or communities without sufficient access to quality child care, known as child care access deserts or whose children have been suspended or expelled from child care settings.¹⁰⁸ Where possible, *Best Starts* will avoid eligibility requirements

¹⁰³ MomsRising has conducted an initial analysis of WCCC and ECEAP eligibility changes as a result of the Fair Start Act [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁰⁴ According to the Aspen Institute, a “benefits cliff” occurs when a minor increase in a family's income causes a swift and total loss of child care subsidy or other financial supports. The increase in hourly wages is typically less than the amount the family loses in benefits. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Price of Child Care in Washington, Child Care Aware of America, 2019. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁰⁷ Reducing the Cliff Effect to Support Working Families, Aspen Institute, 2018. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁰⁸ Child Care Deserts, Child Care Aware of America, 2016. [\[LINK\]](#)

that prevent families from accessing care and disrupt continuity of care, including frequent income verifications.

Best Starts will contract with one or more intermediaries with experience in child care referral and subsidy programming to administer the subsidy program, and partner with community-based organizations to ensure effective outreach and support for families and child care providers in equitably accessing the subsidy program. *Best Starts* intends to establish reimbursement rates that allow child care providers to operate sustainably and avoid exacerbating existing inequities experienced by providers.

Best Starts for Kids values the wisdom of families as they decide what type of high-quality care best meets their needs. It also recognizes the critical importance of family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers, as well as informal caregivers. These caregivers are more difficult to support through direct cash payments or subsidies. As a result, *Best Starts* currently provides peer-based and material supports through investments in child care health consultation, infant mental health, and Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups. However, many of these caregivers are low-income and providing child care free of cost. *Best Starts* intends to explore strategies to provide financial assistance to families accessing FFN or informal care in partnership with other governments and nonprofit partners, and by engaging directly with families and caregivers to better understand their needs.

Rationale for Investment:

Insufficient access to high-quality child care was already a crisis in the region before the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a *Best Starts for Kids* survey, in 2019, 34 percent of children in King County lived in families that found it difficult to afford child care in King County.¹⁰⁹ The challenge is multifaceted. Families struggle to afford the cost of care for children and youth, and the number of available slots for child care does not meet demand, while the care provider workforce, many of them women of color, is underpaid.¹¹⁰ Children of color, children from low-income families, and children who have developmental delays or disabilities face additional barriers. They are often excluded from the child care system or have little access to care during the critical early childhood years through age 12.¹¹¹

The unsubsidized cost of child care in King County is prohibitive to many families. Child Care Aware of America's 2019 report, *The US and the High Price of Child Care*, examined child care costs and supports in the Seattle metropolitan area, including King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties, where residents are paying a significant amount of their income on child care. The average annual cost of center-based tuition for an infant was \$23,013 in Seattle and \$16,604 elsewhere in the tri-County region. These numbers translate to 19 and 16 percent, respectively, of median household income for married parents with children. For single parents with children, this care costs 61.8 and 45.2 percent, respectively, of

¹⁰⁹ 2020 Best Start for Kids Annual Report. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹¹⁰ Vogtman, J. and White, C. (2019). Can We Rewrite the Shameful History of Undervaluing Child Care Workers? [\[LINK\]](#)

¹¹¹ Building for the Future: Strong Policies for Babies and Families after COVID-19. [\[LINK\]](#)

median household income.¹¹² The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers seven percent of family income the threshold for affordable child care.¹¹³

This child care subsidy program will begin implementation of reinstating a comprehensive child care program with subsidies for families struggling to afford care and supports for providers, a 2020 recommendation from the King County Children and Families Strategy Task Force.¹¹⁴ Affordable, accessible child care, often made possible through such targeted subsidies, is necessary to improve racial and gender equity in King County and will be critical in the region's economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic.^{115,116}

Approximate Scope: 3,000 children and their families each year.

Anticipated Timeline: *Best Starts for Kids* will release an RFP in the first quarter of 2022 to identify and contract with one or more intermediary agencies who will manage enrollment of eligible families and the distribution of subsidies to their child care providers. Initial implementation of the subsidy program is expected to begin in the second half of 2022.

Wage Boost Demonstration Project

The proposed *Best Starts for Kids* Wage Boost Demonstration Project will allocate at least \$5 million annually to provide a salary supplement to child care providers working with children aged birth to 12 in King County at licensed child care centers and family child care providers. The project will also study the impact of this wage boost on employee retention and continuity of care.

The project is expected to take the form of an hourly wage boost or a retention bonus model¹¹⁷ based on length of service and will reach at least 1,400 providers, prioritizing those working in areas with limited child care access or serving low-income families. *Best Starts* will engage with child care providers and staff to design and refine the project's specific eligibility parameters, priorities, and structure, and to minimize disparities in access to the program potentially experienced by smaller providers with limited infrastructure. Participating child care sites will be required to follow generally accepted best labor practices. Participating individual child care providers will be accepted on a rolling basis and will be able to remain in the project for the duration of their employment or through 2027, whichever comes first.

¹¹² Child Care Aware of America (2019). *The US and the High Price of Child Care*. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹¹³ U.S Department of Health and Human Services (2016). *Child Care and Development Fund Program*. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹¹⁴ Equitable and Accessible Child Care in King County, Children & Families Strategy Task Force, 2020. [\[LINK\]](#) King County previously established a Comprehensive Child Care Assistance Program through Motion 07204, which included a subsidy for families that reflected regional costs of living.

¹¹⁵ Center for American Progress (2020). "How Child Care Disruptions Hurt Parents of Color Most." Ready Nation (2019). "Want to Grow the Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis." [\[LINK\]](#)

¹¹⁶ Johnson, R. and Kirabo, J. (2018). Reducing Inequality Through Dynamic Complementarity: Evidence from Head Start and Public School Spending. The National Bureau of Economic Research. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹¹⁷ In a retention bonus model, participating providers would receive bonuses at set periods in their employment. Bonuses would be tiered to increase with longer periods of retention.

Best Starts will ensure sufficient technical assistance to support child care providers, teachers, and staff in equitably accessing the program.

Rationale for Investment:

King County’s child care workforce is in crisis. This workforce is more diverse than the overall population, disproportionately made up of women and people of color as well as immigrants and refugees.¹¹⁸ Many child care providers continue to live in poverty. The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Compensation Technical Workgroup’s 2019 report found that Washington’s early childhood educators rank in the third percentile of occupational wages. Additionally, 39 percent of Washington’s early childhood educators rely on one or more sources of public assistance support programs.¹¹⁹ Nearly 15 percent of child care providers live below the poverty line, and many cannot afford care for their own children.¹²⁰

Efforts to increase child care workers’ wages have stalled due to the cost implications for families who already struggle to afford care.^{121,122} Benefits packages are also elusive: only 15 percent of child care providers receive health insurance, and fewer than 10 percent are covered by a pension plan at their job.¹²³ Meanwhile, center and family home providers struggle with narrow margins and the inability of families to afford to pay the higher tuition rates that would allow them to offer these types of enhancements to their workers. At the same time, a push for high quality care has driven increased educational requirements for child care providers without commensurate increases to compensation.

Best Starts’ wage boost demonstration project aligns with a recommendation from the King County Children and Families Strategy Task Force to ensure child care providers have access to equitable, living wages and benefits and to include providers in the process of determining these wages.¹²⁴

Approximate Scope: 1,400 child care providers per year.

Anticipated Timeline:

Best Starts intends to implement the Wage Boost Demonstration Project in partnership with an intermediary that will be responsible for distributing funds and collecting data. The identified intermediary is expected to begin the project in the second half of 2022 and continue it through 2027.

¹¹⁸ Child Care Resources tracks the racial and ethnic makeup of licensed family child care providers in King County, who operate 65 percent of child care.

¹¹⁹ Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families Compensation Technical Workgroup (2019).

[\[LINK\]](#)

¹²⁰ Economic Policy Institute (2015). *Child care workers aren’t paid enough to make ends meet.* [\[LINK\]](#)

¹²¹ Child Care Aware of Washington. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹²² Urban Institute (2001). *Models for Increasing Child Care Worker Compensation.* [\[LINK\]](#)

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ CFSTF report

E. Investing Early (Prenatal to Five)

Best Starts invests early to support pregnant and parenting families, infants, very young children, and caregivers during the critical first five years of life with a robust system of support services and resources that meet families either at home, in the community, or wherever children are cared for. These investments support King County families in meeting their basic needs, connect families to services, and care for the well-being of young children and their families. Investing Early is *Best Starts'* largest investment area. Research shows the earlier investments are made, the greater the return for children and families.¹²⁵ All descriptions of strategies include an estimated scope that is subject to refinement in partnership with community and providers. Table 10 outlines the funding estimates for the 2022-2027 levy by strategy.

Table 10: Funding Estimates for Investing Early strategies

Strategy	2022-2027 Funding Estimate
Maternal and Child Health Services	\$89,024,000
Home-Based Services	\$63,398,000
Community-Based Parenting Supports	\$24,091,000
Early Support for Infants and Toddlers	\$28,529,000
Universal Developmental Screening	\$19,020,000
Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC)	\$21,555,000
Systems Building for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	\$9,510,000
Workforce Development	\$8,305,000
Innovation Supports	\$6,340,000
Help Me Grow	\$16,484,000
Environmental Supports: Lead and Toxics	\$4,755,000

¹²⁵ Heckman, J. (2021). [\[LINK\]](#)

Maternal and Child Health Services

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$14,190,000	\$14,296,000	\$14,624,000	\$14,959,000	\$15,302,000	\$15,653,000	\$89,024,000

Description:

Public Health—Seattle & King County’s (PHSKC) Maternal/Child Health (MCH) services provide a range of vital supports at home, clinic, and community settings to pregnant individuals and parenting families. The services address gaps in basic needs and improve health outcomes for newborns and families with a focus on addressing racial disparities, and in increasing access to health services. This programming increases optimal child development and thriving families. Programming includes:

- **Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP):** Nurse home visitors provide first-time parents with education and support starting in early pregnancy through the child’s second birthday.¹²⁶
- **Parent-Child Health Programs (PCH):**¹²⁷ PCH programs provide access to nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, health assessments, preventative health services, education, and referrals for pregnant and parenting individuals, infants and children, and their families.
- **Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program (PHBPP):** PHBPP provides case management, outreach, and education to reduce hepatitis B in infants born to pregnant persons living with hepatitis B.
- **Family Planning and Community-based Health Educators (FPCBHE):** FPCBHE Family Planning Clinical Services delivers affordable, confidential, low-barrier access to high quality and culturally responsive reproductive health clinical services.
- **Kids Plus (KP):** A multidisciplinary team of nurses and social workers provide case management for medical and behavioral health issues to support the health and wellbeing of children and families experiencing homelessness.
- **Family Ways:** Family Ways provides culturally relevant pregnancy and parenting services, health education, and peer support for families with children up to age five, serving communities most impacted by racial inequities.
- **Infant Mortality Prevention Network (IMPAN):** IMPAN provides direct client services such as teen parenting programming depending on identified need by community and disseminates educational materials to reduce infant mortality levels. IMPAN prioritizes African American, Indigenous American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander communities who have the highest risk of infant mortality.

¹²⁶ Nurse Family Partnership [LINK](#)

¹²⁷ Parent-Child Health programs include the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Maternity Support Services (MSS), and Infant Case Management (ICM).

Approximate Scope: PHSKC anticipates that MCH programs will reach approximately 58,000 pregnant individuals, and parenting families on an annual basis.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- The new *Family Ways* program will move from planning to implementation and provide peer support, resource navigation, and pregnancy-related education and services grounded in anti-racist principles and cultural fluency. The model was co-created with community partners and will be delivered in partnership with CBOs and community leaders beginning in 2022.
- *Parent/Child Health* services underwent a redesign in 2020 to improve service delivery and better respond to community need. The program will increase mobile services and embed teams within community partner organizations.

Anticipated Timeline: Maternal and health services are primarily delivered by staff at PHSKC. This will continue unchanged, except that PHSKC will release an RFP in Q1 2022 for the Infant Mortality Prevention Network.

Home-Based Services

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$10,000,000	\$10,220,000	\$10,445,000	\$10,675,000	\$10,909,000	\$11,149,000	\$63,398,000

Description:

Home-Based Services (HBS) provides relationship-based support to expecting parents and parents of children aged birth to five in the places they live. Home visitors deliver information, resources, and social connection to support healthy births, positive parenting, health education, child development, safe home environments, and school readiness.¹²⁸ HBS programming includes:

- **Partnership with Community-Based Providers Delivering a Continuum of Services to Meet Diverse Needs:** *Best Starts* funds community-based partners to deliver age- and community-specific services, including prenatal information, birthing support, parenting and early learning, referral and connection to services, and family therapeutic treatment.¹²⁹ *Best Starts* will continue to partner with United Way of King County (UWKC) to implement ParentChild+ programs.¹³⁰
- **Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance to Support Program Equity and Quality:** *Best Starts* provides capacity-building and program development supports for any newly-funded HBS

¹²⁸ Kendrick, D., et al. "Does Home Visiting Improve Parenting and the Quality of the Home Environment?" *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, (2000) pp. 82, 443–451.

¹²⁹ Programs include Child-Parent Psychotherapy, Early Head Start Home-Based, ParentChild+, Parents as Teachers/Ina Maka, Community-Based Outreach Doulas. These programs are designed for, and implemented in, specific cultural communities.

¹³⁰ ParentChild+. [\[LINK\]](#)

programs in order to reach effective and equitable outcomes.¹³¹ *Best Starts* also invests in model-specific technical assistance for evidence-based and evidence-informed home visiting programs to support building readiness and improving program fidelity and quality over time.¹³²

- **Workforce Supports:** *Best Starts* invests in training, mental health support, other system changes, and a community of practice to support home visitors and supervisor well-being and retention.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* estimates serving up to 1,650 families, children and or caregivers through HBS each year.¹³³

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- HBS will focus on funding supports for African American and LGBTQIA+ families for which there are currently gaps in services.
- HBS will enhance the current funding approach by adding emergency funds for basic needs or items such as utility payments into program budgets for providers to access for families and piloting enhanced case management supports in a subset of grantees.

Anticipated timeline: HBS intends to release RFPs in 2022 and start new contracts in Q3 2022.

Community-Based Parenting Supports

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$3,800,000	\$3,884,000	\$3,969,000	\$4,056,000	\$4,146,000	\$4,237,000	\$24,091,000

Description:

Community-Based Parenting Supports (CBPS) strategy provides community-centered, peer-based services to pregnant individuals, parents, and caregivers of children aged birth to five. CBPS provides concrete supports to strengthen protective factors, mitigate risk, and increase health, safety, and social/emotional well-being of families. Community-Based Parenting Supports services are offered by peer-based providers that share King County families' lived experiences, culture, and language.

¹³¹ The organizations that provide capacity-building support include: Emerging Design, Rainier Valley Corps, The Capacity Collective, NIRN, DSK CRES, YWCA.

¹³² The organizations that provide technical assistance include Early Start, United Way of King County, and Open Arms.

¹³³ Approximate scope of 1,700 families includes those served via braided funding for ParentChild+ with UWKC and City of Seattle.

Community-based partners implement programs in a variety of community settings, including health care clinics, child care and early learning centers, religious institutions, and community centers. *Best Starts* prioritizes equity by funding agencies serving low-income families, BIPOC families, immigrant and refugee families, LGBTQIA+ families, families with disabilities, families with foster children, and those geographically isolated. CBPS programming includes:

- **Basic Needs Resource Brokers (BNRB):** Basic Needs Resource Brokers build on networks of community organizations to provide food, diapers, formula, and other basic needs to families of young children.
- **Caregiver Peer Supports:** Caregiver Peer Supports uses a community-centered and relationship-based approach to provide families with resources and information to strengthen health, safety, brain development, and social-emotional well-being. Investments include programs such as Kaleidoscope Play and Learn (KPL)¹³⁴ and Parent-Caregiver Information and Supports (PCIS).¹³⁵
- **Perinatal and Lactation Support Services:** *Best Starts* partners with organizations across King County to provide culturally relevant perinatal and lactation support services focusing on Indigenous, Black and African American, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander, and Latinx communities. Partners will offer education and support in various formats and settings, including health clinics, community centers.
- **Capacity-Building Supports and Model-Specific Technical Assistance:** *Best Starts* provides capacity-building supports for funded CBPS programs to reach effective and equitable outcomes. *Best Starts* also invests in model-specific technical assistance to support new programs in building readiness to implement the model and in improving program fidelity and quality over time.¹³⁶

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* intends to serve approximately 48,000 caregivers, children, and families through a combination of programming annually.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- To make the strategy more cohesive, *Best Starts* will combine Caregiver Peer Supports¹³⁷ and Community-Based Parenting into one body of work. The combined program will support caregivers through peer support in a community-based setting.

Anticipated Timeline: New RFPs will be released in 2022-2023.

¹³⁴ Child Care Resources: Kaleidoscope Play and Learn. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹³⁵ Community-based peer supports aim to reduce risk factors such as parental distress and isolation and increase protective factors such as parental resilience, social supports, nurturing attachments between caregiver and child, and knowledge of parenting and child development.

¹³⁶ Model-specific technical assistance will likely include Kaleidoscope Play and Learn and Supportive Pregnancy and may be adjusted based on funded programs.

¹³⁷ The King County Council Ordinance 18373. [\[LINK\]](#)

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$4,500,000	\$4,599,000	\$4,700,000	\$4,804,000	\$4,909,000	\$5,017,000	\$28,529,000

Description:

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) promotes equitable outcomes for families with children, aged birth to three, who have developmental delays or disabilities. Eligible infants and toddlers, and their families, are entitled to individualized, quality developmental services in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C.¹³⁸ Services include Family Resources Coordination, education and speech or motor therapies, and take place at home, childcare, and community settings.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts for Kids* funding supported growth in the number of children served by ESIT by 44 percent, from 3,909 in 2015 to 5,643 children in 2019.¹³⁹ King County anticipates a four percent annual increase in the number of children served with *Best Starts for Kids* funding from 2022 to 2027, an increase leading to approximately 1450 additional children accessing ESIT services than are currently served by the last year of the levy.¹⁴⁰

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

Build workforce development pathways, including scholarships for bilingual providers to engage in training and schooling.

- Provide equity trainings and capacity building supports to providers.
- Recruit and build capacity of new Community Based Organizations to become ESIT providers.

Anticipated Timeline: RFA and RFQ¹⁴¹ processes planned for Q4 2022. New ESIT providers supported through capacity building investments may be contracted in 2024.

¹³⁸ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹³⁹ Data Source: Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Data Management System Reports.

¹⁴⁰ Based on several considerations including, the growth rate during *the Best Start for Kids 2016-2027 levy*, the decrease due to COVID, and the federal requirements that all children who are referred and found eligible must be provided services.

¹⁴¹ Request for Proposal or Request for Application or Request for Qualifications. RFPs, RFAs, RFQs are solicitation notifications to apply for funding.

Universal Developmental Screening

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$3,000,000	\$3,066,000	\$3,133,000	\$3,202,000	\$3,273,000	\$3,345,000	\$19,020,000

Description: The Universal Developmental Screening (UDS) strategy provides information, training, tools, and connections among providers to ensure all King County children receive culturally appropriate, high-quality developmental screening throughout early childhood. Early childhood practitioners use developmental screening to celebrate milestones, and monitor signs that a young child may be delayed in one or more areas of development. Families are supported in understanding child development and connecting with a wide range of resources to support their growth and wellbeing. Identifying developmental delays is critical to connecting children to Early Support for Infants and Toddlers services, which can have a big impact on a young child’s success in school and life.

Screenings are offered in any context where a family and child interact with an early childhood practitioner, including healthcare, early learning, and community settings. Community-based partners implement the core components of this work, and customize education on early childhood milestones, developmental screening tools, and delivery of UDS for Black/African American, Chinese, Pacific Islander, Somali, and Latinx communities.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

Future work will be informed by the Universal Developmental Screening Analysis, a comprehensive community-driven participatory research project commissioned by *Best Starts* in 2019. It is the largest analysis completed nationally on UDS.¹⁴² Planned refinements include:

- Prioritize the well-being of communities of color as the strategy focus through 2027.
- Strengthen community partnerships to respond to the evolving priorities of the community.
- Improve alignment of programming for young children to ensure families find the resources they need most. (*alignment with Help Me Grow King County*)¹⁴³
- Continue funding of community-based providers to reduce barriers to high quality and culturally responsive developmental screenings and referrals, training, materials, and supports.

Approximate Scope: Universal Developmental Screening intends to reach approximately 1,000 children through early learning professionals, child care providers, medical and behavior health providers.

¹⁴² Universal Developmental Screening Analysis [[LINK](#)]

¹⁴³ See page 54 for further explanation.

Anticipated Timeline: RFP for new funding for short-term projects to be released in Q3 2022. RFP for new long-term projects to be released in Q2 2023.

Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$3,400,000	\$3,475,000	\$3,551,000	\$3,629,000	\$3,709,000	\$3,791,000	\$21,555,000

Description:

Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC) promotes the health, safety, and development of children and caregivers in child care settings. Multidisciplinary teams of health care providers, mental health professionals, nutritionists, and others, provide coaching and training to child care providers. This includes training on mental/behavioral health, sensory and self-regulation, brain development, and use of developmental screening tools and resources.¹⁴⁴ PHSKC has offered CCHC throughout King County for over 35 years, and *Best Starts* partners with seven community-based partners to strengthen the cultural responsiveness of CCHC services, and develop tailored supports for different communities and cultures.¹⁴⁵ Programs serve licensed child care providers and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) or informal caregivers, and are delivered using both the core PHSKC program model, as well as innovative and community-informed pilot approaches embedded in the values and norms of the community.^{146 147}

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Continue funding systems development work with a focus on developing a cohesive and accessible countywide system of child care health consultation that alleviates race- and place-based inequities.
- Expand focus populations served by CCHC programs to reach new cultural, language, and geographic communities currently not served, for example Hispanic/Latino, indigenous, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander as well as rural communities in King County.

Approximate Scope: Child Care Health Consultation intends to reach approximately 1,200 providers annually.

¹⁴⁴ *Best Start for Kids* Child Care Health Consultation Evaluation by Cardea. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁴⁵ *Best Starts*-funded CCHC programs are customized to Black/African American, Chinese, Eritrean, Ethiopian-Oromo, and Somali communities, and services are available in nine languages and/or dialects.

¹⁴⁶ PHSKC program model consists of a multi-disciplinary team of Public Health Nurses, Mental Health Consultants, Registered Dietitian (Nutritionist), and Community Health Professionals who consult with the teachers, directors, cooks, and other Early Learning Program staff on matters of child health, behavior, and safety.

¹⁴⁷ Community-informed pilot programs are innovative solutions designed by communities to bring CCHC services to child care providers in their specific cultural, language, or geographic community and meet their unique needs. Some programs are developed with a specific focus on serving FFN and informal care providers.

Anticipated Timeline: RFP to be released in Q4 2022.

Systems Building for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$1,500,000	\$1,533,000	\$1,567,000	\$1,601,000	\$1,636,000	\$1,672,000	\$9,510,000

Description:

The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) strategy focuses on improving social and emotional outcomes of young children 0-5 years old. Approaches include reflective consultation and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health trainings.¹⁴⁸ Services strengthen the ability of caregivers and providers to support children in forming close relationships with adults and peers, manage and express a full range of emotions, and explore the environment and learn. These skills and experiences form the foundation for healthy brain development and self-regulation. Services takes place in the context of family, community, culture, and traditions, and promote relational health for very young children and their families.¹⁴⁹ This need is even more critical in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and institutional racism, which have the potential to significantly impact child and family development and wellbeing.¹⁵⁰

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Implement priorities identified by the IECHM work group¹⁵¹ in 2021. BIPOC providers serving a diverse range of families are a priority that emerged from community input during the landscape analysis process.

Approximate Scope: The IECMH strategy will continue to support social-emotional development for all young children under age 5 in King County. IECMH anticipates reaching approximately 350-450 providers a year through trainings and approximately 200 providers a year through reflective consultation annually.

Anticipated Timeline: Release an RFP in Q4 2021 to identify contractors to implement the work of the strategic plan.

¹⁴⁸ Reflective supervision/consultation is a practice emerging from the multidisciplinary field of infant mental health, which acknowledges that very young children have unique developmental and relational needs and that all early learning occurs in the context of relationships.

¹⁴⁹ America's Babies: Making Their Potential Our Priority Report [[LINK](#)]

¹⁵⁰ The potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child growth and development: a systematic review. [[LINK](#)]

¹⁵¹ Work group hosted by King County and includes experts in Infant Mental Health and local providers.

Workforce Development

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$1,310,000	\$1,339,000	\$1,368,000	\$1,398,000	\$1,429,000	\$1,461,000	\$8,305,000

Description:

The Workforce Development (WFD) strategy provides training, technical assistance, and peer learning opportunities to build the knowledge and skills of early childhood practitioners in three content areas: racial equity, infant and early childhood mental health, and healthy child development.¹⁵² WFD strengthens the professional development system for early childhood practitioners. Public workshops teach practitioners foundational topics, such as healthy child development, and trauma-informed engagement, and workshop facilitators are partnered with trainers who have content knowledge and expertise in racial equity. WFD also invests in mentorship, networking, and technical assistance opportunities focused on BIPOC participants, and coordinates communities of practice for affinity groups of *Best Starts*-funded early childhood practitioners.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Codesign workshops with BIPOC communities to reflect the strengths, challenges and interests of specific populations and geographies, focusing on knowledge-sharing and peer-to-peer learning.
- Support alignment, integrated equity, and inclusive methods of deliveries (adult learning) for all funded *Best Starts* programs.

Approximate Scope: WFD anticipates 900 to 1,100 unduplicated providers participating in one or more large group trainings.

Anticipated Timeline: RFP will be released by Q4 2021.

¹⁵² Early childhood practitioners may include home visitors, child-care providers, doulas, social workers, mental health providers, and others.

Innovation Supports

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$1,000,000	\$1,022,000	\$1,044,000	\$1,067,000	\$1,091,000	\$1,115,000	\$6,340,000

Description

Best Starts’ Innovation Supports strategy leverages the expertise and creativity of community to design, develop, and lead effective programs and interventions serving children, aged birth to five, and their families. Innovation Supports provides capacity building supports to select *Best Starts* partners piloting innovative programs and approaches, from initial design and idea development to full implementation. Services typically take place during the first three years of a program or intervention, and include trainings, workshops, communities of practice, and peer supports. Peer supports helps with the dissemination and adoption of innovative practices across CBO leads.

Best Starts will contract with an agency to codesign capacity building services drawing from existing frameworks to support existing and potential CBO partners.^{153,154,155} Participating organizations will receive supplemental funds to support planning and development, including compensation for staff time to participate in capacity building activities.

Planned Modifications in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Implement key learnings from *the Best Starts* 2016-2021, including prioritizing multiple levels of support such as group trainings, workshops, communities of practice, and one-on-one, as well as frequent contacts to build trusting relationships.
- Contract with *the Best Start for Kids* CBO leads to provide peer supports.
- Opportunities to invest in timely and innovative responses to emergent needs.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* anticipates serving between 10-15 organizations every two to three years.

Anticipated Timeline:

Innovation Supports will partner with *Best Starts* strategies investing in innovative program models throughout the life of the Levy. Capacity building supports will be offered during RFP processes and upon award, and during other critical periods for innovation.

¹⁵³ Frontiers of Innovation Equity by Design. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁵⁴ Creative Reactions Lab. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁵⁵ The National Implementation Research Network. [\[LINK\]](#)

Help Me Grow

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$2,600,000	\$2,657,000	\$2,716,000	\$2,775,000	\$2,836,000	\$2,899,000	\$16,484,000

Description:

Help Me Grow (HMG) is a national model designed to empower families to support their children’s health by connecting them to what they need, when and how they need it.¹⁵⁶ Help Me Grow King County (HMGKC) is rooted in the values of self-determination, strength, and resilience, and partners with the Help Me Grow Washington (HMGWA) team and local CBOs to understand how best to connect families and communities to services and adapt the national model.¹⁵⁷ HMGKC is centered in equity and community-based solutions, and implements four core components:

- *Coordinated Access:* A network of CBOs to provide families and communities culturally or linguistically matched connections to services and resources.
- *Family & Community Partnership:* Authentic relationships with families and communities to shape and define the HMGKC system.
- *Data Collection & Evaluation:* Increased access to high quality information about services available to families and the ways in which families interact with services.
- *Service Provider & Professional Partnership:* Collaborative relationships with early learning, social service, health and mental health providers to strengthen coordination.

The HMGKC strategy supports resource navigation and serves as a foundation for all *Best Starts* prenatal to five-year-old strategies. Integration and partnership with all *Best Starts* funded early learning strategies will be a focus.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Convene CBO Collaborative Partnership for strengthening referral pathways and coordinated access regionally, increased language and cultural matches, and greater visibility of service delivery across the HMG King County network.
- Convene stakeholders in early learning for greater collaboration and stronger early childhood development system coordination in King County.
- Integrate tools and resources for families and providers to better understand child development including resources such as Vroom.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶THE HMG SYSTEM MODEL [Help Me Grow](#).

¹⁵⁷ WA Department of Children, Youth and Families, Within Reach, and Washington Communities for Children work together to form the Help Me Grow Washington (HMG WA) leadership team.

¹⁵⁸ Vroom [LINK](#)

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* anticipates serving approximately 1,000 caregivers and 2,000 children annually.

Anticipated Timeline: RFP to be released in Q3 2022

Environmental supports: Lead and Toxics

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$750,000	\$767,000	\$783,000	\$801,000	\$818,000	\$836,000	\$4,755,000

Description:

Communities of color have long been charting the path forward on environmental justice. The Lead and Toxics Program (LTP) builds on this leadership to prevent childhood lead poisoning, identify and reduce exposures to environmental toxics, and equitably improve health outcomes. LTP successfully leveraged \$2M in federal Centers for Disease Control Childhood Lead Poisoning Program Prevention Program (CLPPP)¹⁵⁹ grant funds to sustain and integrate activities across *Best Starts* strategies, with a focus on communities most historically impacted by health inequities.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Use data and community-led program evaluation to inform policy and program activities and implement BIPOC community-driven priorities.
- Improve surveillance to eliminate child blood testing gaps and sources of exposure, and partner with medical systems, providers, and families to ensure all children receive appropriate blood lead testing. Strengthen referral systems for culturally appropriate developmental services for lead poisoned children.
- Deliver resources and consultation to reduce, eliminate, and replace sources of toxic exposures, and develop publicly available community education materials and training resources including child care centers and new family homes.
- Integrate LTP activities in other *Best Starts* strategies, including providing consultation and trainings across King County home visiting programs and partnering with ESIT to provide a model for assessing blood lead level testing status of children referred for developmental services.
- Develop and implement a Medical Legal Partnership to address healthy housing and other policies, laws, and systems at the root of health inequities affecting King County families.

Approximate Scope: LTP anticipates reaching approximately 1,000 children and families annually.

Anticipated Timeline: RFP to be released in Q1 2022.

¹⁵⁹ Assessment Report Motion 15769. [\[LINK\]](#)

F. Sustain the Gain (Five to 24)

Research shows that promotion and prevention efforts, made during key developmental stages or transition points in a young person’s life, can sustain earlier gains.¹⁶⁰ The Sustain the Gain strategy area supports programs that empower youth; support social-emotional development, mental wellbeing, positive identity, health, academics and employability; and provide safe and healthy spaces for youth to connect with peers and supportive adults in and out of school.^{161,162}

To sustain the gains made for King County’s youngest children, it is essential to continue programming for children and young people as they grow and develop through age 24. This is consistent with research that shows critical brain development continuing into young adulthood.¹⁶³

Mental and Emotional Health

Best Starts’ Sustain the Gain strategy area actively promotes mental health and well-being and prevents and mitigates adverse emotional health impacts, including mental health and substance use challenges.¹⁶⁴ *Best Starts’* SB:SBIRT and School-based health centers (SBHCs) strategies provide direct prevention, outreach and early intervention to address mental health and substance use impacts among children and youth. The Liberation and Healing strategy addresses community trauma and its impacts on young people by promoting strengths-based social and emotional supports. The Community Well-Being Initiative (CWI) will convene and coordinate *Best Starts* efforts related to mental health and well-being. The CWI will connect with other related County efforts. Among these are community behavioral health services and interventions administered by DCHS’ Behavioral Health and Recovery Division including services supported by the MIDD behavioral health sales tax fund, prevention services provided by the Children, Youth and Young Adult Division, as well as addressing behavioral health impacts of the pandemic within Public Health’s COVID-related response.^{165,166}

Funding Level Increases and Strategy Name Changes

To respond to communities’ needs and requests for expanded access to services for school-aged children and transition-age young adults only amplified by COVID-19, *Best Starts’* 2022-2027 levy includes increased funding levels for three strategies: Expanded Learning (formally Out of School Time), School Based Health Centers, and Transitions to Adulthood.

For several Sustain the Gain strategies, names are changed since the first *Best Starts* levy to align them more closely with the goals they achieve and the services they provide. The former names of these

¹⁶⁰ Browne, C., Notkin, S., Schneider-Muñoz, A., & Zimmerman, F. (2015). [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶¹ Motion 15888. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶² Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶³ Forum for Youth Investment. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶⁴ Motion 15888. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶⁵ DCHS Behavioral Health and Recovery Division. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶⁶ MIDD Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund. [\[LINK\]](#)

strategies are noted below in Table 11 where applicable. All descriptions of strategies include an estimated scope that is subject to refinement in partnership with community and providers.

Table 11: *Funding Estimates for Sustain the Gain Strategies*

Strategy	2022-2027 Funding Estimate
Expanded Learning	\$44,094,000
Youth Development	\$28,212,000
SB:SBIRT School-Based Screening and Brief Intervention and for Referral to Treatment/Services	\$15,691,000
School-Based Health Centers	\$19,020,000
Liberation and Healing	\$30,748,000
Positive Family Connections	\$8,876,000
Healthy and Safe Environments	\$6,340,000
Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline (SSPP)	\$29,480,000
Transitions to Adulthood	\$30,019,000
Child and Adolescent Immunizations	\$2,853,000

Expanded Learning (formerly Out of School Time)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$6,955,000	\$7,108,000	\$7,264,000	\$7,424,000	\$7,588,000	\$7,754,000	\$44,094,000

Description:

Under the Expanded Learning strategy, *Best Starts for Kids*-funded organizations provide consistent, high-quality and culturally responsive programming to children and youth with access to a range of activities from academic enrichment to cultural and social development activities, recreation, physical activity and health promotion, arts education, and leadership skills. The Expanded Learning strategy continues the two funding models from the original levy: Place-based partnerships in schools and housing complexes, and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)-led organizations. In the renewed levy, Expanded Learning programming will also include licensed school-age care providers.

As part of this investment, School's Out Washington's (SOWA) King County Professional Learning System offers professional development to all *Best Starts* funded organizations in the Sustain the Gain investment area, with a focus on the Youth Program Quality Initiative (YPQI) process for continuous quality improvement and promotion of social-emotional learning (SEL).^{167, 168}

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

In addition to continuing currently funded programs, in 2022-2027 *Best Starts* plans to:

- Expand this investment to reach licensed school-age providers serving youth ages five to 12 years old to build on the new *Best Starts* Investment in child care for children under five years old. Licensed childcare providers will be folded into the Expanded Learning portfolio.
- Restructure the YPQI experience to better respond to an organization's level of experience by implementing a three-tiered approach that provides tailored access to professional development opportunities such as training and coaching to increase program quality.¹⁶⁹
- The new name of Expanded Learning for this strategy aligns with a shift in the youth services industry toward language that emphasizes *why and how* services occur rather than *when and where* they happen. The focus on expanded learning underscores the important learning taking place in these community-based programs, and that the field is united by common goals and a commitment to standards and quality improvement.¹⁷⁰

Rationale for Increased Funding

Increasing the funding through the *Best Starts* Expanded Learning strategy will double the number of more children and youth annually than in *Best Starts* 2016-2021. Providers serve more children ages five to 12, start new programs in under-resourced areas, serve a higher percentage of families in poverty, deliver higher quality programming, and create stronger partnerships with schools, and other expanded learning providers. Partners will provide holistic programs for children, youth and families in schools and low-income housing settings.

Approximate Scope: Extended Learning intends to serve up to 4,000 youth annually through this work.

Anticipated Timeline: Release first RFP in Q1 2022. Release second RFP Q3 2024.

¹⁶⁷ Youth Program Quality Initiative. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶⁸ School's Out Washington Social Emotional Learning. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶⁹ Youth Program Quality Assessment [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷⁰ The Forum for Youth Investment, Karen Pittman. (2020, May 15). What Happens When Out-of-School Time is All the Time? [\[LINK\]](#)

Youth Development (formerly Positive Identity Development, Healthy Relationships, Youth Leadership, and Mentoring strategies)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$4,450,000	\$4,548,000	\$4,648,000	\$4,750,000	\$4,855,000	\$4,962,000	\$28,212,000

Description

The Youth Development strategy invests in mentoring, leadership and positive identity development, and opportunities to learn how to develop healthy and safe relationships (including domestic violence prevention and peer to peer support). The Youth Development Strategy partners with community-based organizations who serve youth navigating the child welfare system, unsheltered youth, LGBTQIA+ youth, and other historically and presently marginalized young people. The programs supported spans a broad spectrum of activities and topics, from the arts to physical activity to community organizing, delivered in a location accessible to participating youth.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- *Best Starts* will combine four strategy areas (Positive Identity Development, Healthy and Safe Relationships, Youth Leadership, and Mentoring) with frequent overlap in organizations serving youth to create the new Youth Development strategy, and will prioritize applicant organizations that clearly demonstrate a focus on at least one of those four areas.

Approximate Scope: Youth Development anticipates serving 5,000 youth per year.

Anticipated Timeline: RFP to be released in Q4 2021.

SB:SBIRT School-Based Screening, Brief intervention and Referral to Treatment/Services (formerly Screening, Brief intervention and Referral to Treatment SBIRT)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$2,475,000	\$2,529,000	\$2,585,000	\$2,642,000	\$2,700,000	\$2,759,000	\$15,691,000

Description:

SB:SBIRT is a model to promote social-emotional and mental health and prevent substance use for middle and high-school students.¹⁷¹ SB:SBIRT provides prevention, outreach, and early intervention to address mental health and substance use impacts during the critical middle school years.¹⁷² The framework can be used to screen for all levels of substance use risk and has more recently demonstrated success when utilized with screening for mental health concerns more broadly.¹⁷³ Funding for SB:SBIRT is available for all middle schools in King County. SB:SBIRT model's strengths is its ability to reach students who have existing needs but might not normally receive attention. The 2019 SB:SBIRT Process Evaluation by Seattle Children's Research Institute (SCRI) showed students who experienced the SB:SBIRT process had significant increase in school connection after the intervention.¹⁷⁴

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Screening tools will be updated to be able to work with high school students.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* intends to reach approximately 1,400 youth annually.

Anticipated Timeline:

- Release RFP in Q4 2021 for continued funding for 12 school districts currently implementing SBIRT or having completed the planning process.
- Release RFP for Planning Awards in the Q4 2021 for remaining school districts and other interested schools for the 2022-23 school year.

¹⁷¹ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷² King County Council, Amendment 15888 [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷³ Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. SAMSA [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷⁴ Weist MD, Eber L, Horner R, et al. Improving Multitiered Systems of Support for Students With "Internalizing" Emotional/Behavioral Problems. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*. 2018;20(3):172-184. doi:10.1177/1098300717753832 [\[LINK\]](#)

School-Based Health Centers

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$3,000,000	\$3,066,000	\$3,133,000	\$3,202,000	\$3,273,000	\$3,345,000	\$19,020,000

Description:

School-based health centers (SBHCs) in King County provide comprehensive medical, behavioral health, and dental services in school settings to children and adolescents who are often underserved by the medical community. SBHCs are an effective strategy for increasing students' educational and health outcomes, including in school performance, grade promotion, and high school completion. They also decrease such health risks as mental illness, teenage pregnancy, poor diet, inadequate physical activity, physical and emotional abuse, and substance misuse.^{175,176,177}

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

In addition to continuing currently funded programs, in 2022-2027 *Best Starts* will expand the investment to:

- Create up to four new SBHCs, including capital investments and vision/dental services.
- Implement comprehensive data management tools and evaluation of student and program outcomes to determine where SBHC can improve.
- Increase funding for training school-based health care providers on subjects such as understanding racial trauma to make SBHC more welcoming and accessible for BIPOC students.
- Increase equitable access to SBHC services through increased behavioral health options, including substance use prevention and treatment, and connecting youth to effective community-based services.¹⁷⁸
- Strengthen SBHC systems and service delivery by intentionally leading with anti-racism and creating culturally competent medical practices using trauma-informed, person-centered care to increase the use of these services by youth of color.

Rationale for Increased Investment and Refinements:

Best Starts will add up to four new SBHCs. Student health needs are persistent, specifically among black and brown students who experience greater disparities in accessing high quality healthcare. The added negative impacts of the pandemic and systemic racism further exacerbate the need to continue to provide medical, behavioral, and mental health services that help students in their academic success

¹⁷⁵ *Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan*, pg. 73. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷⁶ Motion 15888. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷⁷ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷⁸ School-Based Health Centers to Advance Health Equity. A Community Guide Systematic Review. [\[LINK\]](#)

and overall well-being.^{179,180} School based health centers work with school and community partners to identify youth with behavioral health needs, reduce their disproportionate referral to the juvenile justice system, and increase their connection to appropriate services.

Approximate Scope: School-based health centers intend to serve approximately 300 students per school-based health center, for a total of up to 1,800 students once added centers are operational.

Anticipated Timeline:

- Continue funding for the three existing SBHC operations grants through August 2022 without disruption.
- Contingent upon successful implementation, continue three-year contracts for existing operations, beginning in September 2022.
- Continue funding existing grants to Seattle Children’s and UW SMART Center for consultation, professional development, and program evaluation supports.
- Release SBHC RFP for up to four new sites/grantees in Q2 2022 with contracts starting in Q3 2022. Capital and operations investments will be included at this time.
- Continue current enhancement grants (to provide social emotional and other supports to schools in Seattle with existing SBHCs) in good standing through Q3 2022 without disruption.
- Release Enhancement RFP by Q4 2022 to increase behavioral health offerings at existing SBHCs funded through the Seattle Family, Education, Preschool and Promise (FEPP)¹⁸¹ levy.

Liberation and Healing (formerly Trauma Informed and Restorative Practices strategies)

Funding Estimate:

<i>Year</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	<i>Total</i>
Amount	\$4,850,000	\$4,957,000	\$5,066,000	\$5,177,000	\$5,291,000	\$5,407,000	\$30,748,000

Description:

The Liberation and Healing strategy addresses community trauma and its impacts on young people by promoting strengths-based social and emotional supports. The Liberation and Healing strategy promotes collective strengths-based social and emotional supports so that all people thrive as their full selves. Building on its foundations in trauma-informed and restorative practices, the strategy will address the broad impacts of the pandemic, uprisings for racial justice, and the far-reaching implications of police violence by continuing investments in partnerships with schools and community stakeholders.

¹⁷⁹ Motion 15888. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁸⁰ Emily M. Lund (2020) Even more to handle: Additional sources of stress and trauma for clients from marginalized racial and ethnic groups in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁸¹ Seattle Family, Education, and Preschool and Promise levy [\[LINK\]](#)

Three programs are under this strategy: Liberation and Healing from Systemic Racism, Community Well-Being, and TRACE. Partners under Liberation and Healing (formerly Trauma Informed and Restorative Practice) will implement innovative approaches to improve school culture and climate, heal and transform systems, and drive systems change.¹⁸² In addition, program model refinements for the new *Best Starts* levy will focus on addressing youth behavioral health needs.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

Program refinements in Liberation and Healing will include the following components:

- **Community Well-Being (CWI)** will promote social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing through a multigenerational approach. CWI will build community capacity to share resources and deliver culturally relevant programming on emotional health and wellbeing in order to reduce stigma associated with mental health topics and reinforce compassion, connection, and care in communities. CWI will be implemented in response to Motion 15888^{183,184} and input from community recommending investments to address the growing mental health and substance use needs of youth as a result of the pandemic.¹⁸⁵
- **Add Timely Response to Adverse Community Events (TRACE)** as a program within Liberation and Healing. TRACE is an enhanced trauma-specific response to eligible children, youth and/or family members who have experienced an adverse community event and/or are experiencing symptoms of trauma as a result of childhood experiences. The program specifically serves the Snoqualmie Valley (Carnation, Duvall, Fall City, North Bend, and Snoqualmie).

Approximate Scope: Liberation and Healing anticipates serving up to 2,500 children and youth annually.

Anticipated Timeline: Release Liberation and Healing from Systemic Racism RFP in Q4 2021.

¹⁸² The Liberated Village steering committee definitions: **Trauma-Informed:** An understanding of the social, political, and socio-economic conditions that impact scholar's esteem, learning and functioning, and include acute, chronic, and historical racial trauma often exacerbated by the personal biases of educators and internalized oppression that impact marginalized scholars. **Restorative Practices:** Creating a climate that allows for scholars and educators to address and heal from harms committed by and against them (racial trauma and racism) by focusing on practices that include: honest and difficult dialogue, trust-building, management of emotions, holding space for healing; Eliminating punitive and disproportionate exclusionary discipline practices affecting BIPOC scholars, bias education for staff and administrators; collaborative partnership and decision-making with families of BIPOC communities to insure unbiased solutions to their scholar's academic success.

¹⁸³ King County Council, Motion 15888 [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁸⁴ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁸⁵ BSK Community Conversations Report [\[LINK\]](#)

Healthy and Safe Environments (formerly Create Healthy and Safe Environments)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$1,000,000	\$1,022,000	\$1,044,000	\$1,067,000	\$1,091,000	\$1,115,000	\$6,340,000

Description:

Healthy and Safe Environments (HSE) funds communities impacted by inequities to improve the spaces in which children, youth and families live, learn, work, and play and support sustainable, healthy behaviors and long-term positive outcomes. HSE funds community partners empowering youth to transform systems, environments, and policies to decrease and prevent continued inequity in their communities. HSE focus areas include increasing access to healthy and affordable foods, increasing opportunities for physical activity, reducing exposure to unhealthy products and dangerous substances, and creating safe and health promoting environments. HSE includes and addresses recommendations from the National Academy of Medicine, including:¹⁸⁶

- Increase community and neighborhood empowerment.
- Establish strategic partnerships.
- Educate stakeholders and decision-makers.
- Identify community leaders and build on existing resources.
- Gather and use relevant data.
- Maintain a focus on evaluation throughout the PSE change process.
- Share successful strategies with other communities.

No Planned Refinements.

Approximate Scope: HSE will fund between eight and 12 organizations reaching between 20,000 and 70,000 people.

Anticipated Timeline: Release RFP Q3 2021.

¹⁸⁶ National Academy of Medicine. [\[LINK\]](#)

Positive Family Connections (formerly Family Engagement)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$1,400,000	\$1,431,000	\$1,462,000	\$1,494,000	\$1,527,000	\$1,561,000	\$8,876,000

Description:

Best Starts Positive Family Connections help strengthen and build positive relationships between parents, caregivers and youth. Positive Family Connections funds programs designed to strengthen parent-to-parent engagement, kinship care relationships, intergenerational and cultural heritage bonds, restorative practices, personal development for young people and parents/caregivers, and the connections among these family members.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Partner with communities and families to understand their needs and co-design authentic family engagement strategies.
- Launch a family-focused leadership and resource workgroup to center youth and family voices in *Best Starts* programming.
- Change the name of the strategy to reflect the shared vision for the funded programs.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* anticipates serving up to 1,500 parents, children, and youth annually.

Anticipated Timeline:

- Release new RFP for Positive Family Connections in Q3 2022.

Stopping the School-To-Prison Pipeline (SSPP)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$4,650,000	\$4,752,000	\$4,857,000	\$4,964,000	\$5,073,000	\$5,185,000	\$29,480,000

Description:

The SSPP strategy invests in direct service programs as an alternative to harmful punitive legal measures, and drives policy and systems change work to shift the current juvenile legal system. SSPP partners with community-based organizations to serve 12- to 24-year-old young people and their families most likely to be pushed into the criminal legal system or who are involved in the criminal legal system.

SSPP-funded programming builds relationships, provides guidance, and connects young people to opportunities that advance community-defined economic and educational success for young people and their families from any school district in King County. Programming includes:

- **Employment and Economic Development** provides intentional guidance and connection to relevant resources related primarily to employment and education opportunities such as paid skills/job training and shadowing, paid internships, civic and business leadership development, career and land stewardship mentoring, and culturally reflective mental health and well-being supports.
- **Mall Safety** proactively builds caring and supportive relationships with young people on the Westfield Southcenter Mall premises, intervenes in situations on the mall premises where there is a risk of violence or law enforcement involvement, and connects youth with needed services.
- **Education Empowerment and Engagement** serves young people who have been suspended, expelled, and/or are designated truant, including students significantly behind in obtaining high school credits or being recommended for enrollment by case managers from DSHS, law enforcement, community youth development service providers, or school district personnel. Supports include working with students to engage in their academic success including earning their high school diploma. Services help students overcome barriers and achieve goals related to education success.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* anticipates serving 1,400 youth and young adults per year.

Anticipated Timeline: Release RFP Q4 2021.

Transitions to Adulthood (formerly Youth Successfully Transitioning to Adulthood)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$4,735,000	\$4,839,000	\$4,946,000	\$5,054,000	\$5,166,000	\$5,279,000	\$30,019,000

Description

The Transitions to Adulthood strategy helps young people who face major barriers to meet their education and employment goals. A team of peer connectors navigate young people to education and employment services such as high school completion programs, post-secondary education, behavioral health services, career exploration, internships, and employment services at the County’s reengagement sites. Contracted partner agencies and direct services of DCHS’ Children, Youth and Young Adults division (CYAD) provide these services for young adults, ages 16-24, who fall in at least one of the following categories:

- Young adults who have interacted with one or more systems, including behavioral health, child welfare, public assistance, and the criminal legal system;
- young adults experiencing homelessness;
- young adults who are not working or not in school; and

- young adults belonging to one or more groups that experience historically low rates of graduating on time who are transitioning to post-secondary education (e.g., low-income youth, youth of color, youth with disabilities, and English Language Learners).

Rationale for Increased Investment

Even prior to the pandemic, an increased investment was necessary to reach more young people with these services, and COVID-19 only exacerbated it. In a recent survey of young people on the impacts of COVID-19 conducted in partnership with Center for Community Education Results (CCER), respondents said they needed help in four areas: education, employment, mental health, and social connections.¹⁸⁷ *Best Starts* will increase funding to ensure that young adults can participate in the economic recovery. Young people left out of the education and employment as schools went remote will provide more access to the education and employment system. Additionally, youth and young adults voiced needs for mental health promotion, including peer-to-peer models.

Transitions to Adulthood is well poised to respond to all these needs, to provide the region's young people with the education and employment opportunities required to succeed in changing economic conditions. Post-secondary education is key to living wage jobs, but about 2,000 students, disproportionately low-income youth of color, drop out of school each year in King County.¹⁸⁸ Research by Washington STEM shows that by 2024, almost 90 percent of living wage jobs in the County will require some kind of post-secondary education.¹⁸⁹

The Transitions to Adulthood investments in employment will leverage and complement the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Act's (PSTAA) King County Promise strategy that is starting in 2021.¹⁹⁰ King County Promise is a public-private partnership to increase equity in college access and success for historically underserved students in King County. King County Promise was developed and is supported by a diverse coalition of over 300 organizations and individuals. King County Promise expects to address longstanding barriers and fill capacity gaps by providing what students tell us they need to be successful:

- Advising and navigation capacity in high schools, colleges, and community-based organizations to support historically underserved students and young people, under age 26 who are out of school, to get their college degree/credentials.
- Alignment between King County's K-12 and college systems and eliminate barriers facing historically underserved students, to ensure equitable access to support and success in attaining degrees and credentials, through equitable systems improvement.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* anticipates serving up to 1,000 youth and young adults annually.

Anticipated Timeline: Release RFP for new contracts in Q3 2022.

¹⁸⁷ Road Map Project. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁸⁸ *Best Starts Implementation Plan*, 2016, pg. 78. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁸⁹ Washington STEM. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁹⁰ Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Implementation Plan [\[LINK\]](#)

Child and Adolescent Immunizations (formerly Adolescent Immunizations)

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$450,000	\$460,000	\$470,000	\$480,000	\$491,000	\$502,000	\$2,853,000

Description:

The Child and Adolescent Immunizations strategy focus on two key collaborations, the Washington Child Health Improvement Partnership (WACHIP),¹⁹¹ and the pediatric improvement partnership (PIP)¹⁹² to impact vaccine delivery.^{193,194}

The strategy identifies impacts of systemic barriers to vaccine delivery, including breakdowns in the chain of vaccine supply, young people’s access to health care, vaccine hesitancy, and the emergent and changing basic healthcare needs of the community. Programs gather regional collaboration of public and private partners (PIP), to implement quality improvement techniques for pediatric healthcare providers (WACHIP learning collaborative), and partner with youth peer health educators to implement health and vaccine education in their schools.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- Include a new focus on engaging youth in South King County, where childhood vaccination rates are historically low and barriers to healthcare services historically high.¹⁹⁵
- Engage youth in program design and development and build on the Peer-to-Peer Youth Engagement and Education group to raise awareness about, and improve confidence in, adolescent health issues and all vaccinations.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* anticipates serving several clinics and reaching approximately 20,000 youth through quality improvement work.

Anticipated Timeline: Services will continue without disruption.

¹⁹¹ Includes both private and public health care providers, government agencies and CBOs.

¹⁹² Includes both private and public health care providers.

¹⁹³ The WACHIP learning collaborative aims to improve coverage rates for HPV, Tdap and Meningococcal vaccines among King County adolescents.

¹⁹⁴ A PIP is a durable state or regional collaboration of public and private partners who work together to address systemic barriers to quality health care for children and adolescents, and who collaborate to advance quality improvement efforts within pediatric healthcare settings.

¹⁹⁵ King County School Immunization Records. [\[LINK\]](#)

G. Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention (YFHPI)

Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative**Funding Estimate:**

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$4,564,000	\$4,834,000	\$4,944,000	\$4,959,000	\$4,964,000	\$4,974,000	\$29,241,000

Description:

For low-income parents in King County, there are many challenges to maintaining a home and providing the basic necessities for growing kids. King County is the most expensive county in Washington State with the median rental price for a home at \$2,500 per month. With the added costs of food, utilities, childcare, transportation, and schooling, the bills of low-income families quickly become overwhelming.¹⁹⁶

The Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI) prevents youth and families with children from becoming homeless by intervening quickly with landlords and housing providers to help families maintain permanent housing. YFHPI is implemented through diverse community partners and uses a progressive engagement model. In this model, families are offered increasing levels of assistance while simultaneously encouraging and supporting them to address their own housing challenges. To help families maintain long-term housing stability, YFHPI provides case management combined with financial assistance where necessary.

From 2017 through 2020, YFHPI served 10,235 people comprised of 2,852 families and 699 unaccompanied youth.¹⁹⁷ Of the households that exited the program six months after the exit date, 96 percent remained housed without need for homeless services.¹⁹⁸

Rationale for increased investment

During *Best Starts*' 2022-2027 levy, YFHPI plans to support equitable pay for case managers. To achieve this goal, *Best Starts* will increase the investment from the original levy's \$21 million. By providing for equitable pay for case managers, *Best Starts* expects to positively impact workforce turnover and improve service quality.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

Support equitable payment standards across all YFHPI contractors by providing for equitable pay for all case managers supporting YFHPI families.

¹⁹⁶ Lab for Economic Opportunities [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁹⁷ King County Prevention Database, January 2021. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

Approximate Scope: YFHPI will reach approximately 2,000 families per year.

Anticipated Timeline: RFP to be released by Q4 2021.

H. Communities of Opportunity

Communities of Opportunity

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$7,340,000	\$7,501,000	\$7,667,000	\$7,835,000	\$8,008,000	\$8,184,000	\$46,534,000

Strategy Description:

King County and Seattle Foundation partnered to create Communities of Opportunity in 2014 to improve health, social, economic, and racial outcomes by focusing on places, policies, and system changes. COO has become a network of residents, communities, decision-makers, and funders who believe every community can be a healthy, thriving community and that equity and racial justice are both necessary and achievable. *Best Starts* understands that the conditions in communities play an important role in contributing to healthy, thriving children and families.

COO strengthens and builds capacity of stakeholders who are working at the intersection of health, housing, economic resiliency, and community connections. The theory of change is based on science and community input and reflects the COO approach. At the heart of COO are three, mutually reinforcing strategies:

- **Partnerships in place-based and cultural communities:** Supporting local solutions in community.
- **Policies and systems change:** Creating and sustaining equity through educating and advocating change.
- **Capacity building in community-based groups:** Testing innovative models in a learning community, while leveraging the power of collective knowledge to accelerate change.

COO works to secure additional funding sources to its program strategies; thus, it is important to retain flexibility in allocating amounts to the program areas. In addition, COO works in an adaptive model to develop community-centered innovations. Such adaptive work needs flexibility in investment areas as learning progresses, and as needs for specific types of investment may vary in a given year. Each program strategy below includes an estimated funding range, expressed as a percentage of the total COO funding. COO Governance Group¹⁹⁹ will determine funding levels for these strategy areas over the

¹⁹⁹ Ordinance 18442. [\[LINK\]](#)

life of the levy and ensure that the sum of percentages allocated to the three strategies equals 100 percent of contract funding.

Place-based and Cultural Community Partnerships

Estimated Funding: 45 percent to 50 percent of total COO funding.

Program Description: *Best Starts'* COO funding will support coalitions and collaborative partnerships led by and for the communities they are representing. These partnerships will have a shared vision and implement projects that focus on the intersection of health, housing, economic opportunity, and community connections. Ultimately, the aim is to close gaps by race and by place. COO partnership work aligns with and complements COO's separately funded systems and policy change projects.

COO will make multi-year funding commitments for partnerships that represent:

- **Cultural and identity-based communities** who are most adversely impacted by health, social, economic, and racial inequities. COO seeks to support solutions that positively impact conditions, particularly in Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, and among people with low-incomes, immigrant and refugee communities, people living with disabilities, and nongender conforming communities.
- **Place-based communities** where there is a confluence of indicators pointing to the most disparate health and well-being outcomes in King County. Priority is given to communities ranking in the lowest *quintile for health and well-being*. These areas have the greatest opportunity to close the gaps that exist –based on COO composite index of health and well-being indicators.²⁰⁰ This includes, isolated rural communities with significant disparities compared to areas in which they are located.

Approximate Scope: *Best Starts* anticipates at least nine place-based and/or cultural-based community partnerships across King County will be supported over a five-year period, with multiple organizational partners within each partnership receiving support under this strategy.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- COO will focus resources on partnerships in communities with the lowest 20th percentile of composite index for health and well-being indicators for places; and for cultural and identity-based communities most adversely affected by inequities, using composite index scores as a guide.²⁰¹

Anticipated Timeline: COO will release RFP to select partnerships for funding from 2023 through 2027 in Q3 2022.

²⁰⁰COO index is a composite index combining 10 indicators of health and well-being (a composite scoring that is mapped by Census Tracts).

²⁰¹ Ibid.

Systems and Policy Change

Estimated Funding: 40 percent to 45 percent of total COO funding.

Program Description: COO will support community-led projects and campaigns to transform systems and policies to decrease and prevent continued inequity in low-income communities and communities of color in King County. This includes activities that lead to stronger community connections, economic opportunity, better health, and access to housing. COO funded systems and policy change projects should align with and complement COO place-based and cultural community partnership work. COO centers the voices of Black, African American, Indigenous, other People of Color, and other historically marginalized communities (e.g. LGBTQIA populations, people living with disabilities) in investments and program decisions, and supports efforts to enact anti-racist, pro-equity public policies and practices that promote comprehensive well-being for the entire community.

Approximate Scope: COO anticipates funding at least 15 organizations each funding cycle (after 3 years).

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

COO will increase alignment with other *Best Starts* programs that are focused on systems, policy, and environment change, especially the *Healthy and Safe Environments* team. COO and HSE teams will come together for integrated strategic planning and program development.

Anticipated Timeline: COO release an RFP to select partnerships for funding from 2023 through 2027 in Q3 2021.

Learning Community

Estimated Funding: Minimum 10 percent and up to 20 percent of total COO funding.

Program Description: COO will support community stakeholders to engage in shared learning, and to practice innovative solutions. Under the Learning Community model, COO provides resources to bring people together across sectors, places, and projects to advance skills, knowledge, and strategies that impact COO result areas. These resources also enable COO to be flexible and responsive to emerging and evolving needs.²⁰² Program components include:

- **Capacity Building:** leadership development, organizational and partnership infrastructure, and sustained civic capacity to actualize equity. Capacity building will be focused on funded partners and other organizations/groups working on related and aligned efforts.
- **Innovation Funding:** community-based research, piloting and testing new ideas that contribute to systems and policy change.

²⁰² COO's Learning Community responded to the public health crises of COVID-19 and systemic racism by making resources available to support emergent needs and opportunities. This included providing funding for technology grants to enable nonprofit staff to work effectively and safely during the pandemic, and for systems and policy grants designed to increase civic engagement for post-pandemic recovery and during a period of increased awareness for racial equity.

Approximate Scope: At least 750 individuals will receive capacity building support and/or participate in learning community activities.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

- COO will combine program categories in this strategy which were previously segmented. This change allows the program to be responsive and adaptive to community-identified needs.

Anticipated Timeline: Program operations are ongoing.

I. Capital Program

Capital Grants Program

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$5,000,000	\$7,500,000	\$5,000,000	\$8,750,000	\$9,500,000	\$14,250,000	\$50,000,000

Description and Approach:

Best Starts' Capital Grants Program will provide contracts for building repairs, maintenance, upgrades and new construction or expansion to improve access to high quality programs and services for low-income children, youth, and families, with a priority for those serving Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. In addition, rural areas and or low-income areas with lack of access will be prioritized. The program will focus on equitable community-driven development to ensure projects are aligned with and serve communities' needs. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to, recreational, early learning, and child care facilities and housing for youth, young adults, and families. Consistent with recommendations from the CYAB, funding will be prioritized for sites that are multi-use, intergenerational, or include covered outdoor spaces. Priority will also be given for projects in communities that historically have limited or no access to facilities for such services and developments that leverage other capital investments, including County PSTAA and affordable housing funds. All BSK-supported buildings are expected to have culturally responsive child care and early learning services or other programs for children and youth. Funded buildings and facilities are also expected to host permanent low-cost or free programming for low-income households, consistent with recommendations from the CYAB.

Capital grant funding will be offered on an annual basis through a competitive procurement process informed by community engagement. As directed by Ordinance 19267, funding will be available for capital projects when *Best Starts* levy revenues are anticipated above \$822 million according to King County Office of Economic and Financial Analysis forecasts.²⁰³ DCHS fiscal staff will evaluate revenue

²⁰³ The Office of Economic and Financial Analysis [\[LINK\]](#)

forecasts annually to determine the amount of funding available for the upcoming year. If projections are less than \$872 million, then the Capital Grants Program will be reduced accordingly.

Rationale and Principles:

The Capital Grants Program is expected to provide low-income families and communities of color with access to high quality educational or recreational programming for their children and youth year-round. The shortage of recreational, early learning and child care facilities and affordable housing for youth, young adults, and families has resulted from multiple factors. Among these are limited available and affordable real estate; limited capital for investment in facilities maintenance, improvements, and expansion; lack of predictable, sustainable revenue to support operations; and lack of expertise and capacity related to capital project development.²⁰⁴ *Best Starts'* capital investments are expected to be geographically dispersed throughout the County and will support youth programming in communities that historically have limited or no access to facilities for such services. The siting of new facilities and buildings will be evaluated based on the proximity to other similar facilities and transportation accessibility.

Community centers and recreational facilities provide youth with a safe place to go, with caring adults that offer stimulating expanded learning programs.²⁰⁵ It is estimated that 7.7 million children in the U.S. attend expanded learning programs.²⁰⁶ Research shows that expanded learning programs promote academic achievement, good health, well-being, and positive self-identity. Recreation centers play a critical role in promoting physical activities, health, and wellbeing. In many low-income communities, they are the only places youth have opportunities to be physically active.²⁰⁷ Recreational centers also connect youth to caring adults and activities through mentoring, social emotional learning, relationship building, and a variety of after school programs. Studies have shown that youth who have the supports they need to thrive, such as caring adults, community, and a sense of belonging are likely to have more positive outcomes.²⁰⁸

COVID-19 has had a profound negative impact on youth and families, particularly in vulnerable and underserved communities. It has intensified existing socioeconomic challenges and has created new obstacles. Recreational centers have played a critical role during the pandemic for children and youth confronted with food insecurity; disruption of daily routines, academics and physical activities; and

²⁰⁴ ECEAP Facilities Needs Assessments Findings. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁰⁵ After school programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind. They help children learn, grow, and reach their full potential, offering new learning opportunities that help students do better in school and in life. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁰⁶ The Centers for Disease Control: Out of School Time Supports Student Health and Learning. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁰⁷ McKenzie, T. L., Moody, J. S., Carlson, J. A., Lopez, N. V., & Elder, J. P. (2013). Neighborhood Income Matters: Disparities in Community Recreation Facilities, Amenities, and Programs. *Journal of park and recreation administration*, 31(4), 12–22. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁰⁸The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidenced Based Approach [\[LINK\]](#)

challenges with mental health and social isolation.²⁰⁹ Many community centers were able to stay open virtually or during scheduled in-person times to deliver needed services to children, youth and communities. Center programs took on the roles of both caregiving and educating, as youth transitioned to online learning.²¹⁰ Other facilities have had to close their doors due to financial instability during the pandemic. Capital funding through *Best Starts* will increase access to critical services and programs needed especially for vulnerable and underserved children, youth, and families during the recovery phase of the pandemic, and beyond.

Best Starts will aim to align these capital investments with other *Best Starts* programmatic strategies including Communities of Opportunities investments, early learning facility capital funding as directed by the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Act (PSTAA) Implementation Plan,²¹¹ and other affordable housing investments.²¹² *Best Starts* anticipates filling funding gaps when other traditional low-cost public capital resources are not available. This is likely to be especially applicable for non-housing facility-based uses that support low income households with children and youth.

Prioritization of Funding by Project Type:

An overarching goal of *Best Starts*' capital program is to support equitable community-driven development. Capital projects should align with communities' vision of how to address the lack of access to multi-use facilities among low-income children, youth and families, and BIPOC communities. A County Equitable Development Initiative (EDI), mirroring Seattle's EDI program,²¹³ would extend beyond the scope of this grant fund. However, if King County elects to implement an equitable development initiative (EDI) in the future, *Best Starts*' capital grant program investments would be informed by and made collaboratively with a County EDI program.

Priorities were established based upon initial community feedback and Children and Youth Advisory Board recommendations and were designed to complement programs such as PSTAA and existing housing and community development work based in the Department of Community and Human Services.²¹⁴ The priority categories outlined below may be re-evaluated based on future community engagement.

- **Priority 1:** New construction or renovation of existing property to provide for new community or recreational centers which prioritize BIPOC children, youth and families located in low-income communities where there are limited to no other similar facilities available.

²⁰⁹ Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children, Youth and Families IMPROVING CARE. CHANGING LIVES. Evidence-Based Policy Institute, September 2020. [\[LINK\]](#)

²¹⁰ Benefits for Youth, Families, & Communities | Youth.gov. [\[LINK\]](#)

²¹¹ PSTAA Implementation Plan [\[LINK\]](#), approved by Motion 15673 in 2020, [\[LINK\]](#)

²¹² King County Housing Finance Program. [\[LINK\]](#)

²¹³ Seattle Equitable Development Initiative. [\[LINK\]](#)

²¹⁴ King County Housing, Homelessness, and Community Development Division. [\[LINK\]](#)

- **Priority 2:** Facility/building repairs, maintenance, upgrades, or renovations to existing multi-use community centers, early learning centers, child care or recreational facilities to address critical health and safety and issues.
- **Priority 3:** Expand child care and early learning facilities to increase capacity for multipurpose uses, and complement the Early Learning Facilities funding under the PSTAA Implementation Plan to increase capacity for multipurpose uses.²¹⁵
- **Priority 4:** Creation of affordable family or youth housing that includes a child care or youth development component on site.

All funds will be invested in the form of a recoverable grant, where there is no expectation of repayment unless the conditions of the performance term for use is not met. Funds may be recoverable if there is a change of use, violation of the contract terms, or a sale of the building or facility. Exceptions can be made if a loan structure is required to leverage other financing, such as tax credits. Such determinations will be made on a case by case basis. Grantees will be required to provide performance data about children, youth, and families who benefit from the investments which will provide baseline information to inform future investments.

Timeline and Allocations:

Expenditures through this capital program would be made possible through the realization of excess revenue forecasted over the levy term, not to exceed \$50 million. Since forecasts can change substantially over the course of the levy term, there is inherent risk to other *Best Starts* programming in allocating too much capital funding too soon. To mitigate that possibility, the allocation of funds to support capital projects will fluctuate over the levy term. *Best Starts* will maintain a funding reserve and monitor revenue forecasts over several years to ensure that all *Best Starts* investment areas continue to be funded at the levels required by Ordinance 19267, avoiding the need to reduce funding to accommodate any grant commitments.^{216,217}

Estimated Annual Spending Plan:

Each year, capital grant funds will be offered through a competitive procurement process not to exceed the estimated annual amount shown in Table 12. That amount will be based on revenue projections to ensure compliance. In 2022 and 2023, the annual estimated allocation will be made available only for Priority 1 and 2 projects, specifically new construction or renovation of existing property for new community or recreational centers in locations where there are limited to no similar facilities available, and existing facility/building repairs, maintenance, upgrades, and renovations to address critical health and safety issues. This phased approach will make it possible for new and improved facilities to host *Best Starts* programs earlier in *Best Starts*' 2022-2027 levy.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ See [Appendix I](#), Procurement and Fiscal Policies.

²¹⁷ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

Table 12: Estimated Annual Capital Grant Program Spending Plan

Expected Capital Project Contributions (in millions)	
2022	\$5M
2023	\$7.5M
2024	\$5M
2025	\$8.75M
2026	\$9.5M
2027	\$14.25M
2022-2027 TOTAL:	\$50M

J. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$1,850,000	\$1,900,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$11,750,000

Description:

Best Starts strives to partner with organizations that serve, and are led by, their own communities. Community-led organizations are best positioned to design programs that will have positive impacts on the children, youth, and families in their communities. *Best Starts* recognizes that many organizations, and the communities they serve, have historically experienced barriers to accessing funding opportunities from government agencies such as King County. To address this, *Best Starts* provides technical assistance to remove linguistic, cultural, and procedural barriers that might prevent qualified organizations from seeking *Best Starts* funding.

Best Starts Technical Assistance (TA) offers all applicants culturally responsive assistance on proposal development and responses to RFP opportunities. *Best Starts* recruits and retains TA providers that represent a wide range of skills, expertise, and language abilities. They help applicants determine whether programs are an appropriate fit for *Best Starts* RFPs, help applicants navigate the proposal process, review drafts, refine budgets, and support applicants to authentically share their stories of success and impact.

Best Starts Capacity Building Support (CB) offers provision and co-creation of information, tools, resources to strengthen the infrastructure of *Best Starts*-awarded organizations, and opportunities for

areas with service gaps to build capacity. *Best Starts* matches organizations with capacity building consultants (“capacity builders”) according to their needs. Capacity builders offer individualized, responsive coaching and training to support organizations’ capabilities. Areas of support include financial management, human resources, data and evaluation, IT, marketing, board governance, equity and social justice, legal services, and organizational development. *Best Starts* also offers small grants that make fiscal, evaluation and programmatic systems of *Best Starts*-awarded organizations stronger by securing resources such as IT equipment, databases, and software.

Planned Refinements in *Best Starts for Kids* 2022-2027:

Best Starts will include additional capacity building supports to support community based coalitions to identify needs in areas of King County that currently do not have infrastructure to provide services to their residents. Per Ordinance 19267, this includes \$1 million per year for capacity building grants that provide support to grantees to assist with the development of organizations in geographic locations lacking services or service infrastructure.²¹⁸ To achieve this, *Best Starts* plans to:

- Use data to identify communities lacking services or service infrastructure.
- Partner with communities identified as lacking services or service infrastructure using data to inform decisions.
- Partner with local coalitions in identified communities to plan for enhanced capacity.
- Complete outreach to areas identified as lacking infrastructure and services to best understand needs.

Rationale for Increased Investment: Technical assistance and capacity building programming within the first *Best Starts* levy was innovative for a public initiative. Increasing funding will allow the addition of a new type of capacity building: to create new organizations where there are currently none serving a need, or to help organizations grow to serve a previously underserved area. Through surveys, listening sessions, and other forms of feedback, *Best Starts* staff learned that partners highly value this support for community-based organizations (CBOs).²¹⁹ Technical assistance provided during the first *Best Starts* levy improved access to funding opportunities for CBOs. An assessment of *Best Starts* TA found that 40 percent of organizations that received TA had never applied for King County funding. In addition, 62 percent of organizations that used technical assistance were awarded funding for at least one proposal, compared to 53 percent for organizations that did not receive technical assistance.²²⁰

Anticipated Timeline:

- Release an RFQ in Q4 2021 to identify contractors for provision of technical assistance and capacity building, including contractors with a new area of expertise in standing up new organizations, to ensure these services are available at the start of 2022.
- Offer small awards directly to *Best Starts*-funded organizations at least twice over the course of the 2022-2027 *Best Starts* levy, anticipated for 2023 and 2025.

²¹⁸ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

²¹⁹ *Best Starts* Evaluation Dashboard [\[LINK\]](#)

²²⁰ Evaluation Report for *Best Starts for Kids* Technical Assistance. [\[LINK\]](#)

K. Data and Evaluation

Measuring *Best Starts* Strategy and Program Performance

This section presents the overarching principles and approaches that will guide the evaluation and performance measurement of the renewed *Best Starts for Kids* levy. The *Best Starts* Evaluation and Performance Measurement Framework for 2022-2027 continues and builds on the levy’s existing evaluation and performance measurement framework.²²¹

Data and Evaluation

Funding Estimate:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Amount	\$4,590,000	\$4,691,000	\$4,794,000	\$4,900,000	\$5,007,000	\$5,118,000	\$29,100,000

Best Starts evaluation investments funds a team of highly technical and skilled staff, the development and maintenance of robust data systems, and partnerships with external evaluators with deep expertise. With this investment, *Best Starts* will continue to develop insight that enables providers, communities, and policymakers to make more data-informed decisions and engage in continuous quality improvement. This includes data collection and reporting assistance for providers to increase the capacity of community-based organizations to collect data, conduct evaluation and make data-informed decisions.

Engagement with Key Stakeholders

Best Starts data and evaluation staff work closely with an Evaluation Advisory Group, comprised of Children and Youth Advisory Board members and *Best Starts* partners and stakeholders. COO evaluation activities have and will continue to be guided by the existing COO Evaluation Advisory Group. Community engagement to inform the updates to the *Best Starts* evaluation framework highlighted the approach’s many strengths.²²² *Best Starts* staff intend to refine the approaches in areas requested by communities: expanding data and evaluation partnerships, especially between community partners and school districts; expanding technical assistance and capacity building supports for data collection, reporting, and evaluation; improving communication of *Best Starts* data and evaluation findings and impacts; and streamlining reporting across strategies.

²²¹ *Best Starts* Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan, Motion 14979. [\[LINK\]](#)

²²² The community engagement process is described in Section III.E and Appendix J. [\[LINK\]](#)

Evaluation Principles and Continued Commitment to Equitable Evaluation

The *Best Starts* evaluation approach to date has centered equity throughout the process, guided by the CYAB equity statement,²²³ the COO grounding principles,²²⁴ and principles from the American Evaluation Association.²²⁵ Evaluators collaborated with funded partners to develop strategy- or program-specific evaluation plans and reflect on measures of their work. *Best Starts* data collection practices prioritized culturally relevant measurement tools, incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data, and expanded demographic data collection categories such as race to be more reflective of community. Evaluators ensured data were shared back with community for context and reflection.

Best Starts intends to continue these activities and deepen its commitment to the principles of equitable evaluation and decolonizing data.^{226, 227} Data, even those that are expressed in numbers, define a narrative about the community or communities from which the data were collected, which is then used to guide policy decisions and resource distribution.

Historically, data have often been collected and presented in a way that perpetuates the narrative of poverty and need, painting a portrait of disparity and deficit.²²⁸ Instead, data should present a complete story which acknowledges systemic barriers and includes strengths, resilience, and stamina within communities. Decolonizing data means recognizing the expertise and power of BIPOC communities to set their own narrative. Further, it means not erasing communities that have been historically labeled “statistically insignificant” and therefore not included in data reporting, most often small populations (e.g. Indigenous communities, Pacific Islanders, and Asian American subgroups).

Best Starts intends to expand the ways in which BIPOC communities are visible in data and are involved in decisions about what data are gathered and how it is interpreted. This may include expanding the ways the initiative disaggregates data by race and ethnicity, developing new methods for data collection, continuing to value and report on numbers and stories, and increasing opportunities for community reflection and feedback on data analysis.

***Best Starts* Evaluation Framework**

Evaluation and performance measurement will inform strategic learning and accountability. Strategic learning is using data to inform ongoing work and to understand which strategies are effective and why.²²⁹ Accountability is holding contracted partners responsible for the activities they are funded to do and to determine whether or to what degree the work contributed to *Best Starts* results.

²²³ Children and Youth Advisory Board. Statement on Equity. [\[LINK\]](#)

²²⁴ Communities of Opportunity. Governance Grounding. [\[LINK\]](#)

²²⁵ Principles include: systemic inquiry, integrity, respect for people, and common good. American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles. [\[LINK\]](#)

²²⁶ WestEd for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Reflections on Applying Principles of Equitable Evaluation. [\[LINK\]](#)

²²⁷ Decolonizing data means that the community itself determines the data that is collected, the interpretation, and the decision making based on the data. [\[LINK\]](#)

²²⁸ Montana Budget and Policy Center. [\[LINK\]](#)

²²⁹ Center for Evaluation Innovation. Evaluation for Strategic Learning: Assessing Readiness and Results. [\[LINK\]](#)

Best Starts' scale and complexity requires an approach that encompasses a range of measurement techniques. *Best Starts* begins with Results Based Accountability (RBA), a method for assessing the results of *Best Starts* strategies, and supplements those learnings with additional evaluation activities.²³⁰ The resulting framework includes:

- **Population Indicators:** *Best Starts* uses population level-measures to identify needs, understand baseline conditions, and track trends. *Best Starts* strategies intend to contribute to population-level results in the long term, while also understanding that the whole community across multiple sectors is responsible for county-wide conditions, and many additional factors influence these outcomes.
- **Performance Measurement:** Performance measures are regular measurement of program outcomes to assess how well an investment or strategy is working. *Best Starts* is accountable for performance of the levy's strategies.
- **In-Depth Evaluation:** Additional evaluation activities will complement performance measurement to deepen learnings in some program areas. This may include piloting new programs, developing new evaluation tools, and identifying areas for new or deeper community supports.

Population Indicators

Best Starts' population analyses will continue to utilize high quality, population-based surveys and quantitative data disaggregated by demographic characteristics (such as by age, race, ethnicity, place, socioeconomic status, and gender, where data are available), as well as qualitative data.²³¹ These indicators include infant mortality, kindergarten readiness, or high school graduation for King County residents.

King County will continue to implement the nationally award-winning *Best Starts* Health Survey to fill gaps in population data.²³² While there are existing data sources for children around the time of birth,²³³ and in middle and high school,²³⁴ there are no existing population-level data sources for toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary-aged children. Prior to *Best Starts*, very little was known about their health status, risk factors, resiliency, family/community supports or child care arrangements. *Best Starts* Health Survey questions cover demographics, overall health, child and family resiliency, breastfeeding, use of preventive health care services, experience with health care providers, child development, physical activity and obesity, child care arrangements, and family and community supports. These are the very child and youth wellness factors that *Best Starts* is working to strengthen.

²³⁰ Clear Impact. What is Results Based Accountability? [[LINK](#)]

²³¹ Best Starts for Kids Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan, Motion 14979. [[LINK](#)]

²³² *Best Starts for Kids* Health Survey Recognized with National Equity Award. [[LINK](#)]

²³³ Washington State Department of Health, Birth Certificate and Infant Mortality data; Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System.

²³⁴ Washington State Healthy Youth Survey; Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Performance Measurement

Best Starts will measure performance of individual programs or strategies to assess how the program is being implemented and whether it is successfully driving positive outcomes for participating children, youth, and families. As appropriate, programs will measure each of the three domains defined by RBA:

1. **How much did we do?**
2. **How well did we do it?**
3. **Is anyone better off?**

Performance measures will vary across programs by population served, duration of services, type of activity, and duration of funding, and may be either quantitative or qualitative. While some program models will require flexibility in the RBA framework, like basic goods distribution or systems-level programs that do not involve individual enrollment, measures will be regularly reported by all contracted partners across all strategies and programs. The timeline for developing and reporting measures will be distinct for each program and will depend on when the program is fully operational, the duration of enrollment or services, and the time needed for data collection.

Proposed performance measures for each investment area will be included in RFPs. Final program-specific performance measures and data collection methods will be developed in partnership with funded entities.²³⁵ This approach will strengthen partnerships between King County and *Best Starts* grantees and will ensure that *Best Starts* measurement reflects programs’ and communities’ definitions of progress. Example performance measures are shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Performance Measurement Examples

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?	Is anyone better off?
Number of youth enrolled	Percent of children with service start within 30 days	Percent of youth who gain employment
Number of basic needs resources distributed	Percent of parents/caregivers who report that they were treated with respect by staff	Percent of families with increased knowledge of parenting and child development

In-Depth Evaluation

Best Starts’ 2022-2027 levy includes a number of programs that already have an existing, rigorous evidence basis.²³⁶ For this subset of existing programs, where the causal connection between the program and expected results has already been demonstrated, evaluation will measure the quantity and impacts of *Best Starts*-funded services.

²³⁵ See [Appendix K](#) for an example Evaluation Plan for a *Best Starts* program. [\[LINK\]](#)

²³⁶ See sections VI E. and F of this report and *Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan*, Ordinance 18373. [\[LINK\]](#)

For certain strategies where *Best Starts* is investing in novel programs or adapting previously proven programs, *Best Starts* evaluation will use rigorous qualitative and quantitative data to inform program decision-making, and ensure that the program is functioning as intended. Examples of rigorous evaluation may include case control or quasi-experimental designs that include resource intensive data collection.

Consistent with Ordinance 19267,²³⁷ *Best Starts* will measure performance for and evaluate a youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, a King County child care subsidy program, a child care wage boost demonstration project, and technical assistance and capacity building activities. In addition, *Best Starts* plans to prioritize a subset of two or three projects for in-depth, rigorous evaluation. In partnership with the Evaluation Advisory Group, *Best Starts* has identified the following criteria for selecting priority areas for evaluation:

- **High interest from stakeholders:** King County Council, community-based organizations, grantees, Evaluation Advisory Group, Children and Youth Advisory Board, or Communities of Opportunity Advisory Board, as applicable.
- **High potential to improve equity** by serving large proportions of communities most in need
- **High potential to see short-term changes in indicators.** Likely to quickly see changes in indicators of individual or system well-being.
- **Novel implementation.** Implementing an existing program in new settings or populations.
- **Provide new evidence.** New or existing programs that can fill a gap in the scientific evidence base.
- **High quality data.** Sustainable sources of data to be able to track changes over time.

The design of these evaluations will be based on what is appropriate for the program's stage of implementation, and the existing evidence base for effectiveness of the selected program models. Options include:

- **Developmental evaluation** to support innovation and decision-making for a new program.
- **Process evaluation** to support program implementation and improvements.
- **Outcomes evaluation** to demonstrate whether the program is leading to the desired results. For some programs, this may include ascertaining causality by comparing intervention results with a statistically valid control group.²³⁸

The timeline for completing in-depth evaluations will be distinct for each program and will depend on when baseline data are available, the point at which a sufficient number of individuals have reached the outcome to generate a statistically reliable result, and the time needed for data collection, analyses and interpretation of data.

²³⁷ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

²³⁸ King County Veterans and Human Services Levy Evaluation Framework. [\[LINK\]](#)

***Best Starts* Annual Report on Levy Expenditures, Services, and Outcomes (*Best Starts* Annual Reports)**

The Executive will provide the *Best Starts* Annual Report on Levy Expenditures, Services, and Outcomes (*Best Starts* Annual Report) no later than July 15 each year.²³⁹ The first report, to be provided by July 15, 2023, will report on data from calendar year 2022. Subsequent annual reports will continue to be provided by July 15 of each year until July 15, 2028. Each report will focus on data from the prior calendar year. The annual report will be delivered digitally, with a notification letter transmitted to the King County Council when the report is ready for review. Detailed performance measures are anticipated to be available online through interactive dashboards²⁴⁰ that provide transparency by making timely data available and easier to explore. These *Best Starts* Annual Reports will provide data for Investing Early, Sustain the Gain, COO, YFHPI, child care, and technical assistance strategies, and the capital grant program. As required by Ordinance 19267, the reports will include:²⁴¹

- Annual information on levy expenditures, services and outcomes;
- Total expenditures of levy proceeds by program area by ZIP Code in King County, with partial data to be available in the report completed in 2024 and additional data available in each subsequent report;
- The number of individuals receiving levy-funded services by program area by ZIP Code of where the individuals reside at the time of service, with partial data to be available in the first annual report in 2023 and additional data available in each subsequent report.

The Children and Youth Advisory Board and the Communities of Opportunity Advisory Board will consult on, and review, the respective portion of annual reports on *Best Starts* programming for which they have been charged with oversight.

ZIP Code Reporting Methodology and Timeline

Best Starts has reported ZIP Code of client residence for many strategies to date. During the 2022-2027 levy, it will expand this reporting to include client residence by ZIP Code for additional strategies, as well as expenditures by ZIP Code by strategy.²⁴² ZIP Code data will be reported using maps or other visualizations to aid interpretation of the data.

To expand ZIP Code reporting, *Best Starts* will work throughout 2022 to develop and pilot new data collection processes, many of which may rely on providers to report additional data to the County. Strategies that are not currently reporting client residence by ZIP Code will assess the barriers to doing so. They will determine whether additional data collection is feasible for the program model, and what investment is required to support it, such as technical assistance for grantees to make changes to program databases. This work will enable additional providers to begin collecting ZIP Code data by the start of 2023. As a result, *Best Starts* will continue to report client residence by ZIP Code for the strategies already doing so in the 2022 Annual Report and will expand the number of strategies

²³⁹ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁴⁰ For example, see *Best Starts for Kids Impact* [\[LINK\]](#).

²⁴¹ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁴² Referred to in Ordinance 19267 as “program area.” [\[LINK\]](#)

reporting this information by the 2023 Annual Report, which will be transmitted to Council in July 2024. All reporting by ZIP Code will continue to abide by privacy and confidentiality guidelines to ensure individuals cannot be identified.

Best Starts will also develop and pilot a methodology beginning in 2022 for reporting program expenditures by ZIP Code based on available data or modeling. This methodology will need to account for expenditures for programs that are provided virtually, programs that do not operate from a single service location like home-based services, and systems-change work that has impacts in communities larger than a single ZIP Code. *Best Starts* intends to report expenditures by ZIP Code by strategy for all programs that operate from a fixed brick-and-mortar location by the 2023 Annual Report, which will be completed in July 2024. *Best Starts* expects to expand reporting of expenditures by ZIP Code to additional program types by the 2024 Annual Report, which will be completed in July 2025.

Collection of client ZIP Code data may continue to be limited for some programs, including but not limited to those that are mobile or that serve individuals that are unhoused, refugees, experiencing domestic violence, or participating in drop-in programs. ZIP Code data collection may also not be appropriate for programs not included in client counts, including those that focus on system and policy changes or workforce development. Collection may also not be possible for programs that are required to use an existing data system that *Best Starts* cannot revise, or when a legal framework prevents the sharing of these data. *Best Starts* will ground all client reporting requirements for grantees in the principle that data collection should never be a barrier to youth and families accessing necessary services, even as the initiative aims to maximize geographic transparency as directed by Ordinance 19267.

L. Procurement, Equity and Partnership Work

Best Starts will continue to lead with equity when procuring funding and contracting with partners. Funds will be appropriated in accordance with Ordinance 19267²⁴³ for each of the strategy areas. The majority of funds allocated to the community will require competitive bids through an RFP, RFA, or RFQ process.²⁴⁴ Responding to community feedback, *Best Starts* will continue to refine the procurement process to best serve community partners. *Best Starts* is working with community partners to identify refinements through a Community-Focused Grant Making workgroup so refinements can be made by January 2022. *Best Starts* will continue to include community members in work groups and on review panels and require a bias-awareness workshop for all application reviews. Throughout the 2022-2027 levy, *Best Starts'* procurement process will also feature ongoing continuous quality improvement.

Organizations that secure *Best Starts* awards will contract with the County for up to three years, with a possible option to extend if they are in good standing. *Best Starts* will continue to ensure better access

²⁴³ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁴⁴ Request for Proposal or Request for Application. RFPs and RFAs are solicitation notifications to apply for funding.

to available funds through supports like free technical assistance²⁴⁵ in the application process. *Best Starts* will announce funding opportunities through varied venues including trusted messengers in specific communities, social media, information sessions in diverse geographical locations, and online, as well as traditional sources through the county.

Community feedback identified the need for more alignment in contracting requirements from the two King County departments that distribute *Best Starts* funding.²⁴⁶ The goal is to move toward one template for RFPs, one platform to apply for funds online, one invoice template to make it easier for funded organizations. Capacity building will remain available to ensure organizations have the necessary information and are prepared to contract with the County.²⁴⁷ These improvements, originating from community feedback, will strengthen the partnership between the community and County government.

While particular *Best Starts* RFPs may have unique eligibility requirements depending on the framework and results of that particular investment, the procurement and contracting processes described above will ensure overall that residents throughout King County and in any city in King County can access levy-funded strategies regardless of availability of similar services and programs provided by their city or in their community.

For a full list of fiscal and procurement policies, see Appendix I.

Investment Flexibility

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, *Best Starts* worked with partners to revise scopes of work within contracts to enable community agencies to be more flexible to meet the needs of families. For example, organizations shifted funding to provide virtual programming, basic needs, and purchase personal protective equipment. Through the community conversations held in October and November 2020 *Best Starts* partners expressed that the flexible funding during the COVID-19 pandemic was essential for them to survive unprecedented times.^{248,249} Therefore, *Best Starts* intends to continue that type of flexibility as communities rebuild from the pandemic in the coming years.

Even prior to 2020, organizations serving children and youth embraced *Best Starts*' value for taking risks and trying new things, even if course corrections may be necessary. The trust built between *Best Starts* and its community-based partners, combined with the County's willingness to bear some risk, made this possible. Organizations were more willing to transparently communicate with the County about strategies they tried that had been less successful, without fearing their funding would be discontinued. *Best Starts* will continue to lead with this value of partnership, flexibility, and accountability.

²⁴⁵ Full description of technical assistance. [\[LINK\]](#).

²⁴⁶ See [Appendix I](#).

²⁴⁷ See [Appendix I](#).

²⁴⁸ See Community Partnership Key Themes in [Section III.E](#).

²⁴⁹ BSK COVID-19 Impacts Report. [\[LINK\]](#)

Geographic Distribution and Targeted Universalism

Best Starts is committed to directly addressing regional, racial, and economic disparities in King County and the systems that create these disparities. To do this, *Best Starts* services are distributed with countywide geographic access and racial equity in mind, responding to the community's ideas and feedback and reflecting the results of competitive procurement processes. This intentional method of open solicitation for proposals and weighing geographic spread and need during the awards decision process yields an array of services available to cities and communities throughout King County while also delivering interventions where they are needed most. *Best Starts* is committed to assuring opportunities are available across the diversity of geographic locations in the County, as described in the 2019 Human Services Geographic Equity Plan.²⁵⁰ Therefore, it welcomes and considers proposals from all cities, subregions, and unincorporated areas across the county for all strategies.

Best Starts funding alone is not sufficient to fully connect all of King County's over two million residents to the services they need. Therefore, King County plans to continue to deploy *Best Starts* resources to promote equitable access for the populations facing the largest disparities in health and well-being, often linked to poverty as well as those farthest from opportunity.²⁵¹

To address these issues, a targeted universalism approach that recognizes that services must be directed to areas of greatest need guides *Best Starts*' service distribution. With this framework, *Best Starts* pursues universal goals for all children, youth, and families by deploying a range of strategies and services specific to the varying needs and circumstances of each group or community. *Best Starts*' targeted universalism approach considers communities and populations experiencing rapidly increasing challenges facing children and families, and ensures that opportunities are available in the communities where they are needed the most.²⁵² *Best Starts* also offers a combination of strategies that are designed to be more universal in approach, while some are focused within specific communities, as a means to target resources to reduce the disproportionality that exists within King County. A case study from the Othering and Belonging Institute indicated that King County was using this method, and that continuing this approach would be critical to moving towards more equitable access.²⁵³

M. Mitigation of Prorationing

Background on Junior Taxing District Prorationing

Many jurisdictions in Washington State are authorized to levy property taxes, which require residents of that jurisdiction to pay taxes based on the assessed value of their property.²⁵⁴ Each taxing district is

²⁵⁰ Human Services Geographic Equity Plan (2019), as required by Ordinance 18835.

²⁵¹ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Social Determinants of Healthy. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁵² *Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan* (2016), pages 37-38. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁵³ Othering and Belonging Institute. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁵⁴ MRSC Local Government Success (Property Tax in Washington State). [\[LINK\]](#)

authorized to levy a property tax under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 84.52, which provides authorization and provides a limit on the rate that the type of jurisdiction may charge.²⁵⁵

Property tax levy prorationing occurs because taxing districts have the individual taxing authority to levy rates that, when combined, add to more than the aggregate property tax limit of \$5.90 per \$1,000 of assessed value. When a senior taxing district, such as King County, levies a new or increased property tax, it can result in prorationing (or reducing) junior taxing districts to a lower rate and therefore receiving less revenue in order to comply with the limit.²⁵⁶

The hierarchy of taxing districts defined in RCW 84.52.010 sets a specific order by which jurisdiction rates are prorationed when aggregate levels go above the \$5.90 limit.²⁵⁷ The King County Department of Assessments uses this methodology to certify levy rates that meet legal requirements each year.

Ordinance 19267 identifies that *Best Starts* levy revenue can be used for eligible services provided by junior taxing districts that have been prorationed, in three circumstances: metropolitan park districts fire districts, and local hospital districts.^{258,259}

Best Starts Plan to Mitigate Any Prorationing

Each year after the King County Department of Assessments certifies levy rates, the County will calculate whether and how much any metropolitan park districts, hospital districts, or fire districts are prorationed.²⁶⁰ If prorationing occurs, *Best Starts* will partner with jurisdictions to identify eligible services to fund that include services that improve health and wellbeing outcomes of children and youth, as well as the families and the communities in which they live.

Current Modeling Anticipates No Prorationing in 2022-2027

Current modeling as of mid-2021 does not suggest prorationing will occur during the 2022-2027 levy period given current levy rates countywide. If economic trends reduce assessed property value or rates from other taxing districts increase, this forecast may change.

²⁵⁵ RCW 84.52.043 defines “junior taxing districts” as including all taxing districts other than the state, counties, road districts, cities, towns, port districts and public utility districts

²⁵⁶ RCW 84.52.010 Taxes levied or voted in specific amounts – Effect of constitutional and statutory limitations. This RCW outlines a methodology for reducing the tax rate of taxing districts when the aggregate rate for jurisdictions (other than the state) is higher than the \$5.90 limit required by RCW 84.52.043. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*

²⁵⁸ Ordinance 19267. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁵⁹ RCW 84.52.010

²⁶⁰ This calculation uses the Washington State Department of Revenue levy manual and worksheets to compare levy rates to statutory maximums.

V. Conclusion & Next Steps

The *Best Starts for Kids* levy and the programs and services it supports reflect the fundamental beliefs that King County is a region of considerable opportunity, that all residents benefit when the King County community supports each child, youth, and young adult to achieve their fullest potential, and that lives of health, prosperity and purpose must be within reach for every King County resident. To create these opportunities for King County's young people, *Best Starts* will maintain upstream prevention and promotion investments from the first Best Starts levy, while building upon its successes by launching new programming including child care subsidies, increasing investments in programs for older youth, and investing capital facilities serving children and youth. *Best Starts* will also continue to provide capacity building for organizations in their efforts to maintain sustainability and grow in new areas.

Best Starts will continue to promote changes in policies and systems to dismantle long standing racial inequities in health outcomes, such as inequities in maternal and infant health and lack of quality, affordable childcare for working families.²⁶¹ Communities will continue to benefit from new funding to support happy, healthy, safe and thriving children, youth and communities.

Upon adoption of this implementation plan by the King County Council, Best Starts will bring this plan to life by working with the community to refine each strategy to ensure that its implementation meets community need. Best Starts will also continue its ongoing effort to make it easier for organizations to apply for funds and begin to prepare RFPs so that strategies can continue and build at the beginning of 2022. All currently funded investment strategies will be re-procured during the 2022-2023 timeframe. To assure transparency and accountability, *Best Starts* will report on its outcomes, expenditures, and program implementation annually.

²⁶¹ Assessment Report Motion 15769. [\[LINK\]](#)

VI. Appendices

A. Ordinance 19267

AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the qualified electors of King County at a special election to be held in King County on August 3, 2021, of a proposition providing for resident oversight and authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for a six-year consecutive period at a rate of not more than \$0.19 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation in the first year, and limiting annual levy increases to three percent in the five succeeding years, all for the purpose of funding prevention and early intervention strategies and a capital grants program to improve the health and well-being of children, youth and their communities.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. In 2015, King County enacted Ordinance 18088, placing a six-year Best Starts for Kids levy on the ballot. King County residents voted and approved the Best Starts for Kids levy to fund programs and services that support promotion, prevention and early intervention for King County's 19 children, youth and families.
2. The goals of the Best Starts for Kids levy that voters approved in 2015 are to ensure babies are born healthy, King County is a place where everyone has equitable opportunities for health and safety as they progress through childhood and communities offer safe, welcoming and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of King County's children and families.
3. Since its inception, the Best Starts for Kids levy has funded five hundred and seventy programs and has reached over five hundred seven thousand babies, children, youth and families throughout the county with community-driven programming. Levy programs trained sixty-eight thousand child care providers, pediatricians, community health workers and other staff who work with children and youth on healthy child development and racially and culturally appropriate care. The Best Starts for Kids levy distributes resources across the region, focusing investments on those most in need.
4. In June 2020, the council directed the executive in Motion 15651 to produce an assessment report to inform deliberations regarding renewal of the current Best Starts for Kids levy. The report includes assessment of early measurements and successes, challenges in launching this first levy, an analysis of the levy's advancement of equity and early recommendations for renewal. Executive staff combined findings of staff research, a community survey conducted in June 2020, community input from ten geographically based virtual community listening sessions as well as five virtual stakeholder listening sessions, and input from ongoing Best Starts for Kids community partner learning circles. In total, almost seven hundred and twenty community responses informed completion of the report. The council accepted the assessment report in Motion 15769.
5. The existing Best Starts for Kids levy will expire at the end of 2021. Renewal of the Best Starts for Kids levy requires voter approval. Acknowledging the importance of the Best Starts for Kids levy in serving the county's children, youth and families with upstream promotion, prevention and early intervention programs, and, in light of the current impact the COVID-19 pandemic, has

had on the health and well-being of the children, youth and families of King County as well as the regional economic and human services systems including child care, the Best Starts for Kids levy warrants renewal.

6. Over twenty-five thousand babies are born in King County each year. County residents under twenty-five years old comprise thirty percent of the population. Fifty-three percent of the people under eighteen years old in King County are Black, Indigenous and People of Color.
7. Research shows that there are significant disparities in the health and well-being of King County residents. The percentage of children five and under living in poverty is as low as five percent in some regions of the county and as high as fifteen percent in other regions. Infant mortality is four times higher for American Indian/Alaskan Natives compared to whites and more than two times higher for African Americans. Thirty eight percent of toddler and preschoolers are not flourishing and resilient in King County, and that number rises to seventy-one percent for elementary-aged children. Among youth, thirty-three percent report depressive feelings and twenty-four percent report using alcohol or other illicit drugs. Twenty-six percent of youth say they do not have an adult they can talk to and thirty-three percent do not feel strong connection to their family. Two thousand students, disproportionately low income and Black, Indigenous and People of Color, drop out of school each year in King County while research shows that by 2024, almost ninety percent of living wage jobs in the county will require some sort of post-secondary education.
8. Child care is unaffordable for many families in King County, and child care for our youngest residents now costs more than in-state, public college tuition. King County's child care workforce is disproportionately made up of women and Black, Indigenous and People of Color, as well as immigrants and refugees. Wages remain low, with providers earning near poverty-level salaries.
9. In 2010, Ordinance 16897 was enacted, establishing the King County Strategic Plan, 2010-2014. In 2015, the council passed Motion 14317, updating and revising King County's vision, mission, guiding principles and goals. Included within the county's goals are improving the health and well-being of all people in King County, implementing alternatives to divert people from the criminal justice system and ensuring that county government operates efficiently and effectively and is accountable to the public.
10. The county's guiding principles in the King County Strategic Plan, 2010-2014 command that pursuit of the county's goals should address the root causes of inequities to provide equal access for all. In 2015, the county established the office of equity and social justice and, the following year, the office of equity and social justice produced the 2016-2022 Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan. King County actively engages in equity and social justice efforts to eliminate racially and ethnically disparate health and human services outcomes in King County, and this is a priority that shall guide the council and the executive in the process of designing, administering and evaluating the policies and programs related to the renewed Best Starts for Kids levy, if approved by voters.
11. In 2014, Ordinance 17738 was enacted, establishing the youth action plan task force and providing policy direction regarding the development of a youth action plan. In addition to their work with the youth action plan, the youth action plan task force members helped shape the

current Best Starts for Kids levy. In 2015, the council passed Motion 14378, adopting the completed youth action plan. The youth action plan continues to provide guidance and policy direction for the Best Starts for Kids levy.

12. The strategies supported by the Best Starts for Kids levy achieve a variety of outcomes. Headline indicators used to measure these outcomes for children under six include the following: babies born with healthy birth outcomes; children who are flourishing and resilient; children who are ready for kindergarten; and children who are free from abuse or neglect. Headline indicators for children and youth five to twenty-four years old include the following: third graders who meet reading standards; fourth graders who meet math standards; youth who are flourishing and resilient; youth and young adults who are in excellent or very good health; youth who graduated from high school on time; youth and young adults in school or working; high school graduates who earn a college degree or career credential; and youth who are not using illegal substances. Headline indicators for Communities of Opportunity include: adults reporting good or excellent health; youth who have an adult to turn to for help; individuals engaged in civic activities; households paying less than thirty percent or less than fifty percent of their income for housing; local residents who are displaced; youth who eat fruit and vegetables at least four times a day; households with income above two hundred percent of poverty; and youth and young adults in school or working.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this ordinance unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

- A. "Child care workforce demonstration project" means a strategy to improve the provision of child care in King County supplementing wages of a test group of persons who provide child care in exchange for wages and then reporting out on the effects of the strategy upon the quality of child care, including, but not limited to, the strategy's effects upon workforce turnover, workforce experience of poverty and workforce experience levels.
- B. "Children and youth" means persons through twenty-four years old.
- C. "Communities of opportunity" means the strategy described in Section VII of the Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan, that is Attachment A to Ordinance 18373. Communities of Opportunity is designed to improve equity by addressing the race- and place-based inequitable health and well-being outcomes in King County. Communities of Opportunity supports communities in improving the health, social and economic outcomes of those specific communities, and does so by partnering with communities to shape and own solutions.
- D. "King County child care subsidy program" means a strategy to reduce or fully subsidize the cost of child care to low-income families in King County.
- E. "Levy" means the levy of regular property taxes for the specific purposes and term provided in this ordinance and authorized by the electorate in accordance with Washington law.
- F. "Levy proceeds" means the principal amount of moneys raised by the levy and any interest earnings on the moneys.

- G. "Limit factor" for the purposes of calculating the levy limitations in RCW 84.55.010, means one hundred three percent.
- H. "Strategy" means a program, service, activity, initiative or capital investment intended to achieve the purposes described in subsection 4.B. of this ordinance.
- I. "Technical assistance and capacity building" means assisting organizations seeking or receiving levy proceeds to enable the organizations to apply for, implement and improve delivery of a strategy or strategies for which expenditures of this levy are eligible.
- J. "Youth and family homelessness prevention initiative" means an initiative intended to prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming homeless.

SECTION 2. Levy submittal. To provide necessary moneys for the purposes identified in section 4 of this ordinance, the King County council shall submit to the qualified electors of the county a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for six consecutive years, with collection commencing in 2022, at a rate not to exceed \$0.19 per one thousand dollars of assessed value in the first year of the levy period. The dollar amount of the levy in the first year shall be the base upon which the levy amounts in year two through six shall be calculated. In accordance with RCW 84.55.050, the levy shall be a regular property tax levy subject to the limit factor as defined in section 1 of this ordinance.

SECTION 3. Deposit of levy proceeds. The levy proceeds shall be deposited into a dedicated subfund of the best starts for kids fund, or its successor.

SECTION 4. Eligible expenditures.

- A. If approved by the qualified electors of the county, such sums from the first year's levy proceeds as are necessary may be used to provide for the costs and charges incurred by the county that are attributable to the election.
- B. After the amount authorized in subsection A. of this section, the remaining levy proceeds shall be used to:
 - 1. Promote improved health and well-being outcomes of children and youth, as well as the families and the communities in which they live, including, but not limited to: capital investments for buildings and facilities, including, but not limited to, housing, that serve children and youth; ensuring adequate services and supports for pregnant persons and newborns; access to safe and healthy food; developmental screening for children and youth; programs that care for children and youth when they are not at home including child care and out-of-school-time programs; programs and services that promote social and emotional well-being, mental health and a sense of belonging, connection and positive identity in children and youth; and programs and services that provide academic support and promote academic achievement;
 - 2. Prevent and intervene early on negative outcomes, including, but not limited to, poor birth outcomes, developmental delays, chronic disease, social emotional isolation, mental health challenges, substance abuse, dropping out of school, homelessness, domestic violence and effects of systemic racism and incarceration;

3. Reduce inequities in outcomes for children and youth in the county; and
 4. Strengthen, improve, better coordinate, integrate and encourage innovation in health and human services systems and the agencies, organizations and groups addressing the needs of children and youth, their families and their communities.
- C. Of the eligible expenditures described in subsection B. of this section, an amount of each year's levy proceeds shall be allocated first for the purposes in subsections D. and E. of this section. In the levy's first year, which is 2022, the total amount allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be twenty-two and one-half percent of the first year's levy proceeds remaining after the amount authorized in subsection A. of this section. In the levy's subsequent years, the amount to be allocated for the purposes in subsections D. and E. of this section shall be allocated so that the six year total sum of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be no less than two-hundred forty million dollars. The implementation plan required by section 7 of this ordinance shall describe the annual allocations of levy proceeds that accomplish allocation requirements of this subsection C. of this section. After the annual allocation of levy proceeds required by this subsection C. of this section, each year's remaining levy proceeds shall be divided in the following proportions and used for the following purposes:
1. Fifty percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer strategies focused on children and youth under six years old and their caregivers, pregnant persons and individuals or families concerning pregnancy.
 2. Thirty-seven percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer strategies focused on children and youth age five or older;
 3. Eight percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer Communities of Opportunity; and
 4. Five percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer the following:
 - a. performance measurement of levy-funded strategies, evaluation and data collection activities;
 - b. stipends for children and youth serving as appointed members of the King County children and youth advisory board under conditions prescribed by the final children and youth advisory board update report required by section 6 of this ordinance in the final form of the children and youth advisory board update report that the council adopts by ordinance.
 - c. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by metropolitan park districts in King County. Of the moneys identified in this subsection C.4.c., an amount equal to the lost revenues to the metropolitan park districts resulting from prorationing as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, up to one million dollars, shall be provided to those metropolitan park districts if authorized by the county council by ordinance;
 - d. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by fire districts, in an amount equal to the lost revenues to the fire districts in King County resulting from prorationing, as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, for those services, to the extent the prorationing was caused solely by this levy and if authorized by the county council by ordinance; and

- e. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by public hospital districts, in an amount equal to the lost revenues to the public hospital districts in King County resulting from prorationing, as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, for those services, to the extent the prorationing was caused solely by this levy and if authorized by the county council by ordinance.
- D. Except for levy proceeds reserved for the purposes in subsection E. of this section, the levy proceeds annually reserved in subsection C. of this section shall be used to plan, provide, fund, administer, measure performance and evaluate a youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, a King County child care subsidy program, a child care workforce demonstration project and technical assistance and capacity building activities, including one million dollars annually for a capacity building grant program that includes providing support to grantees to assist with the development of infrastructure in geographic locations lacking services or service infrastructure. The grant program to support capacity building that includes providing support to grantees to assist with the development of infrastructure in geographic locations lacking services or service infrastructure shall be described in the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance and must include the development of new organizations and expansion of existing organizations. The youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, King County child care subsidy program, child care workforce demonstration project and technical assistance and capacity building activities required in this subsection shall be described in the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance.
- E. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, if the total projected levy proceeds exceeds eight hundred twenty-two million dollars, the levy proceeds greater than eight hundred twenty-two million dollars shall be used to provide grants designed to support repairs and expansion of buildings and facilities, that serve children and youth, and to support the construction of new buildings and facilities that will serve children and youth. Such buildings and facilities that serve children and youth shall include, but not be limited to, housing and child care, early learning and recreational facilities. However, the total levy proceeds used to provide grants shall not exceed fifty million dollars. Additionally, if the total projected levy proceeds falls below eight hundred seventy-two million dollars, the amount of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes of this subsection shall be first reduced before any other reduction in the total amounts allocated for the purposes in subsections C. and D. of this section. This capital grants program shall be described in the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance. Additionally, the executive shall propose in the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance the amount of levy proceeds to be allocated for the capital grants program and a process for determining annually if a reduction to the amount of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes of this subsection is necessary and the amount of any such reduction. The executive shall also propose in the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance a policy for prioritizing capital investments in new buildings or facilities as compared to capital investments in existing buildings or facilities.

SECTION 5. Call for special election. In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321, the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with the primary election on August

03, 2021, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council shall certify that proposition to the director of elections in substantially the following form:

PROPOSITION___: The King County Council passed Ordinance ___ concerning funding to improve the well-being of children, youth, families and communities. If approved, this proposition would fund promotion of positive outcomes, prevention and early intervention related to: child care; healthy pregnancy; newborn family supports; youth development; community well-being; and crisis prevention and intervention for children and youth, including homelessness prevention. It would authorize an additional six-year property tax levy for collection beginning in 2022 at \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation with the 2022 levy amount being the base for calculating annual increases of up to 3% in 2022 - 2026.

Should this proposition be:

Approved? _____

Rejected? _____

SECTION 6. Governance. The King County children and youth advisory board described in K.C.C. 2A.300.510 shall serve as the oversight and advisory board for the levy and its strategies, except for Communities of Opportunity, if the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the county. The communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board described in K.C.C. 2A.300.520 shall serve as the advisory body for Communities of Opportunity if the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the county. If the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the county, the executive shall by October 01, 2021, transmit to the council for consideration and adoption by ordinance a best starts for kids governance update report that describes and explains necessary and recommended changes to sections of the King County Code and applicable ordinances that describe the composition and duties of the King County children and youth advisory board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board. A proposed ordinance or ordinances shall accompany the best starts for kids governance update report, which ordinance or ordinances, upon enactment, would accomplish the changes recommended by the best starts for kids governance update report. Among the purposes of recommended changes listed and described within the best starts for kids governance update report shall be to update the King County children and youth advisory board's duties and composition as needed to enable the King County children and youth advisory board to oversee and advise on the levy and to extend the existence of the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board to coincide with the levy. The executive shall consult with the King County children and youth advisory board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board in preparing the children and youth advisory board update report.

SECTION 7. Implementation plan.

A.1. Not later than July 31, 2021, the executive shall transmit to the council for review and adoption by ordinance a proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan that identifies the strategies

to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of levy proceeds described in section 4 of this ordinance. The Best Starts for Kids implementation plan shall also include a framework to measure the performance of levy strategies in achieving their outcomes and require an annual report on levy expenditures, services and outcomes, including:

- a. total expenditures of levy proceeds by program area by ZIP Code in King County; and
- b. the number of individuals receiving levy-funded services by program area by ZIP Code in King County of where the individuals reside at the time of service.

2. The executive shall develop the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan in consultation with the King County children and youth advisory board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board. In developing the Best Starts for Kids implementation plan required in this section 7, the executive shall consider and promote harmony with the previous Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan that is Attachment A to Ordinance 18373, specifically describing which strategies from the previous Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan shall continue in the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan. Additionally, in developing the Best Starts for Kids implementation plan, the executive shall ensure that residents throughout King County and in any city in King County can access levy-funded strategies regardless of the availability of similar services and programs provided by their city or in their community. In developing the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan, the executive shall also to the maximum extent possible take into consideration the King County Youth Action Plan, adopted by Motion 14378.

B. Levy proceeds may not be expended for the purposes described in section 4 of this ordinance until the effective date of the ordinance with which the Best Starts for Kids implementation plan is adopted.

SECTION 8. Exemption. The additional regular property taxes authorized by this ordinance shall be included in any real property tax exemption authorized by RCW 84.36.381.

SECTION 9. Ratification and confirmation. Certification of the proposition by the clerk of the county council to the director of elections in accordance with law before the general election on August 3, 2021, and any other act consistent with the authority and before the effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

SECTION 10. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

B. Motion 15888

A MOTION relating to programs and services for prevention, outreach, and early intervention to address mental health and substance use impacts in children and youth five through twenty-four years old, which have been exacerbated due to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

WHEREAS, in 2010, Ordinance 16897 was enacted, establishing the King County Strategic Plan, 2010-2014. In 2015, the council passed Motion 14317, updating and revising King County's vision, mission, guiding principles and goals. Included within the county's goals are improving the health and well-being of all people in King County, implementing alternatives to divert people from the criminal justice system and ensuring that county government operates efficiently and effectively and is accountable to the public, and

WHEREAS, according to the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and eighty studies on the topic, social isolation and loneliness, like that caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, significantly increase the risk of depression and anxiety in previously healthy children and adolescents, and

WHEREAS, a 2014 study done by the University of Southern California of four hundred seventy-six adolescents, with the mean age of fourteen years old, concluded that depression levels directly associated with an increased likelihood of a lifetime use of inhalants, prescription pain killers and many other substances, and

WHEREAS, in a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in June 2020, 40.9 percent of respondents, eighteen years old or older, reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition. Those included 30.9 percent reporting symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder, 26.3 percent reporting symptoms of a trauma-and stressor-related disorder related to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic and 13.3 percent reported having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19, and

WHEREAS, the existing Best Starts for Kids levy, which serves the county's children, youth and families with upstream promotion, prevention and early intervention programs, will expire at the end of 2021 and levy renewal requires voter approval, and

WHEREAS, the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic has impacted the health and well-being of the children, youth and families of King County as well as the regional economic and human services systems including child care, and

WHEREAS, the executive's Best Starts for Kids levy renewal proposal, which is Proposed Ordinance 2021-0062, would, subject to voter approval of a renewal levy, allow levy proceeds to be expended for prevention and intervention early on negative outcomes, including, but not limited to, poor birth outcomes, developmental delays, chronic disease, social emotional isolation, mental health challenges, substance abuse, dropping out of school, homelessness, domestic violence and effects of systemic racism and incarceration, and

WHEREAS, subject to enactment of Ordinance XXXXX (Proposed Ordinance 2021-0062), the executive, not later than July 31, 2021, is required to transmit to the council for review and adoption by ordinance a proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan that identifies the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of levy proceeds described in Ordinance XXXXX (Proposed Ordinance 2021-0062);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The executive is requested, in developing the Best Starts for Kids implementation plan, to:

- A. Identify in the transmitted plan strategies relating to prevention, outreach and early intervention to address mental health and substance use impacts, in children and youth five through twenty-four years old, that have been exacerbated due to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic; and
- B. Consider programs and services that provide, expand access to or provide and expand access to substance use disorder supports for children and youth, including, but not limited to, awareness campaigns on substance use.

C. Ordinance Requirements and Requested Elements

Required Implementation Plan Elements from Ordinance 19267	Links to Relevant Section(s)
<p>After the amount authorized in subsection A. of this section, the remaining levy proceeds shall be used to promote improved health and well-being outcomes of children and youth, as well as the families and the communities in which they live, including, but not limited to: <i>Section 4.B</i></p>	
<p>ensuring adequate services and supports for pregnant persons and newborns; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Maternal & Child Health Services section; Home Based Services section, Community Based Parenting Supports section (Perinatal and Lactation Support Services).</p>
<p>access to safe and healthy food; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Community Based Parenting Supports section (Resource Brokering); Healthy & Safe Environments section; Communities of Opportunity section.</p>
<p>developmental screening for children and youth; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Universal Developmental Screenings section; Help Me Grow section; Universal Developmental Screenings section, Universal Developmental Screenings section, Child Care Health Consultation section.</p>
<p>programs that care for children and youth when they are not at home including child care and out-of-school-time programs; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Expanded Learning section.</p>
<p>programs and services that promote social and emotional well-being, mental health and a sense of belonging, connection and positive identity in children and youth; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Systems Building for Infant Mental Health section; Liberation and Healing section; SB:SBIRT section.</p>
<p>programs and services that provide academic support and promote academic achievement; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Liberation and Healing section; Expanded Learning section; Youth Development section; School Based Health Centers section; Capital Programs section.</p>

Required Implementation Plan Elements from Ordinance 19267	Links to Relevant Section(s)
<p>After the amount authorized in subsection A. of this section, the remaining levy proceeds shall be used to promote improved health and well-being outcomes of children and youth, as well as the families and the communities in which they live, including, but not limited to: <i>Section 4.B</i></p>	
<p>ensuring adequate services and supports for pregnant persons and newborns; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Maternal & Child Health Services section; Home Based Services section, Community Based Parenting Supports section (Perinatal and Lactation Support Services).</p>
<p>access to safe and healthy food; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Community Based Parenting Supports section (Resource Brokering); Healthy & Safe Environments section; Communities of Opportunity section.</p>
<p>developmental screening for children and youth; <i>Section 4.B.1</i></p>	<p>Universal Developmental Screenings section; Help Me Grow section; Universal Developmental Screenings section, Universal Developmental Screenings section, Child Care Health Consultation section.</p>
<p>Prevent and intervene early on negative outcomes, including, but not limited to, <i>Section 4.B.2</i></p>	
<p>poor birth outcomes, <i>Section 4.B.2</i></p>	<p>Maternity Health Services section; Home Based Services section; Community Based Parenting Supports section (Perinatal and Lactation Support Services).</p>
<p>developmental delays, <i>Section 4.B.2</i></p>	<p>Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers section Home Based Services section Universal Developmental Screening section Help Me Grow section</p>
<p>chronic disease, <i>Section 4.B.2</i></p>	<p>Maternity Health Services section; Environmental Supports section.</p>
<p>social emotional isolation, <i>Section 4.B.2</i></p>	<p>Systems Building for Infant Mental Health section; Liberation and Healing section; SB:SBIRT section.</p>
<p>mental health challenges, <i>Section 4.B.2</i></p>	<p>Sustain the Gain section; Systems Building for Infant Mental Health section; Liberation and Healing; SB:SBIRT section.</p>

Required Implementation Plan Elements from Ordinance 19267	Links to Relevant Section(s)
substance abuse, <i>Section 4.B.2</i>	Sustain the Gain section ; SB:SBIRT section ; Healthy and Safe Environments section.
dropping out of school, <i>Section 4.B.2</i>	Maternity Health Services section ; Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative section.
homelessness, <i>Section 4.B.2</i>	Maternity Health Services section ; Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative section.
domestic violence and <i>Section 4.B.2</i>	Youth Development (Healthy Relationships) section.
effects of systemic racism and incarceration; <i>Section 4.B.2</i>	Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline section ; School Based Health Centers section.
Reduce inequities in outcomes for children and youth in the county; and <i>Section 4.B.3</i>	Several sections of the document, starting in section IV , parts C, D, E, and F
Strengthen, improve, better coordinate, integrate and encourage innovation in health and human services systems and the agencies, organizations and groups addressing the needs of children and youth, their families and their communities. <i>Section 4.B.4</i>	Innovation Supports section ; Technical Assistance and Capacity Building section.
The Implementation Plan required by section 7 of this ordinance shall describe the annual allocations of levy proceeds that accomplish allocation requirements of this subsection C. of this section. <i>Section 4.C</i>	Fiscal Overview section ; additional detail can be found in Appendix H (fiscal detail) and Appendix I (procurement and financial policies).
Additionally, in developing the Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan, the executive shall ensure that residents throughout King County and in any city in King County can access levy-funded strategies regardless of availability of similar services and programs provided by their city or in their community. <i>Section 4.C</i>	Procurement, Equity and Partnership Work section.
Of the eligible expenditures described in subsection B. of this section, an amount of each year's levy proceeds shall be allocated first for the purposes in subsection D. of this section. <i>Section 4.C</i>	Fiscal Requirements and Funding Allocations in Fiscal Overview section.

Required Implementation Plan Elements from Ordinance 19267	Links to Relevant Section(s)
<p>In the levy's first year, which is 2022, the total amount allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be twenty-two and one-half percent of the first year's levy proceeds remaining after the amount authorized in subsection A. <i>Section 4.C</i></p>	<p>Fiscal Requirements and Funding Allocations in Fiscal Overview section.</p>
<p>In the levy's subsequent years, the amount to be allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be allocated so that the six-year total sum of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be no less than two-hundred and forty million dollars. <i>Section 4.C</i></p>	<p>Fiscal Requirements and Funding Allocations in Fiscal Overview section.</p>
<p>The Implementation Plan required by section 7 of this ordinance shall describe the annual allocations of levy proceeds that accomplish allocation requirements of this subsection C. of this section. <i>Section 4.C</i></p>	<p>Fiscal Requirements and Funding Allocations in Fiscal Overview section with additional information in Strategy sections.</p>
<p>After the annual allocation of levy proceeds required by this subsection C. of this section, each year's remaining levy proceeds shall be divided in the following proportions and used for the following purposes: <i>Section 4.C</i></p>	<p>Fiscal Requirements and Funding Allocations in Fiscal Overview section.</p>
<p>1. Fifty percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer strategies focused on children and youth under six years old and their caregivers, pregnant persons and individuals or families concerning pregnancy. <i>Section 4.C.1</i></p>	<p>Investing Early section.</p>
<p>2. Thirty-seven percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer strategies focused on children and youth age five or older; <i>Section 4.C.2</i></p>	<p>Sustain the Gain section.</p>
<p>3. Eight percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer Communities of Opportunity; and <i>Section 4.C.3</i></p>	<p>Communities of Opportunity section.</p>
<p>4. Five percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer the following: <i>Section 4.C.4</i></p>	

Required Implementation Plan Elements from Ordinance 19267	Links to Relevant Section(s)
<p>a. performance measurement of levy-funded strategies, evaluation and data collection activities; <i>Section 4.C.4.a</i></p>	<p>Data and Evaluation section.</p>
<p>b. stipends for children and youth serving as appointed members of the King County children and youth advisory board under conditions prescribed by the final children and youth advisory board update report required by section 6 of this ordinance in the final form of the children and youth advisory board update report that the council adopts by ordinance. <i>Section 4.C.4.b</i></p>	<p>Governance Section.</p>
<p>D. Except for levy proceeds reserved for the purposes in subsection E. of this section, the levy proceeds annually reserved in subsection C. of this section shall be used to plan, provide, fund, administer, measure performance and evaluate. <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	
<p>a youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative section.</p>
<p>a King County child care subsidy program, <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Child Care section.</p>
<p>a child care wage boost demonstration project and <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Child Care section.</p>
<p>technical assistance and capacity building activities, including. <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Technical Assistance and Capacity Building section.</p>
<p>one million dollars annually for a capacity building grant program that includes providing support to grantees to assist with the development of infrastructure in geographic locations lacking services or service infrastructure. <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Technical Assistance and Capacity Building section.</p>

Required Implementation Plan Elements from Ordinance 19267	Links to Relevant Section(s)
<p>The grant program to support capacity building that includes providing support to grantees to assist with the development of infrastructure in geographic locations lacking services or service infrastructure shall be described in the Implementation Plan required in section 7 of this ordinance and must include ... <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Technical Assistance and Capacity Building section.</p>
<p>the development of new organizations and <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Technical Assistance and Capacity Building section.</p>
<p>expansion of existing organizations. <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Technical Assistance and Capacity Building section.</p>
<p>The youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, King County child care subsidy program, child care wage boost demonstration project and technical assistance and capacity building activities required in this subsection shall be described in the Implementation Plan required in section 7 of this ordinance. <i>Section 4.D</i></p>	<p>Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative section. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building section; Child Care section.</p>
<p>E. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, if the total projected levy proceeds exceed eight hundred twenty-two million dollars, the levy proceeds greater than eight hundred twenty-two million dollars shall be used to provide... <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Fiscal Requirements and Funding Allocations in Fiscal Overview section.</p>
<p>grants designed to support repairs and expansion of buildings and facilities, that serve children and youth, and <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Capital Programs section.</p>
<p>Such buildings and facilities that serve children and youth shall include, but not be limited to, housing and child care, early learning and recreational facilities. <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Capital Programs section.</p>
<p>However, the total levy proceeds used to provide grants shall not exceed fifty million dollars. <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Capital Programs section.</p>

Required Implementation Plan Elements from Ordinance 19267	Links to Relevant Section(s)
<p>Additionally, if the total projected levy proceeds falls below eight hundred seventy-two million dollars, the amount of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes of this subsection shall be first reduced before any other reduction in the total amounts allocated for the purposes in subsections C. and D. of this section. <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Fiscal Requirements and Funding Allocations in Fiscal Overview section.</p>
<p>This capital grants program shall be described in the Implementation Plan required in section 7 of this ordinance. <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Capital Programs section.</p>
<p>Additionally, the executive shall propose in the Implementation Plan required in section 7 of this ordinance... <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Capital Programs section.</p>
<p>the amount of levy proceeds to be allocated for the capital grants program and <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Capital Programs section.</p>
<p>a process for determining annually if a reduction to the amount of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes of this subsection is necessary and the amount of any such reduction. <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Capital Programs section.</p>
<p>The executive shall also propose in the Implementation Plan required in section 7 of this ordinance a policy for prioritizing capital investments in new buildings or facilities as compared to capital investments in existing buildings or facilities <i>Section 4.E</i></p>	<p>Capital Programs section.</p>
<p>The Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan shall also include a framework to measure the performance of levy strategies in achieving their outcomes and require an annual report on levy expenditures, services and outcome, including <i>Section 7.A</i></p>	<p>Data and Evaluation section.</p>

Required Implementation Plan Elements from Ordinance 19267	Links to Relevant Section(s)
<p>The Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan shall also include a framework to measure the performance of levy strategies in achieving their outcomes and require an annual report on levy expenditures, services and outcome, including <i>Section 7.A</i></p>	<p>Data and Evaluation section.</p>
<p>Total expenditures of levy proceed by program area by ZIP Code in King County; and the number of individuals receiving levy-funded services by program area by ZIP Code in King County of where the individual resides at the time of service. <i>Section 7.A</i></p>	<p>Data and Evaluation section.</p>
Requested Implementation Plan Elements from Motion 15888	Links to Relevant Section(s)
<p>Identify in the transmitted plan strategies relating to prevention, outreach and early intervention to address mental health and substance use impacts, in children and youth five through twenty-four years old, that have been exacerbated due to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic <i>Section A</i></p>	<p>Liberation and Healing section; School Based Health Centers section; Sustain the Gain section.</p>
<p>Consider programs and services that provide, expand access to or provide and expand access to substance use disorder supports for children and youth, including, but not limited to, awareness campaigns on substance use. <i>Section B</i></p>	<p>Sustain the Gain section.</p>

D. Best Starts 2016-2021 Outcomes



Best Starts for Kids Outcomes

Building on the deep knowledge, connections, and skills within King County communities, and backed by what science and research tells us about human development, Best Starts for Kids meets children and families with the right services at the right time.

The first Best Starts for Kids levy reached 490,000 of King County's youngest children and their families and 40,000 youth and young adults, catalyzing strong starts in a child's earliest years, and sustaining those gains through to adulthood.



Promoting healthy starts from day one

Breastfeeding is an important way to bond with a new baby, but can be challenging for first-time parents. Among Best Starts programs that provide post-partum breastfeeding supports, 96% of parents started breastfeeding, helping their babies off to a healthy start from day one.

Supporting families during a child's earliest years

Home visiting provides parents with a trusted source of support in a child's earliest years. Home visitors in Best Starts-funded programs have provided over 212,000 visits to new families.

Kids whose families participated in the Parent-Child Plus home visiting program showed a 57% improvement in kindergarten readiness compared to when they started the program.

99% of families in community-designed home visiting programs reported that they felt more concrete support from our community, and 96% said they increased their knowledge of parenting and child development.

Ensuring families can meet their basic needs

Since 2018, Best Starts for Kids supported 89,000 children and families with nearly 6.5 million items that are critical for raising children like healthy food, diapers, car seats, or clothes.

96% of families reported eating more fruits and vegetables after they received Best Starts-funded Good Food Bags.

Promoting healthy development

Using Best Starts funding, Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers increased the number of families receiving developmental support by 34% since 2015, serving nearly 15,000 children under age 3.

Over 70% of these children made progress in key developmental areas such as social and emotional development (74%), acquiring knowledge and skills (71%), or taking action to meet their needs (72%).



Building the capacity & knowledge of people who care for our kids

Best Starts for Kids equipped over 17,000 people who care for King County's youngest children with information and skills to support healthy development. Collectively, this group cares for over 70,000 children in King County.

Best Starts for Kids provided training and support to over 8,000 people who work with King County's youth and young adults, with the potential to impact 300,000 young people in King County.

Making strong connections for youth

Over 7,700 youth participated in programs to build their leadership skills, develop a positive sense of identity, and learn how to maintain healthy relationships.

Prior to the pandemic, almost 2 out of 3 young people in youth development programs strengthened their ability to set short and long-term goals and make plans to reach them. Even as COVID-19 pandemic had deep social and emotional impacts for young adults, 23% of young people in these programs were still able to make positive plans for their future.

Increasing opportunities to learn & grow outside of the school day

Since 2018, over 11,000 young people participated in Best Starts-funded before- and after-school and summer programs, receiving over 133,500 hours of additional learning time outside of school.

In 2020, 93% of students in these programs improved their academic skills like reading and math, and grew in their social and emotional skills like problem solving, leadership, and ability to develop positive relationships with peers and adults.

Partnering with schools to provide a foundation for growth & development

Prior to the pandemic, Best Starts partners worked with over 11,000 youth, parents, caregivers, teachers, and school staff in over 70 schools to create safe, welcoming environments for students facing trauma or adversity. 80% of youth in these programs said they felt safer and more valued at school, and 94% started coming to school more frequently.

Students made over 16,000 visits to new Best Starts-funded school-based health centers since construction in 2017. Prior to the pandemic, 75% of students using these school-based health centers passed all of their classes.

Launching our kids into college and a career

Best Starts funding supported education and employment programs in the Department of Community and Human Services to increase their enrollment by 71%, serving over 2,700 young people through 2020.

73% of students who completed the Work Training Education program stayed in school, graduated, or enrolled in post-secondary education.

Strengthening our communities

Communities of Opportunity collaborated with 150 organizations to create more than 241 new community partnerships and build the skills and capacity of approximately 2,500 people serving in leadership positions.

Preventing homelessness

Since 2017, Best Starts for Kids' Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative served over 10,200 youth and families at risk of losing their housing—96 percent of those completing the program remained housed one year after completing the program.

COVID-19 Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic deeply impacted many Best Starts for Kids programs, performance measures, and outcomes as partners pivoted to provide services in a changing environment.

When schools closed to in-person teaching in March 2020, Best Starts partners and staff pivoted to meet new needs and adjust strategies to continue ongoing work.



E. Headline & Secondary Indicators

Headline Indicators
<p>Prenatal to 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babies are born healthy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Infant mortality</i> ○ <i>Pre-term birth</i> • Children are thriving • Children are Kindergarten Ready • Families/Caregivers are strong
<p>5 to 24 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth and young adults are healthy • Youth are thriving • Youth have supportive adults • Youth graduate high school on-time • Youth & young adults in school or working
<p>Communities of Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households paying less than 30percent of income on housing; and households paying less than 50percent of income on housing. • Involuntary residential displacement (measured by residential migration) • Households earning a living wage, above 200 percent of poverty • Adults employed • Youth and young adults who are in school or employed • Good to excellent health (self-reported) • Engagement in civic activities • Youth who have an adult to turn to for help
<p>Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of families and youth experiencing homelessness

Secondary Indicators
<p>Prenatal to 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babies who are breastfed • Children are healthy • Child care/preschools are high quality • Parents missing school/work due to child care • Families and caregivers provide a nurturing environment for children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Families are resilient and have hope for the future ○ Families have positive relationships and social supports

- Children receive recommended health and developmental screenings and are connected to needed services
- Parents/caregivers have knowledge of parenting and child development
- Families have concrete support in times of need
- Children have strong parent/caregiver relationships

5 to 24 years

- Youth are physically active
- Youth are not using substances
- Youth are succeeding in school
 - Youth are not chronically absent from school
 - Youth are getting good grades in school
 - Schools are not suspending/expelling youth
 - Youth have a career or college credential
- Youth have hope for the future
- Families, schools, and communities provide supporting environment for youth

F. CYAB Governance Board Roster



CHILDREN AND YOUTH ADVISORY MEMBERS

BOARD MEMBER	ORGANIZATION
ABIGAIL ECHO HAWK	Urban Indian Health Institute
ANGELA GRIFFIN	Treehouse
ARIANA SHERLOCK	Sound Cities Association
BEN DANIELSON	University of Washington
BETH LARSEN	Puget Sound Educational Service District
BOBBIE BRIDGE	Center for Children & Youth Justice
BRIAN SAELENS	Seattle Children's Research Institute
BRIANNA GRANADO HOLDEN	University of Washington
CORBIN MUCK	Tiny Trees Preschool
DEBBIE PETERSON	Federal Way Community Connections
ED MARCUSE	Seattle Children's Hospital
HARLAN GALLINGER	Mary Bridge Children's Hospital
HELENA STEPHENS	City of Bellevue
HIKMA SHERKA	South Seattle College
HYE-KYUNG KANG	Seattle University
JAIMÉE MARSH	FEEST
JESSICA WERNER*	YDEKC
KAREN HART	SEIU Local 925
KAREN HOWE	King County District Court
MUTENDE KATAMBO	Coalition for Refugees from Burma
MOHAMED ABDI	Youth Position

NANCY WOODLAND	Ampersand Community, LLC
NATHAN BUCK	Neighborhood House
NEBIYU YASSIN	Youth Position
RITA ALCANTARA	Kindering
ROBYN MULENGA	Sound Cities Association
ROCHELLE CLAYTON STRUNK	Encompass Early Learning Center
SUZETTE ESPINOZA CRUZ	Department of Education and Early Learning
TANYA KIM	Seattle Humans Services Department
THIEN-DI DO	Rwanda Girls Initiative
THOMAS BALES	National School Organizing Strategy
TOBEY CLOSE	Kindering

G. COO Governance Group Roster



A.J. McClure	Executive Director Global to Local*	Community Representative & SeaTac/Tukwila Partnership
Deanna Dawson	Executive Director Sound Cities Association*	
Jenn Ramirez Robson	Director of Resident Services King County Housing Authority*	Community Representative
Matelita Jackson	SE Network Director Boys & Girls Club of King County	Community Representative
Lydia Assefa-Dawson	Housing Program Coordinator King County Housing Authority*	Community Representative
Marguerite Ro	Chief of Assessment, Policy Development & Evaluation Public Health - Seattle & King County*	King County Executive Representative
Michael Brown	Chief Architect Civic Commons*	Seattle Foundation Appointment
Paola Maranan	Owner/Principal Consultant ArcBend Consulting*	Community Representative
Vazaskia Crockrell	Equity & Social Justice Director King County Council*	King County Council Representative
Sili Savusa	Executive Director White Center CDA*	Community Representative & White Center Partnership
Tony To	Director Emeritus & Othello Square Project Director HomeSight*	Community Representative
Ubax Gardheere	Equitable Development Manager Seattle Office of Planning & Community Development*	Community Representative
Yordanos Teferi	Executive Director Multicultural Community Coalition*	Community Representative & Rainier Valley Partnership

**Affiliation is listed for information purpose only. Unless noted, individual Governance Group members are not representing an organization or group.*

“Community representatives” are members who reflect demographic characteristics of the communities that qualify for funding and are grassroots organizers in those communities; or activists in those communities; or live in those communities; or have worked in those communities.

²⁶² The COO Governance Group is the Communities of Opportunity Best Starts for Kids Levy Advisory Board described in K.C.C. 2A.300.520 and referenced in Ordinance 19267.

H. Fiscal Detail on Operating Investments

Expenditures - Rounded to the nearest thousand	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total*	% Allocation for 2022, as required by Ordinance	% Allocation of all expenditures after 2022 set-asides
Child Care Subsidies and Wage Demonstration Project	23,260,000	31,136,000	32,175,000	35,145,000	38,491,000	39,135,000	\$199,341,000	\$240,332,000	22.50%
Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative	\$4,564,000	\$4,834,000	\$4,944,000	\$4,959,000	\$4,964,000	\$4,974,000	\$29,241,000		
Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	\$1,850,000	\$1,900,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$11,750,000		
Investing Early (Prenatal to Five)	\$46,050,000	\$46,857,000	\$47,901,000	\$48,968,000	\$50,060,000	\$51,176,000	\$291,011,000		50%
Home Based Services	10,000,000	10,220,000	10,445,000	10,675,000	10,909,000	11,149,000	63,398,000		
Community-Based Parenting Supports	3,800,000	3,884,000	3,969,000	4,056,000	4,146,000	4,237,000	24,091,000		
Maternal and Child Health Services	14,190,000	14,296,000	14,624,000	14,959,000	15,302,000	15,653,000	89,024,000		
Childcare Consultation (CCHC)	3,400,000	3,475,000	3,551,000	3,629,000	3,709,000	3,791,000	21,555,000		
Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers	4,500,000	4,599,000	4,700,000	4,804,000	4,909,000	5,017,000	28,529,000		
Universal Developmental Screening	3,000,000	3,066,000	3,133,000	3,202,000	3,273,000	3,345,000	19,020,000		
Systems Building for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	1,500,000	1,533,000	1,567,000	1,601,000	1,636,000	1,672,000	9,510,000		
Innovation Supports	1,000,000	1,022,000	1,044,000	1,067,000	1,091,000	1,115,000	6,340,000		
Workforce Development	1,310,000	1,339,000	1,368,000	1,398,000	1,429,000	1,461,000	8,305,000		
Environmental Supports: Lead and Toxics	750,000	767,000	783,000	801,000	818,000	836,000	4,755,000		
Help Me Grow	2,600,000	2,657,000	2,716,000	2,775,000	2,836,000	2,899,000	16,484,000		
Sustain the Gain (Five to Twenty-Four)	\$33,965,000	\$34,712,000	\$35,476,000	\$36,256,000	\$37,054,000	\$37,869,000	\$215,333,000		37%
Liberation and Healing	4,850,000	4,957,000	5,066,000	5,177,000	5,291,000	5,407,000	30,748,000		
Youth Development	4,450,000	4,548,000	4,648,000	4,750,000	4,855,000	4,962,000	28,212,000		
Expanded Learning	6,955,000	7,108,000	7,264,000	7,424,000	7,588,000	7,754,000	44,094,000		
Positive Family Connections	1,400,000	1,431,000	1,462,000	1,494,000	1,527,000	1,561,000	8,876,000		
School Based Health Centers	3,000,000	3,066,000	3,133,000	3,202,000	3,273,000	3,345,000	19,020,000		
Child and Adolescent Immunizations	450,000	460,000	470,000	480,000	491,000	502,000	2,853,000		
Healthy and Safe Environments	1,000,000	1,022,000	1,044,000	1,067,000	1,091,000	1,115,000	6,340,000		
School Based Screening and Brief Intervention for Referral to Treatment/Services (SB: SBIRT)	2,475,000	2,529,000	2,585,000	2,642,000	2,700,000	2,759,000	15,691,000		
Transitions to Adulthood	4,735,000	4,839,000	4,946,000	5,054,000	5,166,000	5,279,000	30,019,000		
Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline	4,650,000	4,752,000	4,857,000	4,964,000	5,073,000	5,185,000	29,480,000		
Communities of Opportunity	\$7,340,000	\$7,501,000	\$7,667,000	\$7,835,000	\$8,008,000	\$8,184,000	\$46,534,000		8%
Results Focused and Data Driven (Data and Evaluation)	\$4,590,000	\$4,691,000	\$4,794,000	\$4,900,000	\$5,007,000	\$5,118,000	\$29,100,000		5%
Total Expenditures:	\$121,619,000	\$131,631,000	\$134,957,000	\$140,064,000	\$145,584,000	\$148,455,000	\$822,310,000		100%

* Per Ordinance 19267, subsection 4.D, initial investments in child care subsidies and wage demonstration project, youth and family homelessness initiative, and technical assistance and capacity building must be at least \$240M over the life of the levy.

I. Procurement and Financial Policies

Best Starts for Kids Procurement and Financial Policies

The following procurement and financial policies will guide the work of *Best Starts*.

- No amendment shall extend the duration of any contract more than three additional years. Each new contract shall be of no more than three years' duration.
- No new contract may be awarded unless the Executive has invited all councilmembers to designate council district staff to participate in the workgroups that have been or will be assembled to develop the implementation approach for the strategies outlined in approved the *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan, except that invitation to a workgroup is not required for those strategies for which the executive determines no workgroup will be established.
- For each new contract that is competitively procured, the Executive shall invite all councilmembers to designate council district staff to participate in the procurement process. The participation shall include the opportunity for any designated council district staff to be included as nonvoting members of the selection panel for each contract to be competitively procured. As a nonvoting member of a selection panel, any designated council district staff shall have access to all materials received by proposers or bidders as part of the procurement process or created as part of the selection process, the authority to attend and participate in all selection panel meetings, including those at which proposers or bidders are interviewed and the authority to participate in the selection panel's deliberations regarding award of any competitively procured contract.
- For each new contract that is competitively procured, the Executive shall invite the children and youth advisory board, established by Ordinance 18217,²⁶³ to select a member or members to be included on the selection panel for each contract. If the children and youth advisory board selects a member or members to participate, the participation shall be as full members of the selection panel, including voting rights.
- No new competitively procured contract may be awarded unless, before notifying the selected contractor of its award, the Executive notifies each councilmember by email of the impending award, including the name of the contract and the selected contractor. The email notice to councilmembers must occur no less than one business day before the executive notifies the selected contractor of the award.
- As with all operating funds, budget does not automatically carry forward to the next biennium. Unspent budget may be requested as carryforward in the following biennium via an omnibus supplemental ordinance, only in such cases where it is already committed via contract, Memorandum Of Agreement, Memorandum Of Understanding, or similar commitments.
- The *Best Starts* fund is required to maintain a 90-day rainy day reserve at any given time.²⁶⁴ This reserve must be equal to 90 days of expenditures based on the revised budget (adopted plus supplementals including

²⁶³ Children and Youth Advisory Board. [\[LINK\]](#)

²⁶⁴ Comprehensive Financial Management Policies, page 21. Motion 15250. [\[LINK\]](#)

carryforward) for that year. This reserve must be met before any capital grants, additions to programs, or other budget modifications can be made.

- For any change to strategy-level budgets in excess of \$500,000 *Best Starts* leadership will consult the Children and Youth Advisory Board for approval and send a letter to the King County Council with notification of the final change.
 - Such changes must be made within the same investment category, such as but not limited to Investing Early (prenatal to age five) or Sustain the Gain (ages five to 24), as the legal appropriation authority is tied the percentages outlined by ordinance.

J. Community Engagement Stakeholders

2021 Community Conversations

ORGANIZATION	DATE
Best Starts Community Listening Sessions (2021)	
Empower Youth Network	June 03, 2021
Community Network Council (Kent, Des Moines, Covington)	June 09, 2021
North Urban Human Services Alliance (NUHSA)	June 09, 2021
The Village	June 10, 2021
Maple Valley Community Center	June 14, 2021
Vashon Youth & Family Services	June 14, 2021
Issaquah Nourishing Network	June 15, 2021
Build the Bridge Coalition/Federal Way	June 15, 2021
Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC)	June 16, 2021
LGBTQ Allyship and Lambert House	June 17, 2021
Auburn Family Providers	June 18, 2021
Eastside Pathways, Alliance of Eastside Agencies, Eastside High School	June 21, 2021
Southwest Youth and Family Services and City of Burien	June 22, 2021

K. Evaluation Plan Example

Best Starts evaluation staff work in partnership with every funded partner to develop an individualized evaluation plan that includes the program-specific performance measures and data collection methods. The following is an example of an evaluation plan from *Best Starts for Kids* 2016-2021. The core building blocks that are in every evaluation plan include program description or logic model, performance measures, reporting methods, and intended uses of the data. Formatting, layout, and language vary across evaluation plans and *Best Starts* intends to update the evaluation plan template for 2022-2027, while retaining the core building blocks present in the example below.

BEST STARTS FOR KIDS EVALUATION PLAN

Result area: Prenatal to 5

Strategy: Basic Needs Resource Brokering, Community Based Parenting

Program: [Provider/Program Name]

Attachments(s): Theory of Change Diagram and Logic Model

Last updated: July 2, 2021

Project Lead: [BSK Staff]

Evaluation Lead: [BSK Staff]

[Partner] Evaluation contact: [Provider Staff]

[Partner] Evaluation contact: [Provider Staff]

I. DIRECTIONS

Use this living document to guide your evaluation activities, including data collection, summarizing, and reporting.

II. Performance Measures

Adapt as needed. Include at least one of each type of measure and align with strategy measures.

Type	Measures	Definitions/Method of data collection	
<p>How much did we do?</p> <p>Quantity of service provided. For example # of clients served, # of activities by activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of children, families, partner agencies, programs, and sites served • # of requests for each category of item • # and types of items distributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salesforce database 	
<p>How well did we do it?</p> <p>Quality of service provided. For example % of services started within x days, % of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of items that reach focus communities • % of partner agencies with sustained partnership with resource broker • % of orders filled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of items distributed to families (or agencies?) with a south king county zip code / Total # 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salesforce database

<p>participants satisfied with services, fidelity measures for evidence-based models.</p>		<p>of items distributed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of agencies who have been partners for over 1 year/ Total # of partner agencies • # of items distributed/ # of items requested 	
<p>Is anyone better off? Quantity of clients that are better off. For example % of clients with improved health, well-being, knowledge, skills, or behaviors. For PSE projects this could be a narrative report of observed changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of provider partners who agree/strongly agree that the impact of providing goods to their clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ positively influenced organization and program budgets; ○ increased communication by clients between scheduled visits; ○ has kept clients in their program longer; ○ helps to reduce the number of missed client visits <p><u>Policy/Systems/Environment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase # of goods (or items) distributed • Increase ability to secure or distribute goods • Increase awareness as demonstrated by increased volunteering and donating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider survey <p>Survey tools: Survey Monkey or PollEverywhere</p> <p>Narrative report</p>	

III. EVALUATION AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Table includes general requirements. Keep relevant information and add rows, as needed.

Activity	Timeframe	Description
<p>Aggregate Data Report <i>(direct services)</i></p>	<p>Semi-Annually</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 31 (July-Dec) • July 31 (Jan-June) 	<p>The Grantee will submit semi-annual disaggregated Data Reports to King County. The format for this report will be provided by King County and will include the demographics of participants and other data needed to measure performance.</p>

Semi-Annual Narrative Report	Semi-Annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 31 (July-Dec) July 31 (Jan-June) 	The Grantee will submit Semi-Annual Narrative Reports to King County. These reports will cover the activities of the previous six months. The format and questions for the Semi-Annual Narrative Report will be provided by King County.
Participation in Learning Circles	TBD	<i>The Grantee may be required to participate in learning circles to foster mutual learning and data driven decision making. Frequency will depend on the program and strategy area.</i>
Other Evaluation Activities	Group is interested in holding focus groups or a survey with a sample of organizations who receive resources. See Appendix A for focus group resources.	<i>The Grantee may be required to participate in other Evaluation Activities. These activities will vary by Contractor, but may include training on data collection, quality assurance, community engagement, or other activities to build the Contractor’s evaluation capacity or support evaluation of the program or strategy area.</i>
Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 31, 2020 (cumulative total) 	The Grantee will submit a final report to King County summarizing project. The format and questions for the Final Report will be provided by King County and will be similar to the quarterly reports and semi-annual narrative report but will

IV. LOGIC MODEL

Program Name: Basic Needs Resource Brokering					
Result/ primary goals: Increase organizational capacity to provide concrete support in times of need					
<i>Because we have these resources...</i>	<i>...we are able to do these activities...</i>	<i>...producing these short-term program-level results or these changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness, capacity...</i>	<i>...and these interim-term changes across contracted agencies...</i>	<i>...contributing to these longer-term population-level results...</i>	
Resources/ Inputs	Activities	Performance measures	Aggregate performance measures or other intermediate indicators	Secondary indicators or change expected in 3 years	Headline indicators or other long term indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Local and National partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sourcing and purchasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How much did we do?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Is anyone better off?</i> % of provider partners who report that having basic items improved their ability to work with families by: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Healthy children ↑ Parent/chil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ <i>Flourishing / resilient children</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers • Infrastructure (facilities, data systems, trucks) • Funding (BSK and other) • Community Goods Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of goods • Events and drives • Donor relations • Awareness building • Resources procured in response to partners identifying needs of families • Actively collaborate with agency partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of children/families served • # of partner agencies, programs, and sites served • # of requests for each type of item • # and types of items distributed • # of donation/collection sites, including events/drives • # of volunteers and donors (if applicable) • <i>How well did we do it?</i> • % of focus communities reached • % of partner agencies with sustained partnership with resource broker • % of orders filled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ positively impacting organization and program budgets; ○ enhancing communication with clients; ○ improving program retention ○ reduces missed client visits <p><u>Policy/Systems/Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase # of goods (or items) distributed • Increase ability to secure or distribute goods • Increase awareness as demonstrated by increased volunteer hours and/or # of volunteers. 	<p>d attachment ↑ Families are supported and connected</p>	<p>↓ <i>Child abuse and neglect</i></p>
<p>Focus communities: Parents and Caregivers with young children who identify as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Somali, Black/African American, Latinx; live in South King County (see appendix XXXX for zip codes); are under 25 years old; and/or identify as LGBTQ+</p>					
<p>Intensity and Duration:</p>					
<p>External Factors, if any, that may affect this program (e.g. big picture things you can't control):</p>					
<p>Key Partners, if any, who work is dependent on:</p>					

V. EQUITY IMPACT REVIEW

1. Based on the BSK Implementation Plan, all data should be disaggregated by age, race, ethnicity, place/geography, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and income, where possible. What are the data disaggregation plans for this program?

Data is currently disaggregated by: zip code, race/ethnicity, type of organization (services provided), gender, age, language spoken at home
 Household: employment status, ability, housing status

Organizations: populations served (including zip codes), # children served annually, top critical needs, # estimated individuals needing resources

BSK will work with grantees to support additional data collection on:

Somali or African as R/E, age, LGBTQ+ (not available yet based on demographic information as currently asked)

2. How are program activities tailored to address disparities shown in baseline data?
New partnership development is focused on South King County based on BSKHS data showing greatest diaper/formula need
3. What are potential unintended equity-related outcomes of this program? How will this be tracked?

