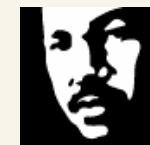


# 2026-2027 Biennial Budget Health and Human Services

Aaron Rubardt – Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget  
Kelly Rider – Department of Community and Human Services  
Michael Gedeon – Department of Public Health



**King County**

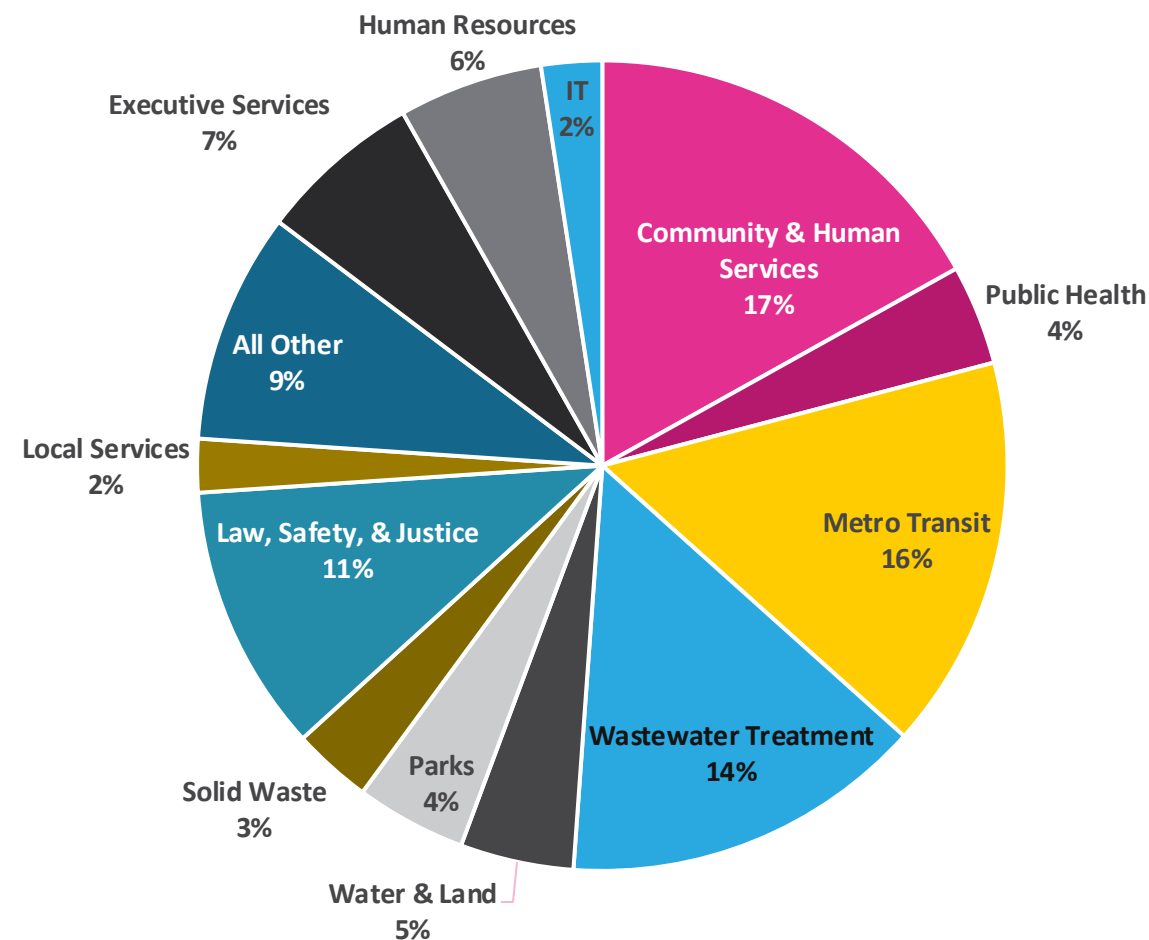
# 2026-2027 Budget Highlights

County did an annual budget for 2025 and has resumed biennial budgeting for 2026-2027.

The Proposed Budget includes a new 0.1% sales tax that is projected to generate \$203 million. About \$175 million was used to avoid budget cuts, including over \$25 million to DCHS and \$20 million to Public Health. The remainder covers new or expanded criminal justice, homelessness, and behavioral health services.

The budget is accompanied by legislation revising the Harborview Hospital Services Agreement.

# 2026-2027 Proposed Appropriations (\$19.7B)



# Federal Funding

The Proposed Budget includes:

- Reserves for potential federal cuts to behavioral health services and Medicaid payments to Harborview. These reserves would quickly be exhausted if federal cuts are of the magnitude currently forecast.
- Backfill for one-time federal COVID funds, including funding to maintain 101 shelter beds and a vehicle outreach program, keep the SoDo Lighthouse shelter open through May 2027, and to fund regional gun violence prevention.
- Some County revenue was used to replace lost federal grants, especially in emergency management.

Public Health has lost some small federal grants that have led to modest program and staffing reductions. No further grant reductions are assumed in the 2026-2027 budget.

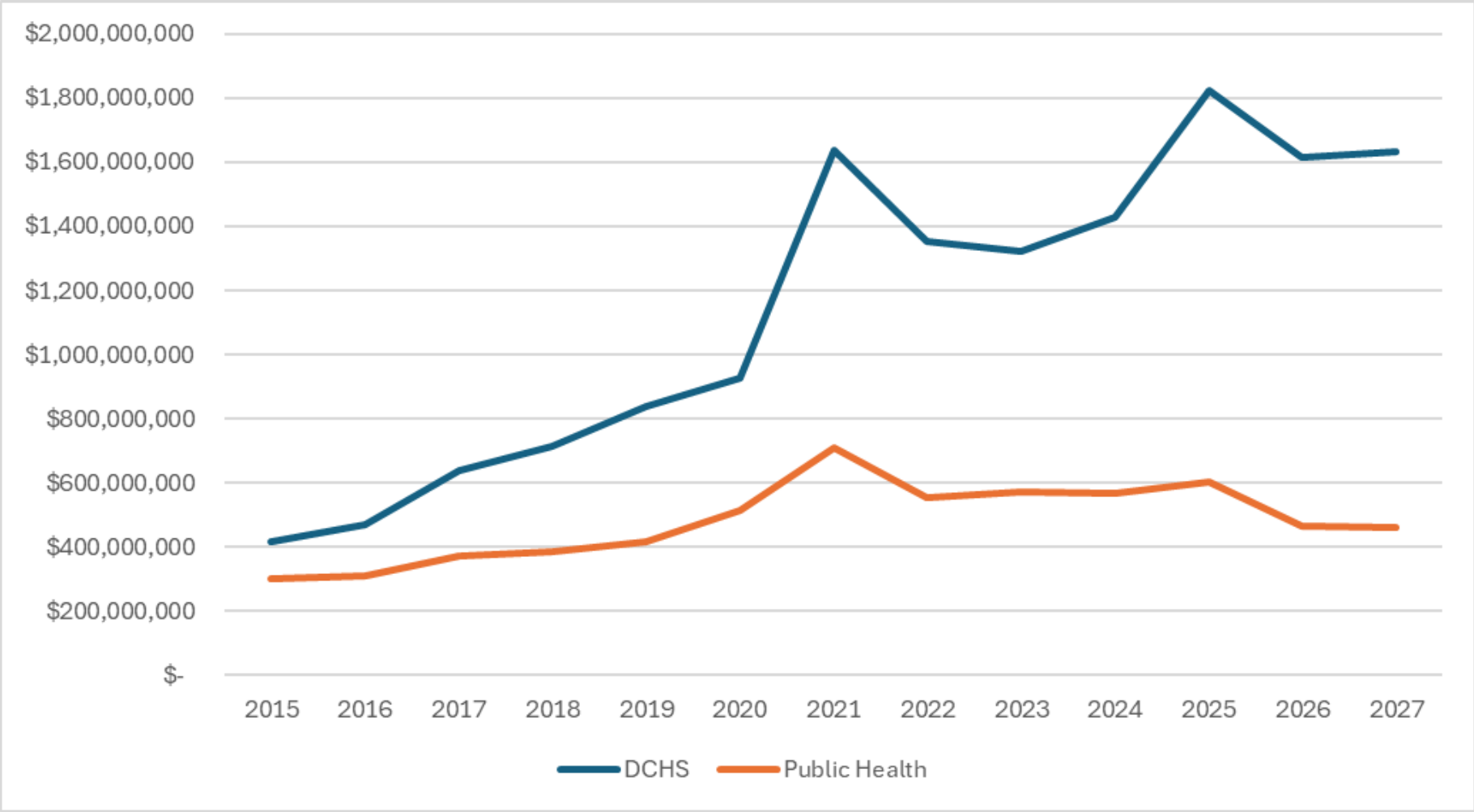
# Federal Funding, con't.

Public Health and DCHS could be affected by reductions in the federal fiscal year 2026 budget, if it is ever approved.

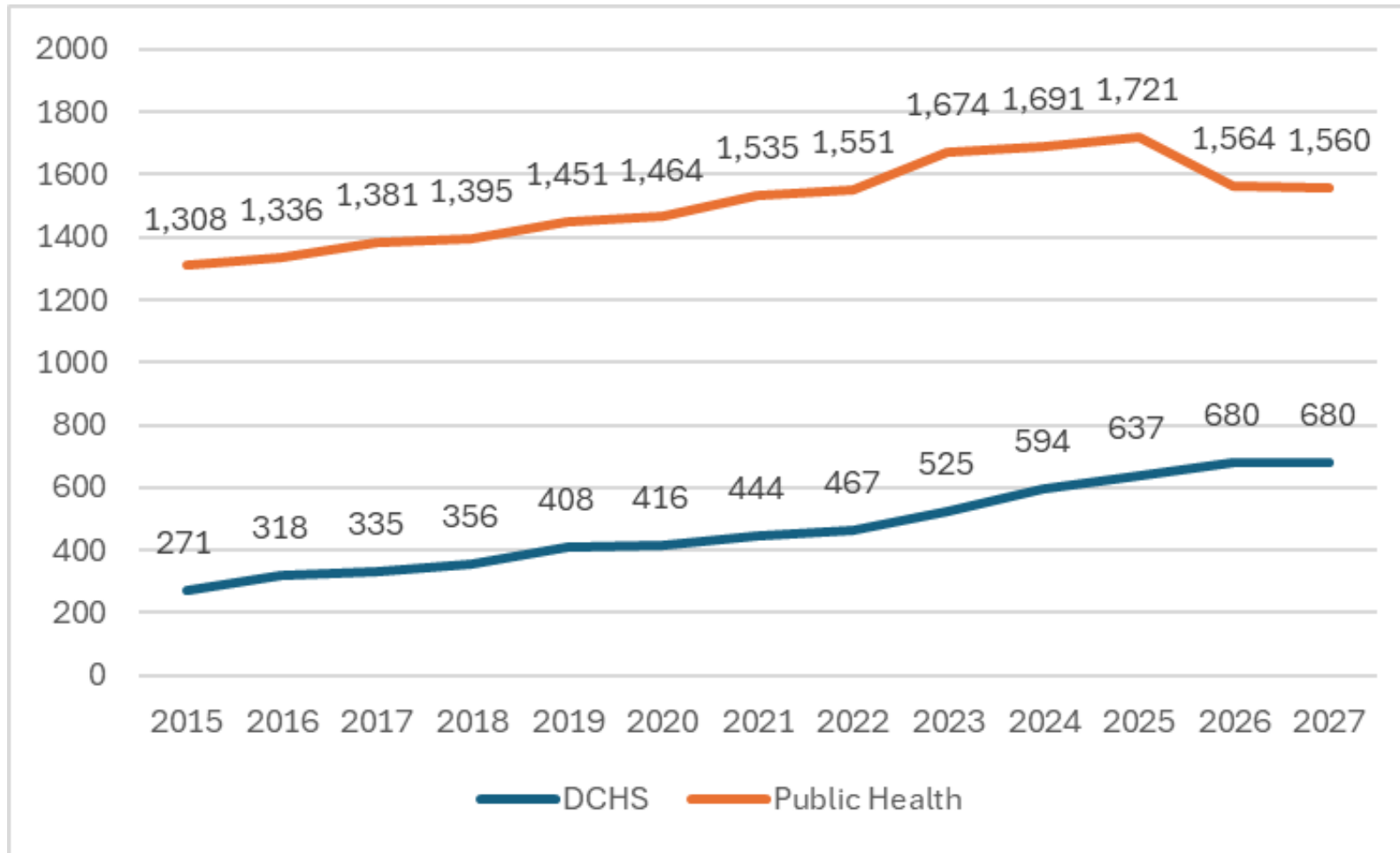
Existing law substantially reduces subsidies through the Affordable Care Act in January 2026. This will lead some people to drop coverage, potentially creating more demand for Public Health services and for Harborview.

Major reductions planned for Medicaid in 2027. Projections suggest that 75,000 to 100,000 King County residents will lose coverage.

# DCHS and Public Health Expenditures by Year



# DCHS and Public Health Headcount by Year



# Different Operational Models

## DCHS

- Primarily a contracting model
- 680 FTEs and \$3.3B proposed budget
- 13 funds with legislated revenue constraints (state and local)
- 6 levy/sales tax funds with defined implementation plans

## DPH

- Primarily focused on assurance and population health with direct service through the Public Health centers
- 1,560 FTES and \$925M proposed budget (will be higher if the EMS Levy passes)
- 4 funds (one with braided funding, one property tax levy, one funded through fees for service, one to support administration of the Department)
- Jail Health Services and Medical Examiner funded by the General Fund



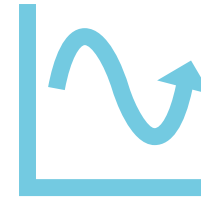
# Similar Revenue Constraints



Federal Funding – at risk



State Funding – at risk



Local Funding -  
constrained

# Summary - DCHS

Budget Overview



Strengthening Internal Operations



Promoting Thriving Children, Youth, and Young Adults



Stabilizing Behavioral Health Care



Sustaining Housing and Shelter programs



# About DCHS

- **DCHS** provides equitable opportunities for people to be happy, healthy, and connected to community.
- We serve **477,000 community members** annually with:
  - behavioral health treatment,
  - affordable housing and related services,
  - childcare resources,
  - services for kids and families,
  - education and employment for youth and young adults,
  - veteran services,
  - senior supports, and
  - inclusive resources for people with developmental disabilities.

DCHS Dashboard: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dchs/about-king-county/about-dchs/data-reports/impact-dashboard>

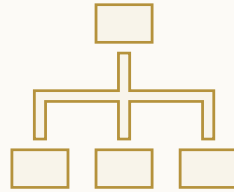


# DCHS by the Numbers



Number of DCHS employees

**630**



Number of divisions

**5**



Number of contracted providers

**550+**



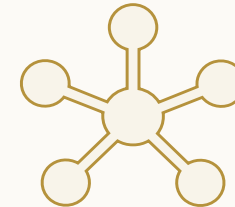
Funds administered annually

**\$1.7 Billion**



Number of people reached across five initiatives in 2024

**477,000**



Number of strategic initiatives led by DCHS

**5**

# Four Drivers of **DCHS**' 26-27 Budget



DEPARTMENT  
GROWTH



PROVIDER STRAIN



CONSTRAINED AND  
UNCERTAIN REVENUES



PRESERVING GENERAL  
FUND INVESTMENTS

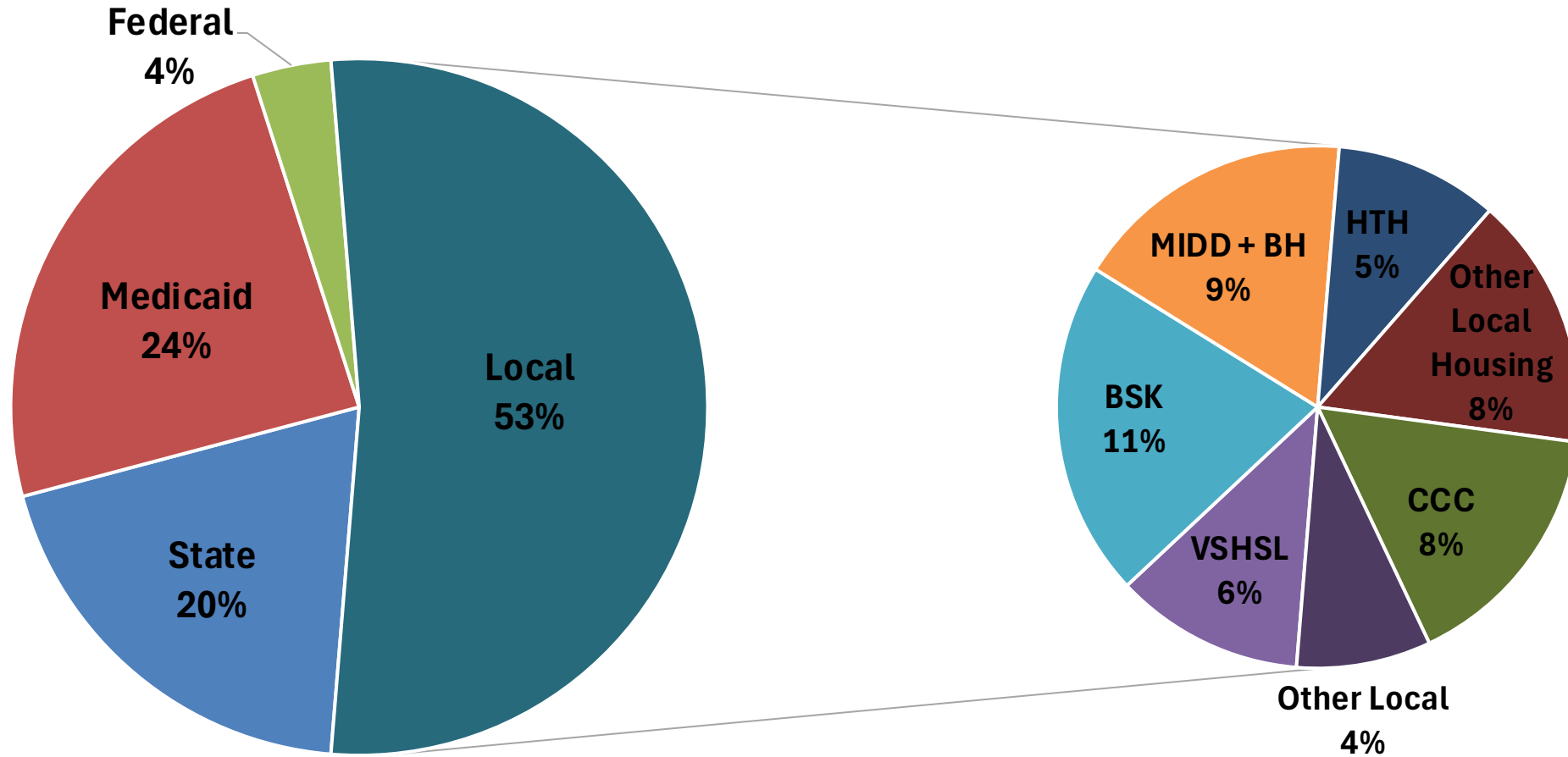
# DCHS Budget Priorities

1. **Strengthen** DCHS' capacity to deliver promised results
2. **Preserve** programs in response to weakening local, state, and federal funding



3 Building Blocks of DCHS Success

# DCHS by the Numbers: 2026-27 Funding



# \$10M to Strengthen Internal Operations and Implement Audit Recommendations



**Improve  
contract  
management**



**Enhance data  
systems**



**Increase  
compliance and  
fiscal staff**



# Promote happy, healthy, safe, and thriving children, youth & young adults

**1,618** children received a childcare subsidy in 2024

**6,974** children participated in Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers in 2024

- 82% of 3-year-olds successfully exited services or transitioned to school-based service

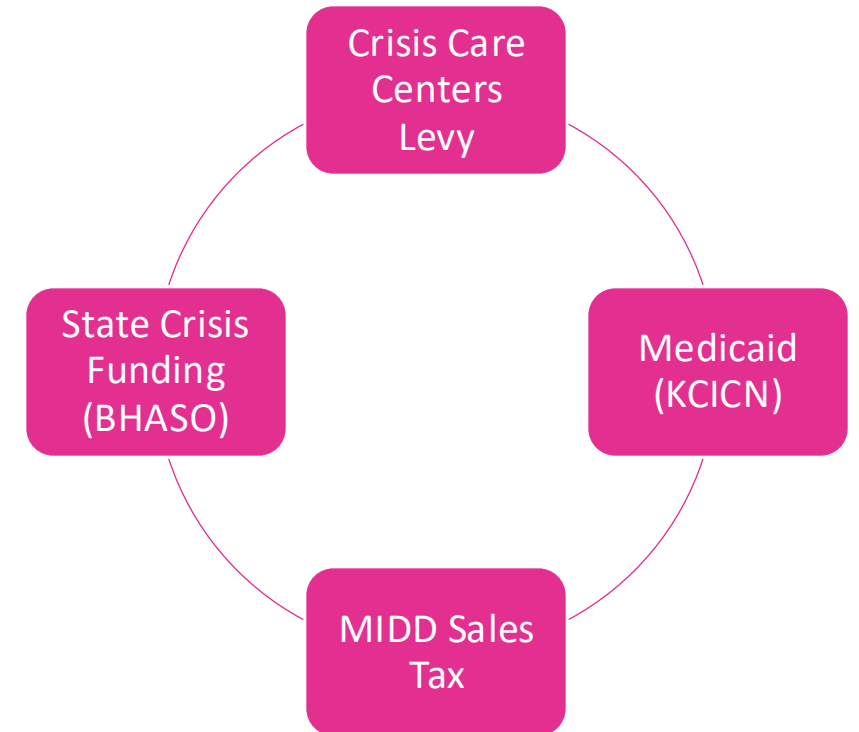
**234** graduates from 3 learning centers in 2025

- 84.5% of youth exiting services increased employability



# Foster effective, accessible, equitable behavioral health care

- **47,300+** people served through King County Integrated Care Network for Medicaid-funded behavioral health services
- **\$16.8M** invested in behavioral health workforce
- **28,000** residents served through MIDD programs
- **27** adult and **9** youth mobile rapid response crisis teams deployed,
- **3,400+** people receiving opioid treatment
- Crisis Care Centers funding ensures **fiscal sustainability** for the North King County site



# 26-27 Budget Approach: Stabilize Behavioral Health Care

Preserve reserves to  
protect against  
federal uncertainty

Maintain MIDD  
inflation adjustments  
and Medicaid  
provider rates

Align MIDD  
expenditures to  
annual revenues

Separate Behavioral  
Health fund to  
increase transparency  
and accountability

# Provide safe, accessible, affordable homes and community spaces

**1,644** affordable homes completed!

**981** Health Through Housing homes open since 2021

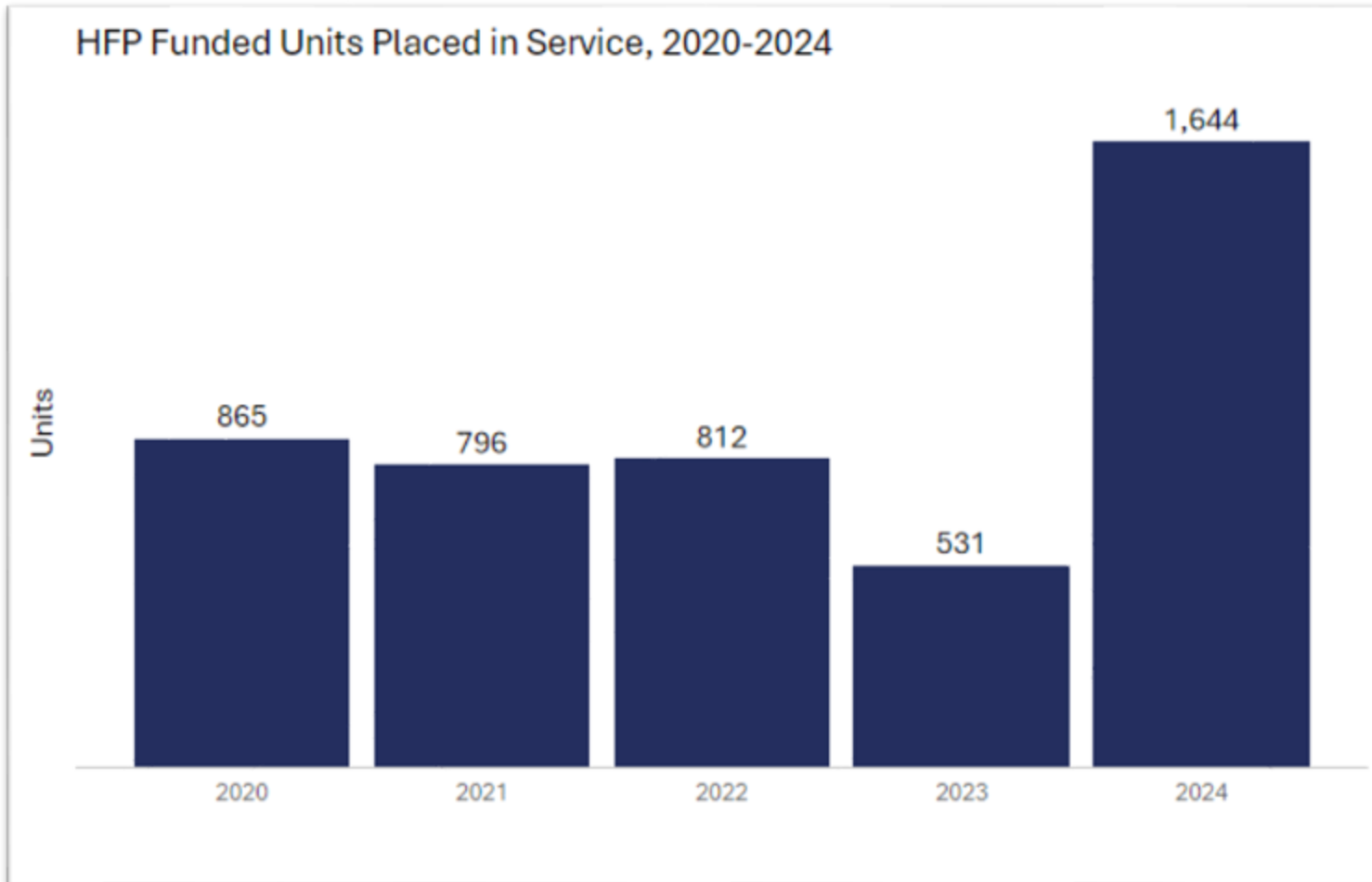
**117** housing repairs completed

**5,826** individuals maintain housing through operations funding

**+2,200** households served with homelessness and eviction prevention resources



# King County funding generated 4,600 affordable units over last 5 years



Photos from  
Connection Angle  
Lake in SeaTac,  
Mercy Housing  
(2025)

Source: King County Housing Finance Program Data



# 26-27 Budget Approach to Sustain Housing and Shelter Services



**Open Federal  
Way Shelter**



**Increase youth  
homelessness  
funding**



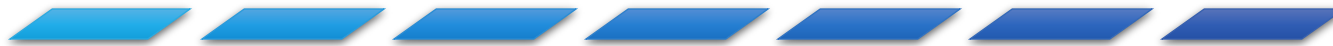
**Preserve  
family shelter  
capacity**



**Maintain funding  
for permanent  
housing**

# Overview – Public Health

Department Overview



2026-27 Budget Highlights & Priorities



Public Health Fund's Longer-Term Outlook



# Public Health Strategic Plan





# Foundational Public Health Services

## Foundational Areas



## Foundational Capabilities

Assessment & Surveillance	Community Partnership Development	Equity	Organizational Competencies
Policy Development & Support	Accountability & Performance Management	Emergency Preparedness & Response	Communications

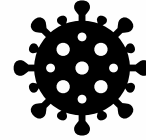
EQUITY

# By The Numbers



Number of PHSKC Employees

1,700



Number of CDC notifiable conditions

Over 100



Page views on PH website

3 million so far in 2025



Number of Divisions

7



2026-27 Proposed Biennial Budget

\$1.2B in 5 funds



Annual health care visits for PEH  
(HCHN Network)

115,000

# Recent Highlights

## Strategic Plan

- In 2024, completed its first strategic plan in 15 years
- In 2025, convened partners to develop Community Health Improvement Plan

## Measles Response

- In 2025, responded to measles cases including travelers ensuring people who may be at risk get the information and care they need. Each case represents hundreds of hours of work.

## Overdose Prevention

- In 2024, saw a decline in overdose fatalities for the first time in a decade
- Installed vending machines with respondents reporting using naloxone to respond to over 800 overdoses to date

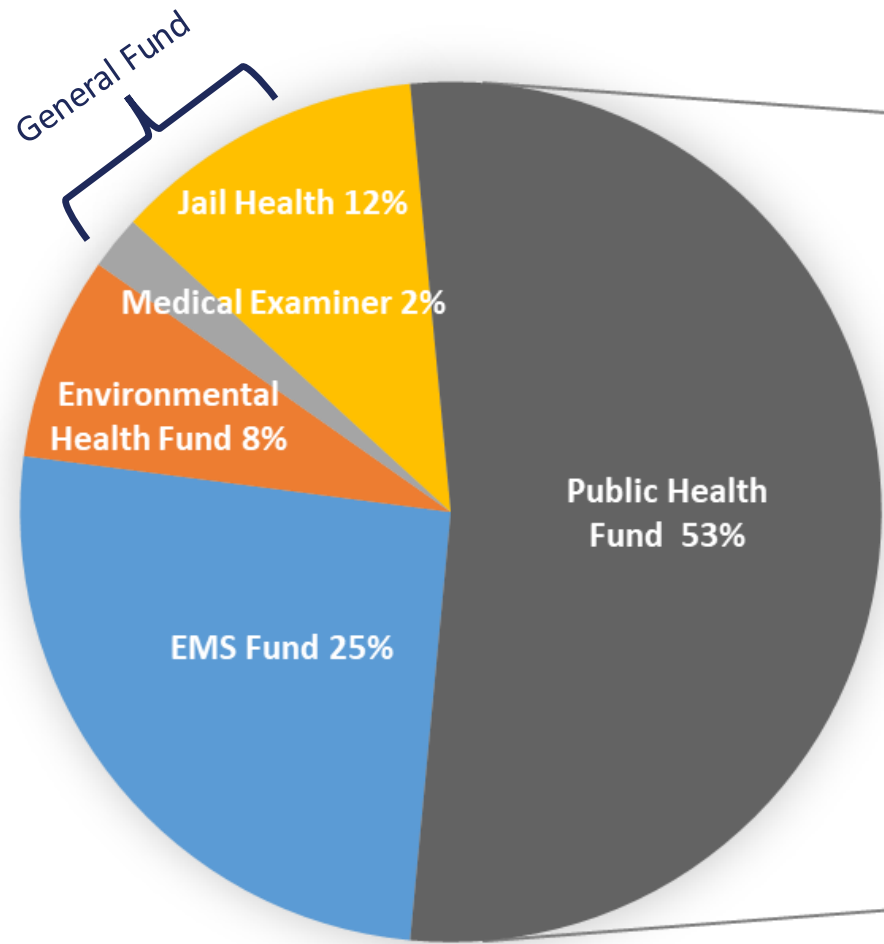
## Access & Outreach

- Led enrollment in state's Apple Health Expansion – helped 2,566 clients in <24 hours
- With federal Medicaid changes, designed a KC plan for keeping impacted people enrolled (partnering with state)
- In past 12 months, our Navigator network enrolled 40,000 into health insurance

## Health Communication Innovation: Comics

- Featured recently on NPR's Here and Now, comics have been successful in reaching communities in a more engaging way and helps bring forth the real stories from our communities.

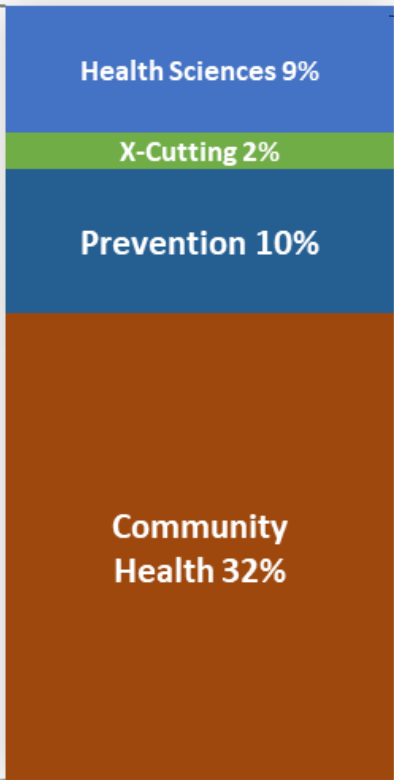
Total \$1.2B Proposed 2026-27 Budget



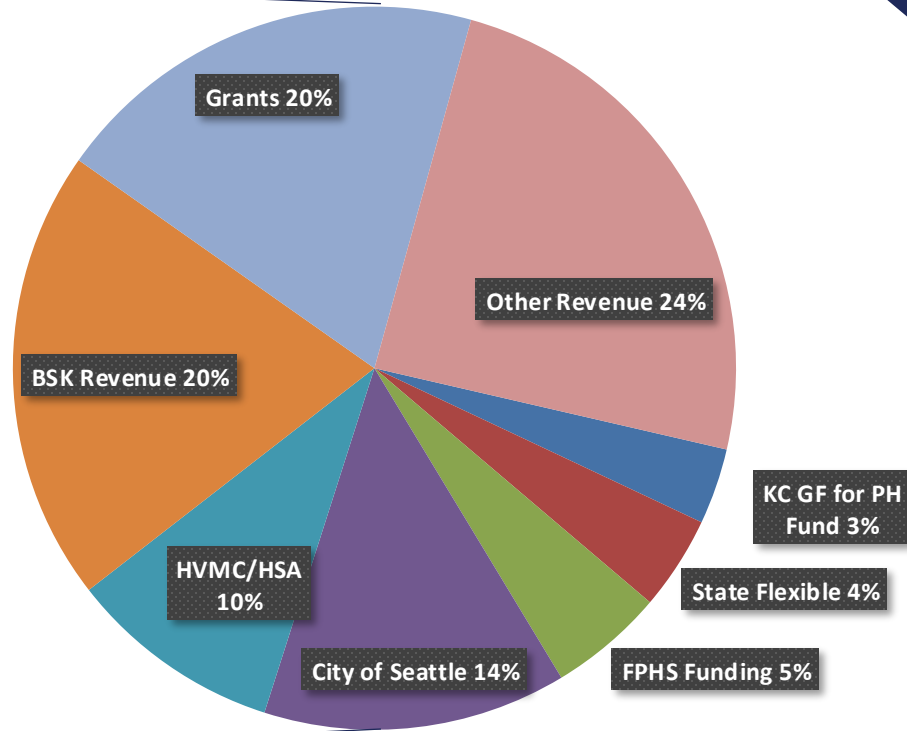
PH Fund Expenditures

\$631 M

Public Health Fund



PH Fund Revenue \$585 M



Notes: Chart does not include the PH Admin Fund, which spreads as Dept Overhead across divisions.

# Public Health 2026-27 Budget Highlights

Mostly status quo; too early to build in federal impacts

Continued funding for Emerging Threats: Gun Violence, Opioid Crisis

Removing vacant positions in First Steps program

Impacts from reductions in FPHS and MIDD funding, and Seattle HSD funding shifts

Ready to implement EMS Levy if approved

Investing in Environmental Health's Permitting System

# Public Health Fund Long-Term Drivers



LONG-STANDING STRUCTURAL GAP FOR  
FOUNDATIONAL SERVICES AND PH CENTER  
SERVICES

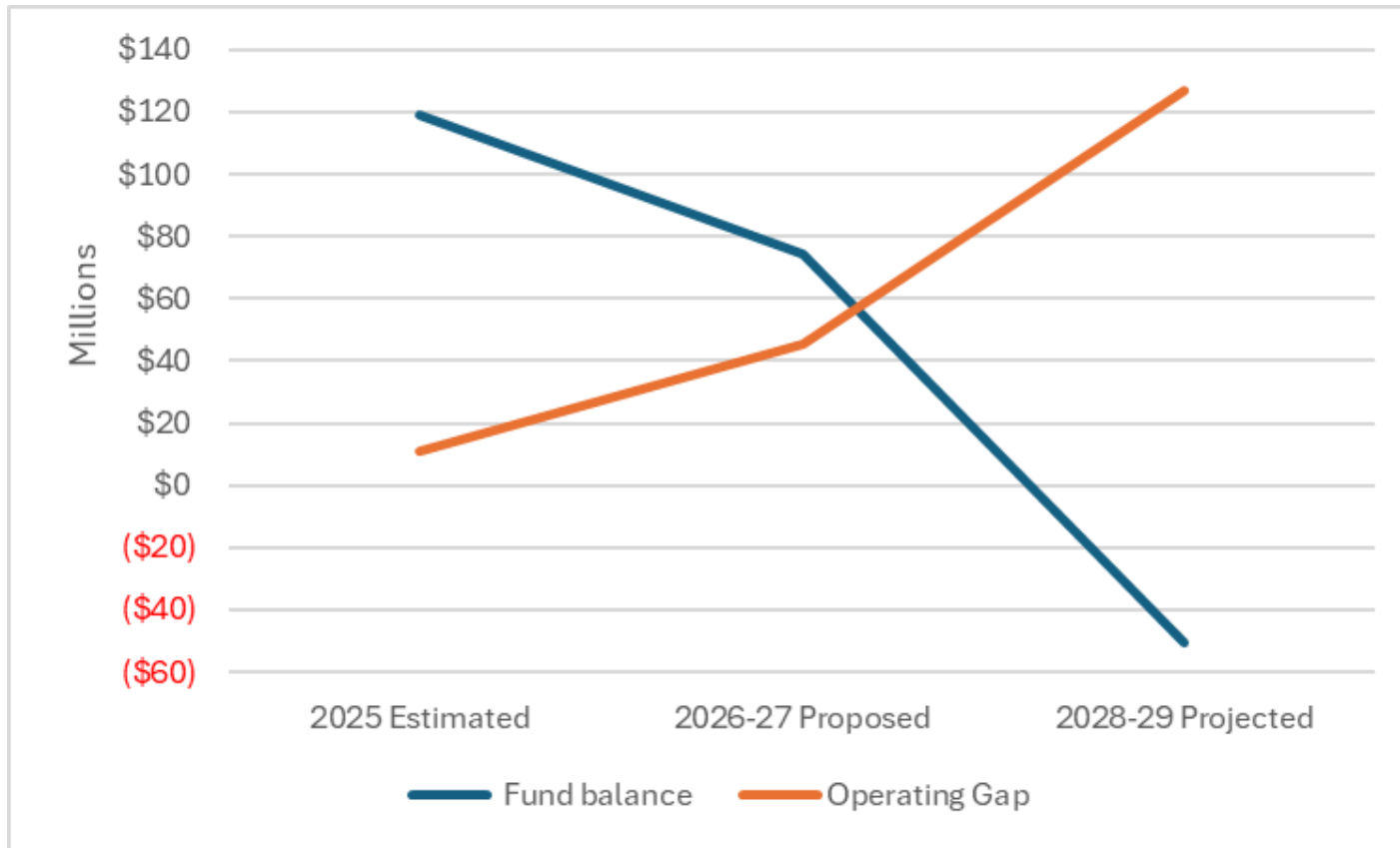


REMOVED HOSPITAL SERVICES  
AGREEMENT FUNDING STARTING IN 2028



EXPECTED FUTURE IMPACTS FROM  
FEDERAL & STATE FUNDING

# *PH Fund “forecasted” to go into the red by the end of 2029*



Operating Gap: Budgeted expenditures exceed revenues

Structural Gap: Lack revenue sources that keep up with inflation

Fund Balance: One-time reserves for rainy day, capital needs, and emergencies excluding confirmed obligations

HSA Clinic Revenues: Removed in 2028-29

# Department 2026-2027 Priorities

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Work toward sustainability of foundational services in the Public Health Fund

---

Work toward sustainability for the Public Health Centers (e.g., CHS Continuous Improvement efforts to strengthen operations and improve wait times, billable visits, enrollment, and other metrics)

---

Achieve Public Health accreditation, further building continuous improvement efforts across the department

---

Respond to federal actions that threaten ability to protect and care for our residents

---

Prepare for upcoming World Cup

---

Support renewal of Best Starts for Kids Levy



# Thank You