



KING COUNTY
Signature Report

ATTACHMENT 1
1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Ordinance

Proposed No. 2021-0062.1

Sponsors McDermott

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

13 **STATEMENT OF FACTS:**

- 14 1. In 2015, King County enacted Ordinance 18088, placing a six-year
15 Best Starts for Kids levy on the ballot. King County residents voted and
16 approved the Best Starts for Kids levy to fund programs and services that
17 support promotion, prevention and early intervention for King County's
18 children, youth and families.
- 19 2. The goals of the Best Starts for Kids levy that voters approved in 2015

20 are to ensure babies are born healthy, King County is a place where
21 everyone has equitable opportunities for health and safety as they progress
22 through childhood and communities offer safe, welcoming and healthy
23 environments that help improve outcomes for all of King County's
24 children and families.

25 3. Since its inception, the Best Starts for Kids levy has funded five
26 hundred and seventy programs and has reached over five hundred seven
27 thousand babies, children, youth and families throughout the county with
28 community-driven programming. Levy programs trained 68,000 child
29 care providers, pediatricians, community health workers and other staff
30 who work with children and youth on healthy child development and
31 racially and culturally appropriate care. The Best Starts for Kids levy
32 distributes resources across the region, focusing investments on those most
33 in need.

34 4. In June 2020, the council directed the executive in Motion 15651 to
35 produce an assessment report to inform deliberations regarding renewal of
36 the current Best Starts for Kids levy. The report includes assessment of
37 early measurements and successes, challenges in launching this first levy,
38 an analysis of the levy's advancement of equity and early
39 recommendations for renewal. Executive staff combined findings of staff
40 research, a community survey conducted in June 2020, community input
41 from ten geographically based virtual community listening sessions as
42 well as five virtual stakeholder listening sessions, and input from ongoing

43 Best Starts for Kids community partner learning circles. In total, almost
44 seven hundred and twenty community responses informed completion of
45 the report. The council accepted the assessment report in Motion 15769.
46 5. The existing Best Starts for Kids levy will expire at the end of 2021.
47 Renewal of the Best Starts for Kids levy requires voter approval.
48 Acknowledging the importance of the Best Starts for Kids levy in serving
49 the county's children, youth and families with upstream promotion,
50 prevention and early intervention programs, and, in light of the current
51 impact the COVID-19 pandemic, has had on the health and well-being of
52 the children, youth and families of King County as well as the regional
53 economic and human services systems including child care, the Best Starts
54 for Kids levy warrants renewal.
55 6. Over twenty-five thousand babies are born in King County each year.
56 County residents under twenty-five years old comprise thirty percent of
57 the population. Fifty-three percent of the people under eighteen years old
58 in King County are Black, Indigenous and People of Color.
59 7. Research shows that there are significant disparities in the health and
60 well-being of King County residents. The percentage of children five and
61 under living in poverty is as low as five percent in some regions of the
62 county and as high as fifteen percent in other regions. Infant mortality is
63 four times higher for American Indian/Alaskan Natives compared to
64 whites and more than two times higher for African Americans. Thirty-
65 eight percent of toddler and preschoolers are not flourishing and resilient

66 in King County, and that number rises to seventy-one percent for
67 elementary-aged children. Among youth, thirty-three percent report
68 depressive feelings and twenty-four percent report using alcohol or other
69 illicit drugs. Twenty-six percent of youth say they do not have an adult
70 they can talk to and thirty-three percent do not feel strong connection to
71 their family. Two thousand students, disproportionately low income and
72 black, indigenous and people of color, drop out of school each year in
73 King County while research shows that by 2024, almost ninety percent of
74 living wage jobs in the county will require some sort of post-secondary
75 education.

76 8. Child care is unaffordable for many families in King County, and child
77 care for our youngest residents now costs more than in-state, public
78 college tuition. King County's child care workforce is disproportionately
79 made up of women and Black, Indigenous and People of Color, as well as
80 immigrants and refugees. Wages remain low, with providers earning near-
81 poverty-level salaries.

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

89 public.

90 10. The county's guiding principles in the King County Strategic Plan,
91 2010-2014 command that pursuit of the county's goals should address the
92 root causes of inequities to provide equal access for all. In 2015, the
93 county established the office of equity and social justice and, the following
94 year, the office of equity and social justice produced the 2016-2022 Equity
95 and Social Justice Strategic Plan. King County actively engages in equity
96 and social justice efforts to eliminate racially and ethnically disparate
97 health and human services outcomes in King County, and this is a priority
98 that shall guide the council and the executive in the process of designing,
99 administering and evaluating the policies and programs related to the
100 renewed Best Starts for Kids levy, if approved by voters.

101 11. In 2014, Ordinance 17738 was enacted, establishing the youth action
102 plan task force and providing policy direction regarding the development
103 of a youth action plan. In addition to their work with the youth action
104 plan, the youth action plan task force members helped shape the current
105 Best Starts for Kids levy. In 2015, the council passed Motion 14378,
106 adopting the completed youth action plan. The youth action plan
107 continues to provide guidance and policy direction for the Best Starts for
108 Kids levy.

109 12. The strategies supported by the Best Starts for Kids levy achieve a
110 variety of outcomes. Headline indicators used to measure these outcomes
111 for children under six include the following: babies born with healthy

112 birth outcomes; children who are flourishing and resilient; children who
113 are ready for kindergarten; and children who are free from abuse or
114 neglect. Headline indicators for children and youth five to twenty-four
115 years old include the following: third graders who meet reading standards;
116 fourth graders who meet math standards; youth who are flourishing and
117 resilient; youth and young adults who are in excellent or very good health;
118 youth who graduated from high school on time; youth and young adults in
119 school or working; high school graduates who earn a college degree or
120 career credential; and youth who are not using illegal substances. Headline
121 indicators for Communities of Opportunity include: adults reporting good
122 or excellent health; youth who have an adult to turn to for help;
123 individuals engaged in civic activities; households paying less than thirty
124 percent or less than fifty percent of their income for housing; local
125 residents who are displaced; youth who eat fruit and vegetables at least
126 four times a day; households with income above two hundred percent of
127 poverty; and youth and young adults in school or working.

128 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

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

131 A. "Child care workforce demonstration project" means a strategy to improve the
132 provision of child care in King County supplementing wages of a test group of persons
133 who provide child care in exchange for wages and then reporting out on the effects of the
134 strategy upon the quality of child care, including but not limited to the strategy's effects

135 upon workforce turnover, workforce experience of poverty, and workforce experience
136 levels.

137 B. "Children and youth" means persons through twenty-four years old.

138 C. "Communities of opportunity" means the strategy described in Section VII of
139 the Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan, that is Attachment A to Ordinance 18373.
140 Communities of Opportunity is designed to improve equity by addressing the race- and
141 place-based inequitable health and well-being outcomes in King County. Communities
142 of Opportunity supports communities in improving the health, social and economic
143 outcomes of those specific communities, and does so by partnering with communities to
144 shape and own solutions.

145 D. "King County child care subsidy program" means a strategy to reduce or fully
146 subsidize the cost of child care to low-income families in King County.

147 E. "Levy" means the levy of regular property taxes for the specific purposes and
148 term provided in this ordinance and authorized by the electorate in accordance with
149 Washington law.

150 F. "Levy proceeds" means the principal amount of moneys raised by the levy and
151 any interest earnings on the moneys.

152 G. "Limit factor" for the purposes of calculating the levy limitations in RCW
153 84.55.010, means one hundred three percent.

154 H. "Strategy" means a program, service, activity, initiative or capital investment
155 intended to achieve the purposes described in subsection 4.B. of this ordinance.

156 I. "Technical assistance and capacity building" means assisting organizations
157 seeking or receiving levy proceeds to enable the organizations to apply for, implement

158 and improve delivery of a strategy or strategies for which expenditures of this levy are
159 eligible.

160 J. "Youth and family homelessness prevention initiative" means an initiative
161 intended to prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming
162 homeless.

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

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

174 **SECTION 4. Eligible expenditures.**

175 A. If approved by the qualified electors of the county, such sums from the first
176 year's levy proceeds as are necessary may be used to provide for the costs and charges
177 incurred by the county that are attributable to the election.

178 B. After the amount authorized in subsection A. of this section, the remaining
179 levy proceeds shall be used to:

180 1. Promote improved health and well-being outcomes of children and youth, as

181 well as the families and the communities in which they live, including, but not limited to:
182 ensuring adequate services and supports for pregnant persons and newborns; access to
183 safe and healthy food; developmental screening for children and youth; programs that
184 care for children and youth when they are not at home including child care and out-of-
185 school-time programs; programs and services that promote a sense of belonging,
186 connection and positive identity in children and youth; and programs and services that
187 provide academic support and promote academic achievement;

188 2. Prevent and intervene early on negative outcomes, including, but not limited
189 to, poor birth outcomes, developmental delays, chronic disease, social emotional
190 isolation, substance abuse, dropping out of school, homelessness, domestic violence and
191 effects of systemic racism and incarceration;

192 3. Reduce inequities in outcomes for children and youth in the county; and

193 4. Strengthen, improve, better coordinate, integrate and encourage innovation in
194 health and human services systems and the agencies, organizations and groups addressing
195 the needs of children and youth, their families and their communities.

196 C. Of the eligible expenditures described in subsection B. of this section, an
197 amount of each year's levy proceeds shall be allocated first for the purposes in subsection
198 D. of this section. In the levy's first year, which is 2022, the total amount allocated for
199 the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be twenty-two and one-half percent of
200 the first year's levy proceeds remaining after the amount authorized in subsection A. In
201 the levy's subsequent years, the amount to be allocated for the purposes in subsection D.
202 of this section shall be allocated so that the six-year total sum of levy proceeds allocated
203 for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be no less than two-hundred and

204 thirty-five million dollars. The implementation plan required by section 7 of this
205 ordinance shall describe the annual allocations of levy proceeds that accomplish
206 allocation requirements of this subsection C. of this section. After the annual allocation
207 of levy proceeds required by this subsection C. of this section, each year's remaining levy
208 proceeds shall be divided in the following proportions and used for the following
209 purposes:

210 1. Fifty percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer strategies
211 focused on children and youth under six years old and their caregivers, pregnant persons
212 and individuals or families concerning pregnancy.

213 2. Thirty-seven percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer
214 strategies focused on children and youth age five or older;

215 3. Eight percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer
216 Communities of Opportunity; and

217 4. Five percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer the
218 following:

219 a. performance measurement of levy-funded strategies, evaluation and data
220 collection activities;

221 b. stipends for children and youth serving as appointed members of the King
222 County children and youth advisory board under conditions prescribed by the final
223 children and youth advisory board update report required by section 6 of this ordinance in
224 the final form of the children and youth advisory board update report that the council
225 adopts by ordinance.

226 c. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by metropolitan

227 park districts in King County. Of the moneys identified in this subsection C.4.c., an
228 amount equal to the lost revenues to the metropolitan park districts resulting from
229 prorationing as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, up to one million dollars, shall be provided
230 to those metropolitan park districts if authorized by the county council by ordinance;

231 d. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by fire districts,
232 in an amount equal to the lost revenues to the fire districts in King County resulting from
233 prorationing, as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, for those services, to the extent the
234 prorationing was caused solely by this levy and if authorized by the county council by
235 ordinance; and

236 e. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by local hospital
237 districts, in an amount equal to the lost revenues to the local hospital districts in King
238 County resulting from prorationing, as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, for those services,
239 to the extent the prorationing was caused solely by this levy and if authorized by the
240 county council by ordinance.

241 D. The levy proceeds annually reserved in subsection C. of this section shall be
242 used to plan, provide, fund, administer, measure performance and evaluate a youth and
243 family homelessness prevention initiative, a King County child care subsidy program, a
244 child care workforce demonstration project and technical assistance and capacity building
245 activities. The youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, King County child
246 care subsidy program, child care workforce demonstration project and technical
247 assistance and capacity building activities required in this subsection shall be described in
248 the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance.

249 **SECTION 5. Call for special election.** In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321,

250 the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with
251 the primary election on August 03, 2021, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular
252 property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director
253 of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state
254 constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the
255 said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council
256 shall certify that proposition to the director of elections in substantially the following
257 form:

258 PROPOSITION____: The King County Council passed Ordinance ____
259 concerning funding to improve the well-being of children, youth, families
260 and communities. If approved, this proposition would fund promotion of
261 positive outcomes, prevention and early intervention related to: child care;
262 healthy pregnancy; newborn family supports; youth development;
263 community well-being; and crisis prevention and intervention for children
264 and youth, including homelessness prevention. It would authorize an
265 additional six-year property tax levy for collection beginning in 2022 at
266 \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation with the 2022 levy amount being
267 the base for calculating annual increases of up to 3% in 2022 - 2026.

268 Should this proposition be:

269 Approved? _____

270 Rejected? _____

271 SECTION 6. Governance. The King County children and youth advisory board
272 described in K.C.C. 2A.300.510 shall serve as the oversight and advisory board for the

273 levy and its strategies, except for Communities of Opportunity, if the levy is approved by
274 the qualified electors of the county. The communities of opportunity-best starts for kids
275 levy advisory board described in K.C.C. 2A.300.520 shall serve as the advisory body for
276 Communities of Opportunity if the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the
277 county. If the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the county, the executive shall
278 by October 01, 2021, transmit to the council for consideration and adoption by ordinance
279 a best starts for kids governance update report that describes and explains necessary and
280 recommended changes to sections of the King County Code and applicable ordinances
281 that describe the composition and duties of the King County children and youth advisory
282 board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board. A
283 proposed ordinance or ordinances shall accompany the best starts for kids governance
284 update report, which ordinance or ordinances, upon enactment, would accomplish the
285 changes recommended by the best starts for kids governance update report. Among the
286 purposes of recommended changes listed and described within the best starts for kids
287 governance update report shall be to update the King County children and youth advisory
288 board's duties and composition as needed to enable the King County children and youth
289 advisory board to oversee and advise on the levy and to extend the existence of the
290 communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board to coincide with the
291 levy. The executive shall consult with the King County children and youth advisory
292 board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board in
293 preparing the children and youth advisory board update report.

294 **SECTION 7. Implementation plan.**

295 A. Not later than July 31, 2021, the executive shall transmit to the council for

296 review and adoption by ordinance a proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan
297 that identifies the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of
298 levy proceeds described in section 4 of this ordinance. The Best Starts for Kids
299 implementation plan shall also include a framework to measure the performance of levy
300 strategies in achieving their outcomes. The executive shall develop the proposed Best
301 Starts for Kids implementation plan in consultation with the King County children and
302 youth advisory board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy
303 advisory board. In developing the Best Starts for Kids implementation plan required in
304 this Section 7., the executive shall consider and promote harmony with the previous Best
305 Starts for Kids Implementation Plan that is Attachment A to Ordinance 18373,
306 specifically describing which strategies from the previous Best Starts for Kids
307 Implementation Plan shall continue in the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation
308 plan. In developing the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan, the executive
309 shall also to the maximum extent possible take into consideration the King County Youth
310 Action Plan, adopted by Motion 14378.

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

314 **SECTION 8. Exemption.** The additional regular property taxes authorized by
315 this ordinance shall be included in any real property tax exemption authorized by RCW
316 84.36.381.

317 **SECTION 9. Ratification and confirmation.** Certification of the proposition by
318 the clerk of the county council to the director of elections in accordance with law before

319 the general election on August 3, 2021, and any other act consistent with the authority
320 and before the effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

321 **SECTION 10. Severability.** If any provision of this ordinance or its application

322 to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the
323 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.
324

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Claudia Balducci, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, _____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: A. Best Starts for Kids Blueprint Report