



King County

2026 State Legislative Priorities

Local Government Funding for Essential Services

Federal uncertainty exacerbates King County's structural fiscal gap. The cost of essential services and programs continues to grow, the federal government has eliminated and rescinded funding for those essential services and programs, and the Legislature provides limited revenue options for counties and has capped revenue growth from property taxes at one percent. To help us rise to the moment and preserve King County as a welcoming community where every person can thrive, we ask the Legislature to:

- Replace the 1 percent property tax revenue growth cap with a growth rate tied to inflation and population growth.
- Authorize local option progressive revenue tools that enable local governments to provide state mandated services, respond to federal fiscal changes, and continue to support our residents with needed services outside of state legislative sessions.
- Address inadequate funding for county roads and bridges.
- Provide a local option dedicated revenue source for King County's public health clinics to support the health care services delivered to 80,000 residents across King County annually.

Public Defense

Ensure a well-run and efficient justice system across the state by funding and providing resources needed to meet state constitutional obligations for public defense and fully implement new state Supreme Court mandated caseload standards.

Affordable Housing & Homelessness

King County, and the cities and towns within it, cannot solve the affordable housing and homelessness crises without help from the state. Housing providers across the county are struggling to preserve the housing that exists today, and the need for new housing across the spectrum continues to grow. We ask the legislature to help continue our work on building and preserving affordable housing units.

- Preserve operating and capital investments for affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, and emergency housing and shelters.
- Increase flexibility of existing revenue tools used to fund affordable housing to meet areas of greatest and emerging needs.
- Increase accountability and technical support to help municipalities plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all income levels.
- Reduce siting barriers for permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and emergency housing.
- Maintain investments in encampment resolution programs that move people out of encampments and into housing at the pace necessary for each person to be placed into housing that meets their individual needs.
- Preserve funding for eviction defense and rental and landlord assistance programs.
- Adopt policies that encourage and preserve homeownership and help address current and future housing needs.

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Human Services

- Build on investments in the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance that support immigrant and refugee populations.
- Maintain access to Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) for ages 0-3 and supports for ages 3-5.
- Protect opportunities for employment and meaningful inclusion in the community for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).
- Ensure food access in light of federal cuts and eligibility restrictions to SNAP.

Health Care & Behavioral Health

Recently adopted federal cuts and new Medicaid requirements will make it harder for many Washington residents to receive the physical and behavioral health care they deserve starting in 2026. Community behavioral health providers are especially reliant on Medicaid to deliver core treatment services and support workers, and the risk of widespread disenrollment is high.



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continued

- Protect access to care as federal Medicaid requirements and cuts are implemented, and preserve access to health care for those who have been categorically prohibited from Medicaid eligibility.
- Maintain the state's investments in essential behavioral health crisis services, including funding to operate new facilities, sustain mobile response services, and preserve substance use disorder services and peer counselors.
- Remove barriers to ensure community-based crisis care is as easy to access as hospital emergency departments.
- Support efforts to maintain access to, and increase premium assistance for, Cascade Care plans purchased via the Washington Health Benefits Exchange or Apple Health.
- Increase the Apple Health Expansion program enrollment cap, allowing more individuals to secure health care coverage.
- Restore full Foundational Public Health Services funding.

Climate & Environment

- Make permanent the Habitat Restoration Permit Pathway Program (previously the Habitat Recovery Pilot Program) and expand eligibility to more salmon-habitat projects approved or funded by state and federal sources.
- Provide additional funding for Floodplains by Design to help communities work to mitigate the risk of flooding, restore habitat for fish and wildlife, and preserve rapidly disappearing farmland.
- Mitigate the federal defunding of grant money for the Howard Hanson dam.

Transportation & Transit

- Maintain WSDOT infrastructure project investments; complete the Triangle project; fund the roundabout on SR 203/Tolt Hill Road.
- Sustain expanded water taxi funding.
- Provide funding for the Safe System approach to traffic safety.
- Establish a Snoqualmie Pass truck parking facility to provide a safe place for truckers to park when the pass is closed.
- Revise the sales tax exemption for zero-emission buses to include equipment and eliminate the program cap.
- Strengthen infrastructure protections and driver accountability as a means of preventing damage to our public highways and bridges.
- Adopt state legislative policy items identified in the King County Regional Transit Safety Implementation Plan, including expanding the legal definition of transit worker assault to include all contracted and frontline transit workers; and aligning firearm restrictions at transit facilities with restrictions at other public spaces like schools and libraries.

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Regional Governance

- Support our court's ability to provide in-person interpretation for all court users by addressing such issues as rates, scheduling, certification, and cost of training for Court Interpreters across the state.
- Eliminate statutory restrictions preventing individuals who are authorized to work in the United States from serving as corrections officers.
- Increase county procurement thresholds to create efficiencies and facilitate more investment in women and minority-owned businesses.
- Strengthen emergency response throughout the state by creating a state disaster relief fund to assist both public agencies and individuals to ensure local jurisdictions and individuals are not devastated by disasters as the FEMA thresholds increase and program practices change; and by allowing jurisdictions to use funds otherwise restricted by state law for emergency response purposes in a major disaster.
- Allow lodging tax revenue to be used to maintain and grow the tourism related workforce.
- Ensure the security of elections and data collected by public agencies.
- Prohibit surveillance pricing by banning the use of personal data to set individualized prices for consumer products.