

**King County****Dow Constantine**

King County Executive

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800

Seattle, WA 98104-1818

206-263-9600 Fax 206-296-0194

TTY Relay: 711

www.kingcounty.gov

September 25, 2023

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

I am pleased to transmit to you a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, impose a one-tenth of one percent sales and use tax to finance the King County Doors Open program to support cultural organizations in King County. It would also repeal outdated references to previous cultural access programing in previous legislation. The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 82.14.525 authorizes the legislative authority of a county to impose a one-tenth of one percent sales and use tax for a cultural access program without voter approval.

Generating about \$100 million annually, this funding for the Doors Open program would advance equitable access to arts, science, and heritage organizations throughout King County and would remove barriers to access faced by many who live in King County. Doors Open funding would support the growth and development of arts, science, and heritage centers throughout King County to promote healthy and vibrant communities.

This proposed Ordinance designates 4Culture, King County's Cultural Development Authority to administer the Doors Open program bringing its successful track record of creating and managing local arts, heritage and culture funding and service programs.

The Doors Open program includes funding for:

- A public school cultural access program, designed to increase public school student access to cultural educational experiences by extending the offerings of cultural entities through programs provided at schools and at the facilities and venues of the cultural entities, including the provision of transportation to facilities and venues;
- New or emerging cultural organizations with a focus on ensuring that all geographic areas of the county and all communities in the county have access to cultural experiences;

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- Countywide initiatives and projects including public programs, centralized supports for cultural practitioners, limited-time events, and funding for unmet community needs;
- Building for Equity grants to help cultural organizations acquire, build, and renovate brick and mortar buildings, to purchase equipment, and to help provide launch funding for new cultural organizations, and support organizational capacity building;
- Reimbursing cultural organizations for actual and reasonable expenses incurred in providing public access to cultural experiences; and
- Programmatic support to meet the ongoing needs of cultural organizations, including but not limited to assistance with rent, utilities, payroll, and other basic annual expenses.

In addition, the proposal includes designated funding to increase cultural capacity throughout the County outside of established cultural centers. Plus, a portion of 2024 proceeds would be allocated for capital and one-time operating support, with 4Culture and King County jointly implementing a program that will invite cultural organizations to participate in a competitive application process for capital project and one-time operating support. Awards will support cultural facilities grants and organizational capacity building grants.

Thank you for your consideration of this historic legislation. Passage of this proposed Ordinance will foster the creation and development of new cultural organizations throughout King County, reduce geographic barriers, and ensure that all residents have improved access to arts, science, and heritage resources.

If your staff have questions, please contact Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Executive Office, at 206.477.0952.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff
Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council
Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive
Brian Carter, Executive Director, 4Culture