



**Signature Report**

**Motion**

**Proposed No.** 2020-0200.1

**Sponsors** Balducci

1                   A MOTION requesting the executive to prepare an  
2                   assessment report to inform council deliberations regarding  
3                   possible renewal of the best starts for kids levy.

4                   WHEREAS, in November 2015, King County voters passed the first best starts  
5 for kids levy to generate funding for a wide range of programs to support promotion,  
6 prevention and early intervention for King County's children, youth and families, and

7                   WHEREAS, the goals of the existing best starts for kids levy are to ensure that:  
8 babies are born healthy; King County is a place where everyone has equitable  
9 opportunities for health and safety as they progress through childhood; and communities  
10 offer safe, welcoming and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of  
11 King County's children and families, regardless of where they live, and

12                   WHEREAS, the best starts for kids levy was created to align with King County's  
13 equity and social justice principles and includes a focus on systems and policies change  
14 so that all communities in King County can thrive and prosper regardless of race or place,  
15 and

16                   WHEREAS, fifty percent of the existing levy's proceeds are allocated to  
17 promotion, prevention and early intervention programs for children under age five and  
18 pregnant families, thirty-five percent are allocated to promotion, prevention and early  
19 intervention programs for children and youth ages five through twenty-four; ten percent

20 are allocated to creating safe and healthy communities; and five percent are allocated to  
21 evaluation of the best starts for kids initiative. The allocation has been beneficial in  
22 delivering services to populations in need of the services, and

23 WHEREAS, the best starts for kids levy will expire December 31, 2021, and

24 WHEREAS, the best starts for kids levy is a voter-approved, six-year levy lid lift,  
25 renewal of which requires voter approval of a ballot measure, and

26 WHEREAS, the best starts for kids levy distributes resources across the region,  
27 targeting investments to those most in need, and

28 WHEREAS, current events have underscored the urgency of the continued need  
29 to dismantle systems of racial and other forms of oppression which affect youth, families  
30 and communities in King County, like the school to prison pipeline, and

31 WHEREAS, over twenty-five thousand new babies are born in King County in  
32 each year, and

33 WHEREAS, while King County as a region is thriving, research shows that there  
34 are significant disparities in birth outcomes by race, geography and income, and some  
35 children and youth are in danger of being left behind, and

36 WHEREAS, infant mortality is four times higher in some areas of King County  
37 than others, twenty-nine percent of elementary age children are flourishing and resilient,  
38 thirty-three percent of adolescents report depressive feelings and twenty-four percent  
39 report using alcohol or other illicit drugs, and

40 WHEREAS, those disparities persist throughout a child's life course, contributing  
41 to sustained disparities in long-term success, and

42 WHEREAS, services funded through the best starts for kids levy have directly

43 addressed those disparities through promotion, prevention and early intervention,  
44 allowing King County's children, youth and families to be happy, healthy, safe and  
45 thriving, and

46 WHEREAS, sustained investment in funded strategies and programs is necessary  
47 to fully realize long-term beneficial impacts for children, families and communities, and

48 WHEREAS, the King County council is considering whether to submit to the  
49 qualified electors for their approval in 2021 a ballot measure to renew the best starts for  
50 kids levy, and

51 WHEREAS, the purpose of an assessment report is to support council awareness  
52 of initiative implementation and outcomes to inform deliberations regarding the potential  
53 ballot measure for a renewed levy;

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

55 A. The council requests that the executive submit for council review an  
56 assessment report of the best starts for kids levy-funded goals, strategies and programs.

57 The assessment report submitted to council shall be developed in consultation with  
58 stakeholders and shall include:

59 1. An assessment of the context and impact of the best starts for kids levy-  
60 funded goals, strategies and programs outlined in Ordinance 18088, including, but not  
61 limited to:

62 a. an analysis of investments by geographic area

63 b. an analysis of investments by strategy

64 c. progress of levy implementation

65 d. preliminary measurement of changes experienced by families and

66 communities; and

67 e. an analysis of the impact of investments in advancing equity and social  
68 justice and changing systems and policies of racial and other forms of oppression; and

69 2. Recommendations that address the following:

70 a. whether to maintain or modify the best starts for kids levy's three primary  
71 goals enumerated in the implementation plan approved in Ordinance 18373: to ensure  
72 that: babies are born healthy; King County is a place where everyone has equitable  
73 opportunities for health and safety as they progress through childhood; and communities  
74 offer safe, welcoming and healthy environments that help improve outcomes for all of  
75 King County's children and families, regardless of where they live;

76 b. whether a renewed levy should incorporate new or revised goals or  
77 strategies such as child care, recommendations from the children and families strategy  
78 task force or other county efforts focused on children and youth;

79 c. how a renewed levy would align and coordinate with programs such as: the  
80 veterans, seniors and human services levy; mental illness and drug dependency fund;  
81 children and families strategy task force recommendations; the Puget Sound Taxpayer  
82 Accountability Account; and other federal, state and local funding streams and programs  
83 to integrate, align and avoid duplication of efforts;

84 d. whether a renewed levy should retain, or make modifications to, existing  
85 strategies that are intended to: support parents, families and caregivers; screen children  
86 to prevent potential problems and intervene early to link to treatment; cultivate caregiver  
87 knowledge; support high-quality childcare; build resiliency of youth and reduce risky  
88 behaviors; meet the health and behavior needs of youth; create healthy and safe

89 environments for youth; help youth stay connected to their families and communities;  
90 help young adults who have had challenges successfully transition into adulthood; stop  
91 the school-to-prison pipeline; support priorities and strategies to facilitate collaboration  
92 with communities that have much to gain; engage multiple organizations in institutional,  
93 system and policy change; and prevent youth and family homelessness;

94 e. how a renewed levy would benefit the entire region while targeting  
95 resources to those most in need;

96 f. whether a renewed levy should modify any, or any combination of, the role;  
97 the structure or the representation of the children and youth advisory board.

98 B. The executive shall file the assessment report requested by this motion by  
99 September 30, 2020, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk  
100 of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all  
101 councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the policy staff director and the lead staff for

102 the committee of the whole and the regional policy committee, or their successors. The  
103 report shall be accompanied by a proposed motion accepting the report.  
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KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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ATTEST:

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**Attachments:** None