



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

July 28, 2021

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

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

Pursuant to Ordinance 19267, I am pleased to transmit the Best Starts for Kids (Best Starts) Implementation Plan and a proposed Ordinance that, if enacted, would adopt the plan to govern Best Starts' strategies, programs and expenditures should the levy be approved for renewal by the voters in August 2021.

The start we give our children now will define our region's health, prosperity and equity for generations to come. As you know, Best Starts is King County's groundbreaking community-driven and science-informed initiative that helps our children, youth, young adults, and families realize their full potential to be healthy, happy, safe, and thriving.

This Implementation Plan continues the commitment of the original Best Starts for Kids levy, passed by voters in 2015, to put every child and youth in King County on a path toward life-long success. A voter-approved renewed and expanded Best Starts will continue intergenerational investments in promotion, prevention, and early intervention programs and services for children, youth, and young adults, while deepening investments in key targeted areas in response to emerging needs and community input.

If approved by voters, the renewed levy will provide child care subsidies for more than 3,000 low-income children, and a workforce development project for low-wage child care workers. It will also increase funding to school-based health centers, expanded learning opportunities for school-age children and programs supporting youth and young adults to successfully transition to adulthood. A new capital grants program will invest in the buildings and facilities needed to provide low-income families and communities of color with access to high quality educational or recreational programming for their children and youth year-round.

Additional capacity building funds will engage communities in geographic areas that have not traditionally applied for funds, supporting their participation in Best Starts programming.

The Best Starts Implementation Plan from 2022-2027 has eight main investment areas:

- Invest Early (prenatal to age five)
- Sustain the Gain (ages five to 24)
- Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention
- Communities of Opportunity
- Child Care Subsidies and Wage Demonstration Project
- Capital Projects
- Technical Assistance and Capacity Building
- Evaluation

The expanded levy, if approved by voters, is projected to generate \$883.8 million over six years. The funds are proposed to be allocated as follows:

- \$240 million of the total levy revenue, including 22.5 percent of first year's revenue, is set aside for Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention, Child Care Subsidies and a Wage Demonstration Project, and Technical Assistance and Capacity Building;
- 50 percent of the remaining revenue is dedicated to investments for Invest Early strategies serving children from prenatal through age five;
- 37 percent for Sustain the Gain strategies serving ages five through 24);
- Eight percent for Communities of Opportunity;
- Five percent for evaluation; and
- The levy will include up to \$50 million for capital projects serving children, youth, and families, provided projected total levy proceeds continue to exceed \$822 million.

Best Starts values and centers community partnership. Building on consistent input from community throughout the first levy, focused engagement to inform the Implementation Plan included a series of community conversations across the county and community surveys. Community members shared what they thought Best Starts got right, what they would like to see improved, and what they wanted to see added for the next levy. In preparing for a potential renewed levy for 2022-2027, staff circled back to the community to make sure that the new levy captured their ideas well.

The Children and Youth Advisory Board as well as the Communities of Opportunity (COO) Governance Group participated actively in the development of the Implementation Plan. Both boards conducted focused planning and feedback processes in the first half of 2021 as part of their ongoing oversight of Best Starts and COO. Each board endorsed the plan in June 2021.

The Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan is the third of four plans related to the potential renewal of the Best Starts Levy that I am transmitting for Council review. The July 2020 Best Starts for Kids Assessment Report looked back at what Best Starts accomplished in the first levy. The January 2021 Best Starts for Kids Blueprint Report laid out a vision for the next levy that is reflected in this plan. The Best Starts Governance Plan is due to the Council on October 1, 2021.

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July 28, 2021

Page 3

The Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan supports the health and human service goal of the King County Strategic Plan to improve the health and wellbeing of all people in our community and the objective to provide equitable opportunities for children to progress through childhood safe and healthy. Similarly, Best Starts supports the work called for in King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, and the 2015 Youth Action Plan through strengthening families and communities and maximizing the assets and knowledge of our richly diverse county and its many cultures and communities.

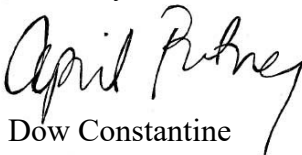
From its beginning, Best Starts has provided a powerful opportunity for King County to center the voices and lived experiences of communities most impacted by systemic racism, and to counter deeply entrenched systems of racism. One of Best Starts' foundational goals is to work in true partnership with communities to find solutions to the issues they care about, in ways that work for them. Through these efforts to break down barriers between communities and public funding, Best Starts works to bring true equity to King County.

This plan required approximately 918 hours of staff time to produce, costing an estimated \$41,200.

Thank you for your continued support of Best Starts for Kids. I look forward to working with you and our many community partners to achieve our shared vision that every baby born and child raised in King County reaches adulthood happy, healthy, safe, and thriving.

If your staff have questions, please contact Leo Flor, Director, Department of Community and Human Services Director at 206.477.4834 or Dennis Worsham, Interim Director, Seattle-King County Public Health at 206.263.8158.

Sincerely,



for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers
 ATTN: Janine Weihe, acting Chief of Staff
 Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council
Shannon Braddock, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Karan Gill, Director, Council Relations, Office of the Executive
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget
Leo Flor, Director, Department of Community and Human Service
Dennis Worsham, Interim Director, Public Health Seattle-King County