## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 5 | **Name:** | Miranda Leskinen |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2021-0214 | **Date:** | September 8, 2021 |

**SUBJECT**

A Motion to accept the 2020 (5th annual) Best Starts for Kids annual report.

**SUMMARY**

On June 1, 2021, the Executive transmitted to Council the fifth annual Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Annual Report. The report provides information on all BSK financial investments made in 2020, as well as BSK performance measures and outcomes. These annual reports are required by the BSK Implementation Plan (approved by Ordinance 18373). Staff analysis has determined that the executive transmitted BSK Annual Report meets the requirements as outlined in the BSK Implementation Plan.

Proposed Motion 2021-0214 would accept the 2020 BSK annual report (5th annual report), in accordance with Ordinance 18373.

**BACKGROUND**

**2016-2021 BSK Levy.** The Best Starts for Kids levy that was approved by King County voters in November 2015 is a property tax that is levied at a rate of $0.14 per $1,000 of assessed valuation in 2016, with an increase of up to three percent for each of the five subsequent years of the levy—2017 through 2021.[[1]](#footnote-1) The levy is anticipated to generate a total of approximately $404.85 million in revenues over the six-year levy period, based on the most recent revenue forecast (as of July 2021). Table 1 shows the projected annual revenues in dollars.

**Table 1. BSK Annual Revenues in Dollars[[2]](#footnote-2)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tax Year** | **Value** |
| 2016 | $59,455,206 |
| 2017 | $62,379,867 |
| 2018 | $65,652,750 |
| 2019 | $69,094,328 |
| 2020 | $72,426,449 |
| 2021 | $75,846,946 |
| **Total** | **$404,855,546** |

The BSK levy Ordinance (18088), directed that out of the first year's levy proceeds, $19 million be set aside to fund the Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI) as well as the amounts that were necessary to pay for election costs related to the levy. All remaining levy proceeds are to be disbursed as follows: 50 percent for the Invest Early Allocation (0-5 years old); 35 percent for the Sustain the Gain Allocation (5-24 years old); 10 percent for the Communities Matter Allocation (otherwise known as Communities of Opportunity); and 5 percent for the Outcomes-Focused and Data-Driven Allocation.

**BSK Implementation Plan.** The Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan, which outlines programming for the BSK initiative, approved by Ordinance 18373, provides requirements related to the transmittal timelines, stakeholder involvement and contents for all BSK Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports. The summary of each requirement and an evaluation of whether each requirement was included in the BSK 2020 Annual Report are detailed in the “Analysis” section below.

**BSK Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative Implementation Plan.** The BSK Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI) is intended to prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming homeless. The BSK YFHPI Implementation Plan, which outlines programming for BSK YFHPI, approved by Ordinance 18285[[3]](#footnote-3) and updated by Ordinance 18373, provides requirements related to transmittal timelines and contents of various reports related to BSK YFHPI. The following bullets summarize BSK YFHPI reporting to date[[4]](#footnote-4):

* Motion 14797[[5]](#footnote-5) accepted a report on the BSK YFHPI technical assistance funding contract;
* Motion 14828[[6]](#footnote-6) accepted a report on the BSK YFHPI lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer awareness training contract;
* Motion 14845[[7]](#footnote-7) accepted a report on the BSK YFHPI services funding contracts;
* Motion 14901[[8]](#footnote-8) accepted the first outcomes report on the BSK YFHPI; and
* Motion 15225[[9]](#footnote-9) accepted the 2017 outcomes report on the BSK YFHPI.
* Motion 15724[[10]](#footnote-10) accepted the 2018 outcomes and independent evaluation report on the BSK YFHPI.

**BSK Innovation Fund.** The 2017-2018 biennial budget ordinance provisoed[[11]](#footnote-11) $500,000 of the biennial appropriation for Best Starts for Kids pending the transmittal and Council approval of a proposed supplemental appropriation ordinance for expenditures of BSK levy proceeds to the Innovation Fund. As per the proviso, the supplemental appropriation ordinance was required to include clear, written specifications and investment processes for contemplated investment strategies. Ordinance 18569[[12]](#footnote-12) appropriated approximately $2.8 million of BSK levy funds for the Innovation Fund. [[13]](#footnote-13)

**BSK Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan.** The BSK Implementation Plan sets out the principles for the BSK evaluation, including requirements for the BSK Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan (EPMP) which outlines strategies, methods, and metrics to evaluate and measure the performance of the BSK initiative. The BSK EPMP was accepted by Motion 14979 on October 17, 2017. The accepted BSK EPMP did not contain any major divergences compared to the policy direction in the preliminary evaluation framework in the BSK Implementation Plan or in the YFHPI Implementation Plan. However, there were some key changes that were reflective of the initiative’s evolution as implementation roll-out continued.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**BSK Levy Renewal Planning.** Motion 15651, adopted by the Council in July 2020, requested the executive submit for Council review an assessment report of the current BSK levy funded goals, strategies, and programs. The intent of the assessment was to inform Council deliberations regarding the potential for a levy renewal, since the current BSK Levy expires at the end of 2021. Motion 15651 included a detailed list of reporting requirements covering both an assessment of the current levy and recommendations for any future levy. On October 15, 2020 the Executive transmitted the BSK Assessment Report, as required by Motion 15651, and a proposed motion that would, if enacted, accept the report. In December 2020, Council passed a motion to accept the report.[[15]](#footnote-15)

In April 2021, Council approved Ordinance 19267, which placed a BSK renewal levy proposition on the ballot. King County voters approved the renewal levy on August 3, 2021.

**ANALYSIS**

The BSK Implementation Plan outlines requirements related to the transmittal timelines, stakeholder involvement and contents of Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Annual Reports. The following subsections evaluate whether the 2020 BSK Annual Report is consistent with the requirements outlined in the BSK Implementation Plan.

**Transmittal Timeline.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires that BSK Annual Reports be transmitted by June 1 of each year. The Executive transmitted the 2020 BSK Annual Report on June 1, 2021, therefore meeting the requirement outlined in Motion 15620.

**Content Requirements.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires that BSK Annual Reports describe the programs funded and outcomes for the children, youth, families, and young adults served. Specifically, annual reports are to include:

* Progress toward meeting overall levy goals and strategies
* Headline indicator measurements[[16]](#footnote-16)
* Performance metrics[[17]](#footnote-17)
* Lessons learned
* Strategies for continuous improvement

The transmitted BSK Annual Report includes this information.

**Review by Advisory Boards.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires that the BSK Annual Reports be developed in consultation with the Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) and the Communities of Opportunity – BSK Advisory Board[[18]](#footnote-18) (COO-BSK Board) before transmittal and that each advisory board shall consult on and review the respective portion of annual reports on BSK programming over which they have been charged with oversight. As stated in the Executive’s transmittal letter to Proposed Motion 2021-0214:

*“The Council directed that certain advisory boards provide input on the Best Starts for Kids annual report. The members of the Children and Youth Advisory Board and Communities of Opportunity Advisory Board received a draft copy of the 2020 Annual Report in April 202[1]. Representatives from each board reviewed the respective portion of the report over which they have oversight. The final report reflects their input and feedback.”*

**Details on Communities of Opportunity (Communities Matter) Awards.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires BSK Annual Reports include a detailed chart with information on Communities of Opportunity awards to-date since the last reporting cycle. Page 87 of the 2020 BSK Annual Report summarizes Communities of Opportunity investments for the reporting cycle. Additionally, pages 88 through 98 of the report expound on the $9.9 million in 2020 investments.

The BSK Implementation Plan also requires the BSK Annual Report to provide a breakdown of awards by multiple sources and the amounts contributed by each source if public funds (i.e. BSK levy funds) are blended with other fund sources for Communities of Opportunity awards.[[19]](#footnote-19) In addition, denotations that each public fund award was not awarded to undertake a prohibited body of work is also required. This is denoted in the transmitted report.

**BSK Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan Updates.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires that updates to the BSK EPMP be reported as part of annual reports[[20]](#footnote-20). Relatedly, the BSK Implementation Plan also requires headline indicators be measured and reported annually as part of the annual report[[21]](#footnote-21). The transmitted report includes the required information. In 2020, Best Starts for Kids did not recommend any revisions to the BSK Performance Measurement and Evaluation Plan, or any changes to the plan or programs based on evaluation and data. That said, the report indicates limited refinements to measurement processes occurred as new information became available or COVID-19 impacted programming or data collection, with substance and targets remained unchanged. The report summarizes the measurement refinements (pages 44-46).

In the report, investments are categorized as ‘laying the groundwork’, ‘building momentum’ and/or ‘delivering impact’, which the report describes is a reflection of the young life and complexity of the initiative. As further indicated, as of 2020, all BSK-funded programs are ‘delivering impact’, which means that the program is actively delivering services, and there are at least two quarters of performance data to report for the year.

**BSK 5th Annual Report Highlights.** The following sub-sections provide highlights from the 2020 BSK Annual Report. More information about awards tied to BSK investments is available online on the BSK open data portal.[[22]](#footnote-22) In sum, the report notes that, in 2020, Best Starts invested $99.8 million[[23]](#footnote-23) in 558 programs delivering impact through strategies that reached more than 380,000 children, parents, caregivers and other community members in King County. Additionally, the report indicates that BSK provided approximately 7,200 hours of technical assistance and capacity building leveraged by communities in 2020.[[24]](#footnote-24) An aggregate summary of participants served by the initiative in 2020, including demographic information, in provided on page 8 of the report. Similar summaries by strategy area are also provided throughout the report.

Invest Early Allocation Highlights ($47.0M investment for 2020). In 2020, Best Starts for Kids supported community partners in meeting basic needs, connecting families to services, and caring for the well-being of young children and their families. Among the 2020 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for the Invest Early allocation, the following were included:

* Help Me Grow King County Partnership Network supported 245 parents/caregivers and 512 children between when it launched in August 2020 and the end of the year. As indicated in the report, 80 percent of children served were BIPOC and 71 percent of children received a developmental screening.
* The report notes that a majority of these families reached out with concerns related to basic needs, developmental progress and parent/caregiver support. As further indicated, to address these concerns, partners interacted at least 900 times with families over video, text and phone and completed 490 referrals for related services or resources.
* 3 community-based organizations served 5,262 children and their families through the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program, which supports families whose children have developmental delays and disabilities, focusing on children up to age 3.
* 137 providers started the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement process, and an additional 359 providers participated in reflective consultation meetings to transform their practice and improve connection to babies, children and families. The report notes that 86 percent of providers reported that these sessions had a positive impact on their relationships with the babies, children and families they serve.
* Evidence-based and evidence-informed home-based programs increased their caregiver reach by 74 percent over 2019, serving 1,085 caregivers, 67 percent of whom identified as BIPOC. Similarly, the programs increased their reach among children by 75 percent over 2019, serving 907 children, 70 percent of whom identified as BIPOC.
* 41,427 families and children accessed basic necessities — including diapers, clothes, baby formula and fresh fruits and vegetables. The report notes this represents a 39 percent increase over 2019. As further noted, 98 percent of all requested items were distributed.
* 11,671 pregnant women and infants received pregnancy and parenting support, and families received 1,167 linkages to health prevention support services. As noted in the report, the shift to video and phone visits for most clients increased accessibility.
* Allocated, through a partnership with Child Care Resources, $526,000 toward COVID-19 prevention for child care facilities, such as personal protection equipment and cleaning supplies.

Performance measurements data for the Invest Early Allocation are provided in the report on pages 62-74.

Sustain the Gain Allocation Highlights ($36.0M investment for 2020). In 2020, Best Starts for Kids flexed investments for community partners to help young people and families navigate remote learning, continue offering youth programming and expand access to mental health supports. Among the 2020 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for the Sustain the Gain allocation, the following were included:

* 3,584 young people participated in culturally responsive programs supporting leadership development, identity formation and healthy relationships, with 75 percent of young people actively engaging. In many instances, young people were part of co-creating curriculum, designing and facilitating workshops and elevating the voices of their peers.
* From September to December in 2020, 507 students were screened (through the SBIRT program[[25]](#footnote-25)) across six school districts conducting remote screening. Of these students, 231 engaged in a brief intervention and 75 were referred to services or resources.
* According to the report, among students who were provided with one or more referrals, 44 percent of referrals resulted in a successful connection to behavioral health or other type of service.
* 1,527 children and youth participated in high-quality Out-of-School Time opportunities, both virtually and in-person. 5,120 hours of virtual programming were provided. Out-of-School Time awardees distributed 736 technology devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots) to support youth in accessing Out
* Students made 4,122 visits to school-based health centers for primary care, behavioral health and preventive care. 979 people accessed services at school-based health centers.
* 540 young people enrolled in work-training education programs, a 9 percent increase over 2019 despite barriers due to the impact of COVID-19. Of those completing the program, 69 percent stayed in school, graduated
* 361 young people accessed behavioral health or other services offered at re-engagement sites across King County to help them maintain stability while they complete post-secondary education.
* 83 young people involved in the legal system participated in the Community Empowered Disposition Alternative and Resolution (CEDAR) program. The report notes that of those who have exited the program, 67 percent received a recommendation for a reduction in charges or case dismissal.
* 68 young people involved in the legal system accessed education and legal services through a partnership between Best Starts, the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office Truancy Team, Neighborhood House, Reconnect to Opportunity and Youth Source.

Performance measurements data for the Sustain the Gain Allocation are provided in the report on pages 75-81.

Communities Matter Allocation Highlights ($9.9M investment for 2020). In 2020, Best Starts for Kids invested in culturally-rooted and place-based partnerships and organizations, building on community-driven policy and systems change under way. BSK also supported COVID-19 response efforts and Black-led organizing. Among the 2020 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for the Communities Matter allocation, the following were included:

* Rainier Valley coalition partner, Healthy Othello Safer Through Environmental Design (HOSTED), supported 16 youth to improve community connections and health by sponsoring 22 summer community projects and workshops to engage in vegetable gardening, beautification and artistic expression, all while following COVID-19 protocols.
* Additionally, partners at Rainier Beach Action Coalition’s Corner Greeters and Farm Stand programs figured out how to continue operating safely, providing 6,000 pounds of free, fresh produce and activating and engaging with spaces and people in the Rainier Beach community.
* Front & Centered created a fellowship program and peer learning cohort to support BIPOC entrepreneurs in developing innovative enterprises that reflect a regenerative, community-focused approach to economic growth. The inaugural cohort included five Frontline Community Fellows and four New Economy Learning Peers. The group participated in a seven-session peer-learning curriculum and connected to government and philanthropic leaders, along with 90 other individuals, at the first Move The Money session.
* COO’s COVID-19 Tech Fund provided essential infrastructure support for organizations to navigate the COVID-19 environment. 25 organizations were funded a total of $125,775 to purchase technology and resources essential for organizational operations and deliverables, while supporting community members and staff in practicing social distancing and working safely.

Performance measurements data for the Communities Matter Allocation are provided in the report on page 82.

Homelessness Prevention (YFHPI) Highlights ($3.8M investment for 2020). In 2020, Best Starts for Kids combined case management with financial assistance to prevent homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the 2020 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for this allocation, the following were included:

* The YFHPI served 3,310 individuals in 2020. This support included assisting with housing searches, connecting to employment resources, language and cultural support, working directly with resolving conflicts with landlords, and budgeting and housing stability planning.

Performance measurements data for the Homelessness Prevention (YFHPI) Allocation are provided in the report on page 83.

**INVITED**

* Marcy Miller, Policy Manager, Public Health – Seattle & King County

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposed Motion 2021-0214 (including attachment)

1. Ordinance 18088 and Motion 14673. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Values are total levy amounts and have not been adjusted for undercollections. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Enacted on May 17, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Beginning in 2019 (consistent with the BSK Implementation Plan), YFHPI reporting has been included in the BSK annual report, rather than as a standalone report. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Passed January 23, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Passed March 27, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Passed April 17, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Passed July 5, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Passed September 17, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Passed December 8, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ordinance 18409, Section 95, Proviso P1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Enacted on September 14, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. As indicated in the 2020 BSK Annual Report, $7,858,252 have been invested in the Innovation Fund, including current (through 2020) and previous years expenditures and amounts awarded in contracts. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The King County Auditor's Office's 2017/2018 biennial work plan included an audit of the BSK EPMP. That audit was conducted in 2017 and generated recommendations for the Executive, including: 1) develop performance measures that adhere to the results-based accountability model for all programs receiving BSK funding; 2) develop, document, and apply a plan with detailed criteria for selecting the appropriate types of evaluation for different programs; 3) modify the existing criteria to identify programs for program evaluations to include the applicability of existing evidence; 4) document and communicate data quality control procedures for the current data system; 5) update quality control practices for the new data collection system, including service provider training, before the new system is implemented; 6) require that all individuals conducting BSK evaluation identify potential conflicts of interest and document their mitigation strategies as early as possible in order to increase transparency; and 7) put procedures in place to protect the independence of the evaluation team. The most recent follow-up report from the Auditor’s Office, released on August 2, 2021, indicates that all the recommendations have been fully implemented. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Motion 15769 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Headline indicators are aspirational, long-term measures that quantify BSK’s overarching results. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Per the BSK Implementation Plan, programs will have performance metrics to track progress toward implementation milestones including: *How much was done?* *How well was it done?* and *Is anyone better off?* [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Also referred to as the Communities of Opportunity Governance Group. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. BSK Implementation Plan (Attachment A to Ordinance 18373), page 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. BSK Implementation Plan (Attachment A to Ordinance 18373), page 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. BSK Implementation Plan (Attachment A to Ordinance 18373), page 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. BSK Open Data Portal. URL: <https://data.kingcounty.gov/Health-Wellness/Best-Starts-for-Kids-Funding-Award-Database/2be9-wu5b/data>. Last accessed on July 6, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Total includes evaluation and programming. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Performance measurements data for the TA/CB allocation are provided in the report on page 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. SBIRT is an acronym for school-based screening, brief intervention and referral to services. As noted in the report, SBIRT shifted to remote screening and follow-up as schools closed in the spring of 2020. As further noted, SBIRT reached more than 8,000 students in the 2019–2020 school year. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)