



Legislation Text

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Clerk 08/13/2009

A MOTION establishing policy guidance for the funding of human services in the King County 2010 Budget Ordinance.

WHEREAS, the 2009 law, justice, health and human services committee is charged with developing recommendations on policy direction for 2010 Budget Ordinance, and

WHEREAS, human services in King County are defined as a group of wide ranging programs designed to assist the county's most vulnerable citizens with services for older adults, youths and families at risk for involvement in the justice system, the unemployed, domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, treatment and counseling for the chemically dependent and mentally ill, veterans, developmentally disabled individuals and the homeless, and

WHEREAS, King County provides human services for two reasons:

1. To fulfill regional, contractual obligations with the state of Washington for the planning and provision of publicly funded services, such as mental health, substance abuse, veterans and developmental disabilities; and
2. To help the county meet state mandates for the provision of public health and criminal justice services in a more efficient and cost-effective manner, and

WHEREAS, over eighty-five percent of the county's human services are contracted to be performed by community-based agencies that provide direct services in communities across the county, and

WHEREAS, in 2007, the county funded human services that were provided to over five hundred eighty-three thousand families and individuals, and

WHEREAS, the King County 2009 Budget Ordinance reduced general fund support to human service programs that decrease use of the jail. Despite the county's adopted policy of providing human service programs that lessen jail use, these programs were considered "nonmandatory" in that they are not required by state law, and received disproportionate levels of reduction as compared to mandatory justice programs, and

WHEREAS, in the 2003 Budget Ordinance, one million eight hundred thousand dollars of general fund revenue previously supporting human service programs at the Cedar Hills Alcohol Treatment Center and the North Rehabilitation Facility were reallocated to support mental health and substance abuse treatment programs for individuals involved in the criminal justice system, and

WHEREAS, budget ordinances after 2003 do not specifically dedicate general fund revenues from the Cedar Hills Alcohol Treatment Center and the North Rehabilitation Facility to mental health and substance abuse treatment programs for individuals involved in the criminal justice system and the amount becomes part of the overall general fund support for human service programs, and

WHEREAS, in the 2004 Budget Ordinance, seven million dollars in rent from the Cedar Hills Solid Waste Facility was paid to the general fund and was allocated to support human service programs, and

WHEREAS, budget ordinances after 2004 do not dedicate general fund support for human services resulting from the Cedar Hills rent payments, and

WHEREAS, the county's general fund allocation to human service programs in the county have been systematically reduced since 2006, and

WHEREAS, the 2009 Budget Ordinance eliminated nearly thirty-five percent of the general fund support for human service programs, and

WHEREAS, the 2009 Budget Ordinance eliminated nearly fifty-three percent the general fund support from the department of community and human services, community services operating division, and

WHEREAS, the county continues to face historic general fund deficit again in 2010, and

WHEREAS, most human service programs are not mandated by state law and are at risk of having

general fund support eliminated in 2010, and

WHEREAS, the King County Framework Policies for Human Services outlines the county's role in human services stating that "King County has a leadership role in coordinating regional housing and human services systems. In concert with federal, state, and local governments, service providers, non-profit organizations, foundations, faith communities, businesses, schools, the criminal justice system and others. King County will seek to build and sustain a coordinated regional human services system to provide services, supports, safety and opportunity to those most in need," and

WHEREAS the continued loss of general fund support of the county's human service programs would further erode the county's thirty-seven-year progress with, and role in, providing regional human services with its regional partners, and

WHEREAS, the demand for human service programs are rising as King County residents are experiencing record breaking unemployment rates, bankruptcies and foreclosures;

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

A. The county shall dedicate at least one percent of the county's general fund to support human service programs in 2010.

B. The county shall prioritize human service programs that help the county fulfill its mandated criminal justice duties more effectively and efficiently. These programs shall be subject to a level of reduction no greater than the level of reduction applied to the budgets of the county's mandated criminal programs.

C. The county shall work with cities and other partners to provide regional human service systems such as housing, homelessness, domestic violence, sexual assault survivor services, youth and family services and crisis referral services.