



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-0389, **Version:** 1

Clerk 09/10/2019

A MOTION requesting the executive to develop, implement and report on a pilot Homeward Bound program specifically and exclusively to provide bus tickets to the homeless for family reunification purposes.

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") defines homeless as including individuals and families who: (1) are living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements; or (2) have a primary residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a vehicle, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport or camping ground, and

WHEREAS, HUD requires all Continuums of Care, which is "All Home" in Seattle and King County, to conduct a Point-in-Time Count of their unsheltered population on a biennial basis and Seattle and King County is among several communities that conducts an annual count, and

WHEREAS, according to the Point-in-Time Count, a total of 11,199 individuals were experiencing homelessness in Seattle and King County on January 25, 2019, and

WHEREAS, there are a number of jurisdictions in the United States that have extensive Homeward Bound programs, including San Francisco, New York City, West Palm Beach and Portland, and these types of programs invest a range of tens of thousands of dollars to a million dollars to help reunify homeless individuals with their families, and

WHEREAS, in 2018, King County invested approximately \$37,000 in family reunification strategies, including transportation costs, and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the San Francisco Examiner reported that from 2005-2016, San Francisco provided nearly 10,000 homeless residents Greyhound bus tickets to cities across the United States under its bus ticket home program, and

WHEREAS, in that same article, one homeless individual praised the bus ticket home program in San Francisco as a fabulous program, stating that some people may have something terrible happen or no way to make money, and they may need to be around family or someone who can support them, and

WHEREAS, a 2016 performance audit for the city of San Francisco showed approximately 800 people accessing their bus ticket home program each year from 2012-2015, and that the bus ticket home program, which is also known as Homeward Bound, combined with other strategies resulted in a significant decline of chronically homeless individuals and families in San Francisco in 2015;

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

A. The council requests that the executive develop and implement a pilot Homeward Bound program specifically and exclusively to provide bus tickets to the homeless for family reunification. The program shall set aside, at a minimum, \$1,000,000 annually for the purpose of purchasing bus tickets for homeless individuals who would like to return home. In addition, the program shall prohibit the purchase of bus tickets for any destination in King County and in any county adjacent to King County.

B. The council requests that the executive report to the council on the results of the program and that the report:

1. Identify the pilot period during which the program was implemented;
2. Identify the types of funding that the department of community and human services can use to continue and expand the program in future years, including potential partnerships with external funders;
3. Identify any additional outreach needs for the program, as well as any supportive programming for these individuals; and
4. Provide any additional recommendations for the long-term implementation of an extensive

Homeward Bound program, including goals around the number of one-way tickets to be provided to the homeless and evaluation of the effectiveness of such a program.

C. The council requests that the executive transmit the report on the program no later than one year from the date of passage of this motion. The report should be filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the health, housing and human services committee, or its successor.