



Legislation Text

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A MOTION setting the county's priorities for allocation of the coronavirus relief fund and certain other CARES Act funding remaining after reimbursing the county for its necessary expenditures to prevent, to prepare for, to respond to and incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHEREAS, the significant progression of COVID-19 in Washington state and the public safety preventative measures, including social distancing and the Governor's Stay Home - Stay Healthy order are causing devastating economic effects in Washington and has led to the highest levels of unemployment in recorded history in King County and Washington state, and

WHEREAS, state and local government revenues have plummeted in an extremely short amount of time, and

WHEREAS, the pandemic has hit for-profit and nonprofit organizations alike in a devastating manner, and

WHEREAS, the federal government adopted the CARES Act and, among other relief, established the coronavirus relief fund to cover costs that state and local governments incur in their responses to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19, and

WHEREAS, the coronavirus relief fund cannot be used for government revenue replacement, and

WHEREAS, the coronavirus relief fund must be spent on necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible expenditures must not be accounted for in the most recently approved budget and must be incurred during the period of March 1, 2020 through

December 31, 2020, and

WHEREAS, the council has identified expenditures that should receive preference when the executive is considering proposals for allocation of the coronavirus relief fund;

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

A. The county reasserts its highest priority for allocation of the coronavirus relief fund to direct COVID-19 response through significant investment in public health and making sure the county's public health response is ready for a potential second wave between now and the end of 2020.

B. The county will use a principled approach in the allocation of remaining coronavirus relief funds and certain other CARES Act funding after investing in public health, intended to focus on immediate relief before long term recovery, foremost meeting its residents' basic needs, especially for food and housing stability, ensuring uninterrupted delivery of its core essential services, while still exercising responsible spending and accountability measures, and ensuring future needs can be met, creating immediate solutions that are sufficiently thoughtful to ensure lasting impacts and using an equity and social justice lens to ensure help is provided where it is needed most.

C. The county should prioritize a narrow range of services to make sure that the limited federal relief dollars have the most effective recovery impact and avoid duplication of services or having several agencies providing the same service and, where possible, the county should utilize existing programs that can quickly get relief funding out into the community.

D. The county's priorities for allocation of the coronavirus relief fund and certain other CARES Act funding above and beyond amounts needed for its direct emergency response should be allocated accordingly, and are:

1. Food security and access. These services may take the form of food banks, organizations providing meals, such as senior centers, community centers and schools, or organizations connecting farmers with the market and those most in need of food, while ensuring culturally appropriate food options remain available.

The county should also consider expanding existing programs such as King Conservation District's Harvest against Hunger, Harvest Share, and also should examine the acquisition of centralized cold storage and refrigeration trucks for movement of produce;

2. Housing stability and homelessness services. These services will keep people connected to housing, keep them in their homes and provide protections for those unable to pay their housing and facing eviction or foreclosure. The county should also prioritize increasing the number of twenty-four hour, seven days-a-week non-congregate sheltering, continue efforts aimed at shelter deintensification and be mindful of the unique needs faced by the immigrant, refugee and undocumented populations;

3. Economic recovery. After meeting the immediate needs of residents, a priority should be given to assisting key institutions, such as private business, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations and cities and the unincorporated area. Attention should also be paid to services connecting and preparing individuals who have been economically impacted by the public health emergency for the job market, with technical support for language access and communication, digital access and child care; and

4. Mental health, behavioral health, safety and security programs. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency have hit vulnerable populations particularly hard. Services providing support for those suffering from domestic or intimate partner abuse, substance abuse and child abuse should be prioritized.

E. The council requests that the county executive prioritize the principles, services and programs in sections A. through D. of this motion in the proposals allocating resources resulting from the coronavirus relief fund and certain other available CARES Act funding.