The King County Alliance for Human Services
Budget Recommendations for 2026-2027

For over 20 years, The King County Alliance for Human Services (KCAHS) has worked with the King County Executive and Council to build a strong human services sector that can take care of all King County residents.

King County's human services system has continued to face, which will significantly worsen in 2025, unprecedented demands and the impact of growing costs of living. This was before federal reductions began to roll out.

The 2026-2027 biennium is expected to bring financial challenges, the likes of which we have never seen. The human services providers that make up our sector are entering the 2026 budget year strained in capacity. As a result, we need to strengthen organizations to maintain the talent and capacity to meet the increasing needs of our community in the coming years.

To maintain a strong human services sector for all King County residents, we must make and maintain strategic investments now. Many service providers are expecting an influx of people needing their services due to federal budget cuts and policy changes. If our communities are to weather cuts to SNAP and Medicaid, crime victim services, and more, the existing services system needs additional funding to expand capacity. We call on the King County Executive and Council to meet the following needs for the 2026-2027 biennial budget:

1. **Sustain human services capacity in King County**
    a. Adjust all human services contracts for inflation in alignment with King County DCHS policy, and maintain consistency with the City of Seattle's inflation adjustment requirement.
    b. Improve staff retention and provider stability by increasing all human services contracts by 5% for wage equity to align with recommendations in the the VSHSL-funded 501 Commons "Putting People First" Study, 2023 University of Washington Wage Equity Study, and DCHS policy.
    c. Increase budget allowance for administrative costs from 10% to at least 15% and recognize federal indirect rates.
    d. Apply the proposed changes to all human services delivery contracts (including DCHS, MIDD, BSK, VSHSL, CCC, Health Through Housing, General Fund, etc.), beginning in January 2026.

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2. **Mitigate the impacts of federal and state budget reductions and policy changes on King County residents.**
    a. Ensure that people can still access housing, food, medical care, and other basic needs even when they lose access to federally or state-funded services and benefits (i.e., SNAP, Medicaid, Emergency Housing Vouchers, etc.).
    b. Identify where the human services sector will lose funding in the next 18 months due to state and federal budget cuts as well as policy changes, and create a plan to sustain those services.
    c. Create a long-term plan to strengthen capacity in the human services sector to meet the needs of more King County residents.

The King County Executive and Council should leverage all available revenue options, including the 0.1% Criminal Justice Sales Tax, to accomplish the priorities above.

Thank you for your work to ensure that all King County residents have what's required to meet their basic needs. We look forward to working with you throughout this budget season to craft a budget that ensures as many people as possible have a safe place to sleep, food to eat, care when they are sick, and everything they need to live and thrive.

Sincerely,

Anthony Austin & Nela Cumming

KCAHS Co-Chairs

On behalf of the King County Alliance for Human Services

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