



King County

LOCAL PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, despite this region's prosperity, homelessness in King County is in a state of crisis. In 2015 alone, nearly 10,000 people are experiencing homelessness on any given day, up from about 8,000 people in 2005. Nearly 40 percent (3,772) of these homeless persons are unsheltered. On average, people are homeless for more than 100 days, and they return to homelessness after being housed about 15 percent of the time; and

WHEREAS, racial disparities among the population of homeless persons are stark, with Native Americans seven times more likely, and African Americans five times more likely, to experience homelessness than whites; and

WHEREAS, in King County:

- 3,772 were sleeping outside in the elements during our annual January census, the One Night Count;
- 14,042 shelter beds and temporary permanent housing units now put a roof over heads each night;
- 2,919 people per month, including 500 children per month, are now reported by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services to become newly homeless in King County; and
- 1,440 children are currently homeless, including 940 children under 10 years old; and

WHEREAS, as we approach winter, those without homes are challenged even further to survive; and

WHEREAS, regional and national issues of housing affordability, income inequality, a diminishing state and federal safety net, and population growth have vastly exacerbated the problem. A recent national study showed that, in urban areas like Seattle, every \$100 a month increase in average rents raises the homeless population by 15 percent, and by 39 percent in suburban and rural areas. With rents skyrocketing locally in recent years, every year in King County about 35,000 people are estimated to become newly homeless; and

WHEREAS, King County and cities throughout the county have stepped up to provide shelter and support for people in crisis; and

WHEREAS, despite efforts to provide relief for persons who are homeless, and with our public and private partners jointly developing and endorsing a new four-year homelessness strategic plan for the county, called All Home, the problem persists. We have even more people on the streets than 10 years ago; and

WHEREAS, the experience of homelessness is traumatic and makes a person's other problems – like mental illness or substance abuse – worse; and

WHEREAS, the severity and magnitude of this emergency is beyond the response capability of local resources; and

WHEREAS, there is an emergency present that demands immediate preservation of public health, and extraordinary measures are required to protect the public peace, as well as the safety and welfare of individuals.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Dow Constantine, Executive of King County, do hereby proclaim:

SECTION 1

That it is hereby declared that there is an emergency due to homelessness affecting King County.

SECTION 2

King County will continue to work with all of the cities within King County on plans to address homelessness.

King County will take actions that support, and are within the framework, of the All Home Strategic Plan and its goals of making homelessness rare, and if it occurs, brief, and one-time only; reducing racial disparities; and engaging the full community in ending homelessness. King County's immediate actions will include:

- Securing at least 50 additional shelter beds in Seattle;
- Providing 20 new housing vouchers for those exiting Drug Court;
- Increasing incentives for landlords to rent to veterans;
- Acquiring mobile medical van for use with the City's multi-disciplinary outreach team;
- Increasing mental health services for youth and young adults;
- Increasing support for the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program;
- Adding capacity for evaluation, treatment and detoxification facilities in Seattle and South King County; and
- Evaluating publicly-owned land and buildings for use as alternative housing, such as tiny homes.

The Local Proclamation of Emergency includes these requests of the governments of Washington State and the United States:

Washington State

- Undertake those steps and issue those orders that the Governor deems necessary to assist the City of Seattle, King County and cities within, in combating this civil emergency;
- Allocate additional resources for mental health and substance use disorder treatment;
- Set Medicaid rates for inpatient treatment at an amount that is sufficient to provide effective treatment;
- Identify State-owned property to host authorized encampments, vehicle parking, emergency shelter, and housing;
- Allocate intervention and other resources to address the public health and safety crisis associated with unauthorized encampments on State property along I-5, I-90, and SR-99, including implementing physical changes to those areas to minimize ongoing and long-term public health and safety risks;
- Increase the amount and expand allowable support services in the Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG), including Housing and Essential Needs Program and stabilize funding for CHG;
- Restore the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) to pre-recession levels; and
- Authorize additional financing tools to expand affordable housing and ensure affordability and protections for tenants.

United States

- Increase funding for affordable housing, including capital and operating funding for permanent housing for the homeless and our most vulnerable extremely low-income residents, rental assistance and voucher programs;
- Increase funding for the interrelated system of homeless support services for all populations and address the funding gap created by the shift in priorities of McKinney funding toward housing and housing related services, including funding for mental and behavioral health, chemical dependency, employment and family support services in the HHS and DOL budgets;
- Extend the terms of the existing Moving to Work Program, which provides flexibility for the Seattle Housing Authority and the King County Housing Authority to design local services for housing and employment support for low-income families;
- Eliminate the Institutions for Mental Disease regulation limiting Medicaid reimbursement to facilities with more than 16 beds;
- Update 42 CFR Part 2 – Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Records to mirror HIPAA regulations and support care coordination and primary care integration;
- Approve Washington’s Medicaid Transformation Waiver request, which includes creating a supportive housing benefit that would allow the use of Medicaid funds to pay for support services delivered in permanent supportive housing; and
- Reengage with 10 cities, including Seattle, to implement the requests they submitted for waivers and regulatory flexibility under the 2012 “Dedicating Opportunities to End Homelessness” initiative, which was launched by the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

DATED this 2nd day of November, 2015



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

