



King County

# King County 2025 Legislative Priorities

## Secure Local Government Funding for Essential Services

King County faces a severe revenue deficit because the cost of county provided essential services and programs continues to grow, and the Legislature capped revenue growth from property taxes at 1 percent and limits other revenue options for counties. To make progress on these issues, we ask the Legislature to:

- Provide counties with sustainable revenue sources, ensuring they can perform the services that the State mandates and residents desire;
- Address inadequate funding support for County roads and bridges;
- Increase state funding for state mandated public defense costs.

## Dedicated support for Public Health Clinics

**A dedicated revenue stream for King County's public health clinics is required to support the health care services delivered to 80,000 residents across King County annually.** Public Health clinics provide crucial services to meet the healthcare needs of people historically underserved by the medical system, including Black, indigenous, and people of color, those who speak a primary language other than English, those experiencing homelessness, and those who are uninsured.

Public Health has been significantly underfunded since the Legislature enacted \$30 car tabs in 2001 as the MVET supported public health. While some replacement funds were allocated, those were cut in the 2008 Great Recession. Further, the Legislature's 2007 one percent limit on the growth of property tax further limits funding available for general government, including public health. FPHS funding in the last decade does not fund public health clinics.

## Behavioral Health: Strengthen Access to Care

Adequate state support is critical to provide for people in crisis, complementing direct local investments in crisis care and stronger care delivery. Too many people are going without the mental health and substance use/recovery care they need, which can lead to a cycle of hospitalization, homelessness, and interaction with the criminal-legal system. To reverse this inequitable and costly cycle, the State must take these key actions in 2025 to support behavioral health services:

- Fund minimum behavioral health Medicaid payments based on the state's own rate study;
- Provide funding for initial operations of new behavioral health facilities that provide crisis care, including investing in the success of the first-of-its-kind crisis facility in King County;
- Fully fund state-mandated services such as evaluation and treatment, the ITA court, and designated crisis responders;
- Expand access to medications for substance use disorder, addiction and overdose recovery care, and invest in behavioral health supports for people living in affordable and supportive housing.

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# King County 2025 Legislative Priorities

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## Bolster Public Safety and the Legal System

The public safety and legal systems are overburdened and under-resourced. The Legislature can help offset these problems by:

- Preventing gun violence, by requiring a permit to purchase firearms, allowing Medicaid funds to be used for violence intervention programs, and removing the preemption of local firearm policies;
- Funding diversion programs and alternatives to incarceration;
- Maintaining increased correction officer academy training classes;
- Providing additional fiscal and policy resources for the King County legal system to help address the increased unlawful detainer caseload;
- Increasing funding for programs that seek to end gender based violence and support survivors of crime.

## Housing and Homelessness

Housing and homelessness continue to be critical issues. We ask the Legislature to:

- Provide robust state operating and capital investments for affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, and emergency housing and shelters;
- Build on state investments and provide stronger and ongoing state support to stabilize and provide services to refugee and immigrant populations, including recently arrived migrants and asylum seekers;
- Adopt policies and invest in programs that encourage and preserve homeownership, and help address current and future housing needs;
- Build on investments in state and local government programs that move people out of encampments and into housing.

## Protect Our Climate and Environment

We must mitigate and prepare for the climate crisis and address the ongoing environmental decline. The Legislature can take two immediate steps to counteract these crises:

- Enact the Re-WRAP Act, enhancing and growing product stewardship programs to make products safer for people and the planet, from design to disposal;
- Reduce, mitigate, and eliminate PFAS and other forever chemical pollution;
- Recognize municipal solid waste as a source of renewable energy.

## Responsible Government

- Maintain investments in WSDOT infrastructure projects, complete the Triangle project, fund the roundabout on SR 203/Tolt Hill Road, and increase funding for public transit connected to water taxis and ferries;
- Provide funding for a public awareness campaign and increase funding for respite centers for human trafficking related to major tourism generating events;
- Increase the number of available enrollment slots for Apple Health;
- Increase reestablishment expense limit for entities displaced by public works projects;
- Allow lodging tax revenue to be used to maintain and grow the tourism related workforce.

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