

From: [Robert Wilson](#)
To: [KCC - Legislative Clerks \(Email Group\)](#)
Subject: RE: Public Comment In Support of VSHSL Renewal
Date: Monday, April 17, 2023 7:45:07 AM

I'm forwarding this on behalf of Kiionna Dickinson, who is Valley Cities Pathfinder for Veterans of Color.

Bob

The VSHL Veteran Pathfinder program has put me in a position to assist and support over 120 veterans within the community by helping them get connected to mental health services, housing, food assistance, financial support, and veteran specific services such as filing for benefits. Having pathfinders serve in roles that are intended to target outreach to connect with veterans that are disproportionately uninformed of their benefits, has been vital in ensuring veterans of color are informed on the benefits that they have available to them and assisted with accessing them. Pathfinders for veterans help to eliminate barriers to a population that would typically potentially have a difficult time requesting help or navigating systems due to military culture. As a veteran of color, myself, I can attest to the importance of this role being that once you are discharged from the military, there is little to know guidance on how to go about accessing resources or veteran benefits. This is especially difficult when you are coming from active duty service where all the thinking/decisions are made for you by your chain of command.

-Kionna Dickinson

From: Robert Wilson <rwilson@valleycities.org>
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 7:41 AM
To: kcccomitt@kingcounty.gov
Subject: Public Comment In Support of VSHSL Renewal

My name is Robert Wilson and I'm the manager of the Veterans Program at the nonprofit Valley Cities Behavioral Health Care with locations throughout King County. I have been working with veterans funded by the various iterations of this King County's Veterans Levy since 2014. I currently provide therapy services for 22 vets and family members under a subcontract that Valley Cities has with the Washington Department of Veteran Affairs. This service is vital as many of the veterans I work with prefer not to go to the VA for various reasons. Disability income often places veterans in a difficult situation as they are often ineligible for Medicaid services offered by community behavioral health care; yet don't feel like they have the income to afford to see a therapist in private practice. I have been able to work with veterans to help reduce symptoms of PTSD and help many get through potential suicide situations.

I also manage two VSHSL levy contracts, one for Path Finding Services for the underserved Veterans of Color, and for Housing Navigation. The Valley Cities Vet Team has worked continuously with King County on behalf of veterans since the first levy was approved in November 2005 positively

impacting at least 250 veterans and family members.

I am a 20-year Navy Retiree and the two people working as Pathfinder and Housing Navigator are both Army veterans. Providing services to veterans is more than a job for Kionna Dickinson, Sarah Faison and myself. We are very passionate about this work and this levy. I ask that we are allowed to continue the mission started back in 2005.

As a homeowner within King County, I support an increase of the VSHSL to 15 cents to keep up with inflation.

Bob

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