



LIVE UNITED



May 2, 2016

720 2nd Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104

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2015-2016**

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King County Councilmembers:

Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Kathy Lambert, Larry Gossett, Dave Upthegrove
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Kohl-Welles (Chair) and members of the King County Health, Housing and Human Services Committee:

I am writing in support of Proposed Motion No. 2016-0180, to be considered at your May 3, 2016 Health, Housing and Human Services Committee meeting. Unfortunately I had hoped to be at the table to make remarks or answer any questions, but am not able to attend.

The motion before you accepts the Executive's work plan to transfer the administration and management of the region's homeless management information system (HMIS) to King County from the City of Seattle. United Way of King County is a long-time funder of the HMIS, and United Way senior leadership has participated in various oversight committees tied to HMIS since its inception.

In my role as both Safe Harbors Steering Committee co-chair and member of the Coordinating Board and Executive Committee of All Home, I have closely tracked and advised on the transfer and workplan, starting with selection of a new vendor and the proposal to move HMIS administration to the County. I strongly supported the transfer of HMIS to the Department of Community and Human Services, as this structure reflects our new regional vision for a coordinated entry system for all populations, integrated into the HMIS. I'm pleased that the new system is up and running on schedule with few concerns or outstanding issues.

In addition to support for the motion, I want to extend kudos to all of the staff involved in vendor selection and, most important, the smooth transition from the old vendor to the new one. Under Josephine Wong's leadership, working closely with the new vendor Bitfocus, hundreds of users across a wide range of service providers now have access to a more effective, user-friendly HMIS. Josephine and her team, as well as staff from King County IT and the City of Seattle worked incredibly hard to minimize disruption to agencies, provide clear and transparent information throughout the transition, and hands-on support when agencies, funders or users had questions.

I look forward to greater access to information that will help all of us make data-driven funding and policy decisions to address homelessness, one of our region's toughest challenges. I also look forward to United Way continuing our partnership with King County on this and many other regional human services issues. Thank you for your consideration and I urge you to support Proposed Motion 2016-0180.

Sincerely,

Sara E. Levin
Vice President, Community Services

