

From: [Anthony Austin](#)
To: [KCC - Legislative Clerks \(Email Group\)](#)
Cc: [Laura Smith](#)
Subject: Written Public Comment to RPC about VSHSL Levy renewal
Date: Friday, April 28, 2023 10:25:35 AM
Attachments: [KCAHS letter to Regional Policy Committee.pdf](#)

Please distribute this letter to the members of the Regional Policy Committee in regards to VSHSL levy renewal.

In partnership,

Anthony L. Austin M.Ed
Executive Director
Southeast Youth & Family Services
3722 S. Hudson
Seattle, WA 98118
anthony.austin@seyfs.org
O:206-721-5542 ext 11
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Confidentiality Disclaimer:

The information in this email, including attachments, may be confidential and/or privileged and may contain confidential health and mental health information. This email is intended to be reviewed only by the individuals or organization named as addressee. If you have received this email in error please notify Southeast Youth and Family Services (SEYFS) immediately by returning the message to the sender and destroy all copies of this message and any attachments. Please note that any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of SEYFS. Confidential health and mental health information is protected by state and federal law, including, but not limited to, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and related regulations (i.e. 42 C.F.R. sec 2.1).

From: [Denise Rodriguez](#)
To: [KCC - Legislative Clerks \(Email Group\)](#)
Cc: [Denise Rodriguez](#)
Subject: Please Vote for VSHSL Funding for Assessor's Office Staffing
Date: Friday, April 28, 2023 11:51:26 AM

Dear Regional Policy Committee Members:

My name is Denise Rodriguez and I am the Executive Director of the Washington Homeownership Resource Center (WHRC). Our mission is to increase and preserve homeownership in Washington State. WHRC has operated the State's official Foreclosure Prevention Hotline since its creation by the Foreclosure Fairness Act in 2011. As such, we work directly with homeowners in distress, connecting them to housing counseling, legal aid, and other vetted resources including Property Tax Exemption for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities. On the latter program, we partner with the King County Assessor's Office.

I am requesting additional funding for Assessor's Office staffing be included in the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services levy renewal. The Senior Exemption Program is the number one tool for helping cash-strapped seniors age in place in the homes and communities where they've built their lives. Especially in areas with gentrification, the program is an important tool to prevent displacement. It is a popular program and was expanded by the State legislature this legislative session. While the exemption program is a state program, receiving, processing, and approving applications, as well as periodic eligibility review, falls to the Assessor's Office.

With the increased income limit this year, the number of applications to the program is expected to ***DOUBLE*** in 2024. The Assessor's Office needs adequate staffing to process these additional applications and current staffing does not meet that need. Over the past three years, the Assessor's Office has received an average of approximately 7500 applications per year or 625 per month. This volume was a dramatic increase over previous years and resulted from the increased income threshold in 2020 to \$58,423 from \$40,000 in 2019. This year's changes (HB 1355) increase the threshold for qualification to approximately \$72,000 in King County.

At existing staffing levels, this could result in very long wait times for seniors to receive a determination on their applications. Every senior who applies deserves timely response to their application. Additional staffing for the Assessor's Office is necessary to meet the customer service and housing needs of our area's seniors.

Thank you for your consideration.

Denise Rodriguez, Executive Director
Washington Homeownership Resource Center

she/her/hers | c: 206-992-2381 | w: www.homeownership-wa.org | fb: [WHRC](#)

We've moved! Effective November 01, 2022 our mailing address is 5101 14th Ave. NW, Suite 315, Seattle, WA 98107.

From: [Jackie Boschok](#)
To: [Upthegrove, Dave](#); [KCC - Legislative Clerks \(Email Group\)](#)
Subject: Budget Support for KC Senior Property Tax Exemption Program
Date: Thursday, April 27, 2023 9:05:10 PM

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

It's Jackie Boschok, President of the WA State Alliance for Retired Americans (WSARA). As a grassroots state-wide advocacy group, we frequently partner with AARP on issues of mutual interest. .

I am requesting additional funding for staffing the Senior Property Tax Exemption Program be included in the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services levy.

Currently we have thousands of older adults who are house rich but cash poor living in King County. They are living on social security and small pensions and making difficult budget choices especially as housing prices and property valuations rise. I have spoken to many older adults who would like to sell their home and buy something more affordable or accessible (no stairs and low maintenance) in their community but in most cases that type of housing does not exist so they remain in their homes. I have also heard of older adults selling their homes and moving to more affordable parts of the state but after a decade or more in those communities they find they lack the hospitals and transportation services they need as they age.

AARP and WSARA are taking a multiple pronged approach to housing. While we have both supported legislation to make more housing supply available, we also know that older adults want to Age In Place in their home and communities.

The [AARP Home and Community Survey](#) indicates 77% of those 50+ would like to stay in their current homes or communities for as long as possible. To be able to age in place, 34% of older respondents recognize they may need to make physical changes to their house, such as modifying a bathroom or installing ramps in their homes. A quarter of those surveyed anticipate putting an addition on their house or doing some other major renovation. The money they save on their property taxes could allow them to make those modifications and remain in the homes and communities where they want to be.

AARP has been working on the statewide Senior Property Tax Exemption for many years. We have also worked closely with King County on the development of improved application intake and processing. We provided AARP volunteers to field test the applications and provide feedback.

Based on the number of emails we receive, we know that this is a very popular program. According to the Assessor's Office data, there are currently 2800 senior and veteran exemptions applications pending in the queue. Over the past three years, the Assessor's Office has received an average of approximately 7500 applications per year or 625 per month. This volume was a dramatic increase over previous years, following the increased income threshold in 2020 to \$58,423 from \$40,000 in 2019.

This year AARP supported House Bill 1355, that will increase the threshold for qualification for a senior property tax exemption to approximately \$72,000 in King County. This change is projected to double the new applications in 2024. This estimate is based on the number of individuals over the age of 62 with incomes between \$58,000 and \$72,000 (17,647) and the assumption that homeownership rates increase at higher income levels.

You know that I also lead the Machinists 751 Retirement Club. Many of our members in past years, had incomes as Boeing retirees, with pensions and required minimum distributions from 401K savings, that put them above the maximum income allowed to qualify for any property tax relief programs. With the recent legislation designed to provide tax relief to more home owners, our Boeing retirees and so many others in King County deserve to have their applications processed in a timely manner, as they seek tax relief while on fixed incomes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jackie Boschok, WSARA President
206-890-1009

She/her

We acknowledge the people – past, present, and future – of the Dkhw'Duw'Absh, the Duwamish Tribe, the Muckleshoot Tribe, and other tribes on whose traditional lands we do our work.

<http://washington.retiredamericans.org>



From: [Jorge L. Barón](#)
To: [KCC - Legislative Clerks \(Email Group\)](#)
Subject: Comments for RPC Committee
Date: Friday, April 28, 2023 11:28:14 AM

Dear members of the Regional Policy Committee,

In advance of today's meeting of the committee, I wanted to reiterate our ask that you approve the proposed renewal of the Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services levy at the 12 cent rate set by the County Council's budget committee. As one last item of evidence before your vote this afternoon, I wanted to make sure you saw the email that went out yesterday to county stakeholders warning of substantial cuts in funding to programs funded through the general fund. As one of the programs that currently receives funding from the general fund budget, this email is an urgent reminder of the need to ensure the revenue is there to support human services programs in the coming years. While we hope that the county council will protect to the greatest degree possible the relatively small amount of funding that supports human services in the general fund, it is clear that this will be a difficult task, as outlined by the message below. We therefore urge you to ensure that the primary source of revenue to support human services throughout the county can provide an adequate level of resources.

We again urge you to support the 12 cent rate.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Jorge L. Barón
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Padilla Ocampo, Michael** <mpadillaocampo@kingcounty.gov>
Date: Thu, Apr 27, 2023 at 1:40 PM
Subject: Update on King County General Fund Shortfall – Community Input Opportunity
To: Padilla Ocampo, Michael <mpadillaocampo@kingcounty.gov>

Dear community partners,

I am emailing you with an important update on King County's General Fund Budget. I am also sharing a community survey opportunity that you can share out to your networks to help inform the county's next steps.

The Legislative session adjourned on Sunday without fixing the arbitrary and outdated 1% annual revenue growth limit for property taxes. Because property taxes are the largest source of revenue for King County's General Fund, the one percent cap remaining in place means the 2025-2026 General Fund is facing a \$100 million revenue shortfall. You can read more about this online: [King County asking for community input on budget cuts after state's failure to fix county's broken tax system - King County](#)

In the absence of additional revenue, we will not be able to maintain all of our existing

services and programs, and budget cuts will be necessary. The only way to make cuts as small as possible is to start as soon as possible.

The first round of program reductions will be part of the second omnibus supplemental appropriations ordinance that the Executive plans to transmit to the County Council in September of this year. This will provide time to phase in reductions starting in 2024, allowing programs to gradually be reduced and minimize disruptions to services.

Our options for making cuts are limited because most of the General Fund goes to programs mandated at the state or federal level, like jails, courts, prosecution, and public defense. Many general government functions – such as elections, property assessments, human resources, the Executive department, and County Council agencies – are functions that cannot be eliminated but will face budget reductions. The remainder of the programs – discretionary programs not mandated by state or federal law – will take a disproportionate share of the cuts, despite many of these programs being vital and highly valued by our residents. You can see a list of discretionary programs listed out in the survey linked below.

To help inform our decision making, King County is launching a community survey asking for public input on which discretionary programs should be prioritized. Many of the programs and services that could face cuts are vital and highly valued by county residents, so it is in the spirit of transparency that we seek input from the community.

The survey link will have additional details and will give respondents an opportunity to offer input on which discretionary programs they think should be prioritized so as to minimize funding reductions.

You can access the survey online at: [Budget Survey - PublicInput](#)

I know this is unwelcome news but through our ongoing collaboration and partnership, we will navigate this challenging period. Thank you for your continued partnership and for all the work you do in the community.

Best,

Michael

Michael Padilla Ocampo | He/Him

External Relations Associate

Office of King County Executive Dow Constantine

401 5th Avenue, Suite 800, Seattle, WA 98104

(206) 263-6987 Office

(206) 856-9879 Mobile

Visit www.kingcounty.gov/covid for updates on our response to the COVID-19 outbreak, or follow Public Health Seattle/King County on social media (@KCPubHealth)

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Jorge L. Barón (*he/him/his*) | Executive Director | [Northwest Immigrant Rights Project](#)
615 Second Ave., Suite 400, Seattle, WA 98104 | email: jorge@nwirp.org
Direct: (206) 957-8609 | Fax: (206) 587-4025 | www.nwirp.org

If you need assistance from Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, we encourage you to contact us by phone. If you are not already a client, click [here](#) for more information on how to reach us at the office closest to you.

Si necesita ayuda del proyecto para los derechos del inmigrante del noroeste, le recomendamos que se comuniquen con nosotros por teléfono. Si aún no es cliente, haga clic [aquí](#) para obtener más información sobre cómo comunicarse con nosotros en la oficina más cercana a usted.

From: [Pat Johnson](#)
To: [McDermott, Joe](#)
Cc: [KCC - Legislative Clerks \(Email Group\)](#)
Subject: Requesting Increased Budget Support for KC Senior Property Tax Exemption Program
Date: Thursday, April 27, 2023 2:06:48 PM

Dear Council Member McDermott,

My name is Pat Johnson and I am an Advocacy volunteer for AARP here in Washington state.

I am requesting additional funding for staffing the Senior Property Tax Exemption Program be included in the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services levy.

Currently thousands of older adults living in King County are house rich, but cash poor. They are living on social security and small pensions and making difficult budget choices, especially as housing prices and property valuations rise. I know older adults who would like to sell their home and buy something more affordable or accessible (no stairs and low maintenance) in their community, but in most cases that type of housing does not exist, so they remain in their homes. I also know of older adults selling their homes and moving to more affordable parts of the state. But after a decade or more in those communities, they often find they lack the hospitals and transportation services they need as they age.

AARP is taking a multiple pronged approach to housing. While we have supported legislation to make more housing supply available, the [AARP Home and Community Survey](#) indicates 77% of those 50+ would like to stay in their current homes or communities for as long as possible. To be able to age in place, 34% of older respondents recognize they may need to make physical changes to their house, such as modifying a bathroom or installing ramps in their homes. A quarter of those surveyed anticipate putting an addition on their house, or doing some other major renovation. The money they save on their property taxes could allow them to make those modifications and remain in the homes and communities.

AARP has been working on the statewide Senior Property Tax Exemption for many years. We have also worked closely with King County on the development of improved application intake and processing. We provided AARP volunteers to field test the applications and provide feedback.

Based on the number of emails we receive, we know that this is a very popular program. According to the Assessor's Office data, there are currently 2800 senior and veteran exemptions applications pending in the queue. Over the past three years, the Assessor's Office has received an average of approximately 7500 applications per year or 625 per month. This volume was a dramatic increase over previous years, following the increased income threshold in 2020 to \$58,423 from \$40,000 in 2019.

This year, AARP supported House Bill 1355 that will increase the threshold for qualification for a senior property tax exemption to approximately \$72,000 in King County. The change is projected to

double the new applications in 2024. This estimate is based on the number of individuals over the age of 62 with incomes between \$58,000 and \$72,000 (17,647) and the assumption that homeownership rates increase at higher income levels.

Thank you for consideration of this needed funding increase.

Sincerely,

Pat Johnson
AARP Member & 8th District Constituent
1331 Harbor Ave. SW #203
Seattle, WA 98116

From: [NUHSA Staff](#)
To: [KCC - Legislative Clerks \(Email Group\)](#)
Subject: Public Comment
Date: Friday, April 28, 2023 8:48:53 AM
Attachments: [Ltr. to RPC 4-27-23.pdf](#)

Good morning,

Please see the attached letter for the members of the Regional Policy Committee. If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 206-550-5626.

Thank you,

Silje

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Silje Sodal, MPH
Executive Director
NUHSA (North Urban Human Services Alliance)
P.O. Box. 60215
Shoreline, WA 98160

From: [zelda Foxall](#)
To: [Zahilay, Girmay](#)
Cc: [KCC - Legislative Clerks \(Email Group\)](#)
Subject: Budget Support for KC Senior Property Tax Exemption Program
Date: Thursday, April 27, 2023 1:52:55 PM

Dear King County Council Member Zahilay:

My name is Zelda Foxall and I am one of your constituents. First of all, I would like to thank you for all that you have done for us in your district. I have been very pleased to be represented by you.

I am an advocacy volunteer for AARP and a member of the Seattle Chapter. I am writing to request additional funding for staffing the Senior Property Tax Exemption Program to be included in the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services levy.

As you know, we have far too many older adults who are house rich but cash poor in King County. I fear for the ability of older adults to afford to stay in their homes every time we pass legislation that will increase their property taxes. And yet, because we don't have a state income tax, we don't have a lot of options for funding services that are desperately needed. And selling their homes is not always the answer--that can only bring on a host of other financial and social problems for them. And besides, as documented by the AARP Home and Community Survey, 77% of those 50 and over want to stay in their current homes or communities for as long as possible.

I am retired and live on a fixed income. So do many of my neighbors. And we all want to stay in our homes and neighborhoods for as long as possible. And as we age, our homes need certain modifications to make them accessible. These necessary modifications cost money. The money we save on our property taxes could help us afford these modifications to our home so that we can continue to live in our homes and communities.

AARP has been working on the statewide Senior Property Tax Exemption for many years. We have also worked closely with King County on the development of improved applications, intake and processing. We have also provided AARP volunteers to field test the applications and provide feedback.

This is a very popular program where currently 2800 senior and veteran exemptions applications are pending. Public interest has increased following the increased income threshold in 2020 to \$58,423 from \$40,000 in 2019.

This year, AARP supported HB 1355 which proposed increasing the threshold for qualification for a senior property tax exemption to approximately \$72,000 in King County.

This change is projected to double the new applications in 2024. This estimate is based on the number of individuals over the age of 62 with incomes between \$58,000 and \$72,000 (17,647) and the assumption that homeownership rates increase at higher income levels. We desperately need this increased funding.

Will you support this additional request for funding? Thank you for your consideration.

Zelda Foxall
AARP Advocacy Volunteer and Beacon Hill resident

"You can really change the world if you care enough."--Marian Wright Edelman