## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 6 | **Name:** | Miranda Leskinen |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2022-0222 | **Date:** | July 13, 2022 |

**SUBJECT**

A Motion to accept the 2021 Best Starts for Kids (BSK) annual report, the final annual report for the 2016-2021 BSK levy period.

**SUMMARY**

On June 1, 2022, the Executive transmitted to Council the sixth and final Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Annual Report for the 2016-2021 levy period. The report provides information on all BSK financial investments made in 2021, as well as BSK performance measures and outcomes. These annual reports are required by the 2016-2021 BSK Implementation Plan (approved by Ordinance 18373). Staff analysis has determined that the executive transmitted BSK Annual Report meets the requirements as outlined in Ordinance 18373.

Proposed Motion 2022-0222 would accept the 2021 BSK annual report, in accordance with Ordinance 18373.

**BACKGROUND**

**2016-2021 BSK Levy.** The Best Starts for Kids levy period that was approved by King County voters in November 2015 was a property tax levied at a rate of $0.14 per $1,000 of assessed valuation in 2016, with an increase of up to three percent for each of the five subsequent years of the levy—2017 through 2021.[[1]](#footnote-1) The most recent revenue forecast (as of March 2022) projects the levy generated a total of approximately $404.86 million in revenues over the six-year levy period. Table 1 shows the projected annual revenues in dollars.

**Table 1. BSK Annual Revenues in Dollars[[2]](#footnote-2)**

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| **Tax Year** | **Value** |
| 2016 | $59,455,206 |
| 2017 | $62,379,867 |
| 2018 | $65,652,750 |
| 2019 | $69,094,328 |
| 2020 | $72,426,449 |
| 2021 | $75,846,946 |
| **Total** | **$404,855,546** |

The BSK levy Ordinance (18088), directed that out of the first year's levy proceeds, $19 million be set aside to fund the Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI) as well as the amounts that were necessary to pay for election costs related to the levy. All remaining levy proceeds are to be disbursed as follows: 50 percent for the Invest Early Allocation (0-5 years old); 35 percent for the Sustain the Gain Allocation (5-24 years old); 10 percent for the Communities Matter Allocation (otherwise known as Communities of Opportunity); and 5 percent for the Outcomes-Focused and Data-Driven Allocation.

**2016-2021 BSK Implementation Plan.** The Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan, which outlines programming for the BSK initiative, approved by Ordinance 18373, provides requirements related to the transmittal timelines, stakeholder involvement and contents for all BSK Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports. The summary of each requirement and an evaluation of whether each requirement was included in the BSK 2021 Annual Report are detailed in the “Analysis” section below.

BSK Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative Implementation Plan.The BSK Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI) is intended to prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming homeless. The BSK YFHPI Implementation Plan, which outlines programming for BSK YFHPI, approved by Ordinance 18285[[3]](#footnote-3) and updated by Ordinance 18373, provides requirements related to transmittal timelines and contents of various reports related to BSK YFHPI. The following bullets summarize BSK YFHPI reporting to date[[4]](#footnote-4):

* Motion 14797[[5]](#footnote-5) accepted a report on the BSK YFHPI technical assistance funding contract;
* Motion 14828[[6]](#footnote-6) accepted a report on the BSK YFHPI lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer awareness training contract;
* Motion 14845[[7]](#footnote-7) accepted a report on the BSK YFHPI services funding contracts;
* Motion 14901[[8]](#footnote-8) accepted the first outcomes report on the BSK YFHPI; and
* Motion 15225[[9]](#footnote-9) accepted the 2017 outcomes report on the BSK YFHPI.
* Motion 15724[[10]](#footnote-10) accepted the 2018 outcomes and independent evaluation report on the BSK YFHPI.

**BSK Innovation Fund.** The 2017-2018 biennial budget ordinance provisoed[[11]](#footnote-11) $500,000 of the biennial appropriation for Best Starts for Kids pending the transmittal and Council approval of a proposed supplemental appropriation ordinance for expenditures of BSK levy proceeds to the Innovation Fund. As per the proviso, the supplemental appropriation ordinance was required to include clear, written specifications and investment processes for contemplated investment strategies. Ordinance 18569[[12]](#footnote-12) appropriated approximately $2.8 million of BSK levy funds for the Innovation Fund. [[13]](#footnote-13)

**BSK Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan.** The BSK Implementation Plan sets out the principles for the BSK evaluation, including requirements for the BSK Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan (EPMP) which outlines strategies, methods, and metrics to evaluate and measure the performance of the BSK initiative. The BSK EPMP was accepted by Motion 14979 on October 17, 2017. The accepted BSK EPMP did not contain any major divergences compared to the policy direction in the preliminary evaluation framework in the BSK Implementation Plan or in the YFHPI Implementation Plan. However, there were some key changes that were reflective of the initiative’s evolution as implementation roll-out continued.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**2022-2027 BSK Renewal Levy.** In April 2021, Council approved Ordinance 19267, which placed a BSK renewal levy proposition on the ballot. King County voters approved the renewal levy on August 3, 2021. In November 2021, Council approved Ordinance 19354, which adopted the BSK implementation plan for 2022-2027. Per Ordinance 19354, annual reports will continue to be provided to the Council on levy implementation throughout the renewal levy period. These reports will be due no later than July 15 each year from 2023 through 2028 and will reflect levy implementation for the prior calendar year.

**ANALYSIS**

The 2016-2021 BSK Implementation Plan outlines requirements related to the transmittal timelines, stakeholder involvement and contents of Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Annual Reports. The following subsections evaluate whether the 2021 BSK Annual Report is consistent with the requirements outlined in the BSK Implementation Plan.

**Transmittal Timeline.** The 2016-2021 BSK Implementation Plan requires that BSK Annual Reports be transmitted by June 1 of each year. The Executive transmitted the 2021 BSK Annual Report on June 1, 2022, thereby meeting this requirement.

**Content Requirements.** The 2016-2021 implementation plan requires that BSK Annual Reports describe the programs funded and outcomes for the children, youth, families, and young adults served. Specifically, annual reports are to include:

* Progress toward meeting overall levy goals and strategies
* Headline indicator measurements[[15]](#footnote-15)
* Performance metrics[[16]](#footnote-16)
* Lessons learned
* Strategies for continuous improvement

The transmitted 2021 BSK Annual Report includes this information.

**Review by Advisory Boards.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires that the BSK Annual Reports be developed in consultation with the Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) and the Communities of Opportunity – BSK Advisory Board[[17]](#footnote-17) (COO-BSK Board) before transmittal and that each advisory board shall consult on and review the respective portion of annual reports on BSK programming over which they have been charged with oversight. According to the transmittal letter, the CYAB members received a draft copy of the report in April in 2022 and the final report reflects their input and feedback.

**Details on Communities of Opportunity (Communities Matter) Awards.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires BSK Annual Reports include a detailed chart with information on Communities of Opportunity (COO) awards to-date since the last reporting cycle. The Implementation Plan also requires the BSK Annual Report to provide a breakdown of awards by multiple sources and the amounts contributed by each source if public funds (i.e., BSK levy funds) are blended with other fund sources for Communities of Opportunity awards.[[18]](#footnote-18) Moreover, denotations that each public fund award was not awarded to undertake a prohibited body of work is also required. As noted in the 2021 annual report, COO did not make any new awards in 2021 (the last set of awards can be seen on pages 88-98 of the 2020 annual report).

**BSK Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan Updates.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires that updates to the BSK EPMP be reported as part of annual reports[[19]](#footnote-19). Relatedly, the BSK Implementation Plan also requires headline indicators be measured and reported annually as part of the annual report[[20]](#footnote-20). In 2021, Best Starts for Kids did not recommend any revisions to the BSK Performance Measurement and Evaluation Plan, or any changes to the implementation plan based on evaluation and data. That said, the transmittal letter indicates limited changes to performance measures occurred as programs responded to feedback from participants or as COVID-19 impacted programming and data collection (with the overarching goals and intended results remaining the same). The report summarizes the measurement refinements (pages 45-48). As further indicated, all BSK strategies from 2020 continued in 2021, and no new strategies were added to the levy in 2021.

**BSK 2021 Annual Report Highlights.** The following sub-sections provide highlights from the 2021 BSK Annual Report. In sum, the report notes that, in 2021, Best Starts invested $111.5 million[[21]](#footnote-21) in 569 programs delivering impact through strategies that reached around 381,000 children, parents, caregivers and community members in King County. Additionally, the report indicates that BSK provided approximately 10,285 hours of technical assistance and capacity building leveraged by communities in 2021.[[22]](#footnote-22) An aggregate summary of participants served by the initiative in 2021, including demographic information, is provided on page 8 of the report. Similar summaries by strategy area are also provided throughout the report.

Invest Early Allocation Highlights ($52.8M expenditure for 2021). In 2021, the report indicates Best Starts for Kids supported community partners in meeting basic needs, connecting families to services, and caring for the well-being of young children and their families. Among the 2021 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for the Invest Early allocation, the following were included:

* The Help Me Grow King County Partnership Network supported 1,346 parents/caregivers and 2,227 children (93 percent of children served were BIPOC).
* Thirteen community-based organizations served 5,349 children and their families through the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program, which supports families whose children have developmental delays and disabilities, focusing on children up to age three.
* Ten community-designed home-based programs served 1,032 caregivers and reached 998 children through 9,987 home visits.
* 11,502 pregnant people and infants received pregnancy and parenting support – the report notes that the option of video and phone visits increased accessibility and helped alleviate isolation caused by the pandemic.

Performance measurements data for the Invest Early Allocation are provided in the report on pages 60-71.

Sustain the Gain Allocation Highlights ($38.0M expenditure for 2021). In 2021, the report indicates Best Starts for Kids flexed investments for community partners to help young people and families navigate remote learning, continue offering youth programming and expand access to mental health supports. Among the 2021 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for the Sustain the Gain allocation, the following were included:

* 2,102 children and youth participated in high-quality Out-of-School Time opportunities, a 38 percent increase in participation from 2020, and 7,608 hours of virtual programming were provided.
* Students made 4,735 visits to school-based health centers (SBHCs) for primary care, behavioral health and preventive care.
* New community partnerships developed during the 2021 school year providing various opportunities to expanding resources to the SBHC communities – for instance, a relationship between an SBHC, an optical company and a local community-based organization helped provide eyeglasses to youth lacking vision insurance.
* 540 young people enrolled in work-training education programs – of those completing the program, 74 percent stayed in school, graduated or enrolled in higher education.

Performance measurements data for the Sustain the Gain Allocation are provided in the report on pages 72-77.

Communities Matter Allocation Highlights ($11.9M expenditure for 2021). In 2021, the report indicates Best Starts for Kids invested in culturally rooted and place-based partnerships and organizations, building on community-driven policy and systems change under way. BSK also supported COVID-19 response efforts and Black-led organizing. Among the 2021 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for the Communities Matter allocation, the following were included:

* (re: Place-Based and Cultural Community Partnerships) – 112 community members participated in sustainable food systems trainings with Comunidad Latina de Vashon (CLV) including discussions of cooperative business models as supportive models for food security. CLV also implemented three pop-up markets attended by over 400 people with over 40 community members participating as vendors and providing support and planning.
* (re: Systems and Policy Change) – Open Doors for Multicultural Families (ODMF) graduated two parent leadership cohorts who received over 75 hours of ongoing training, mentoring and support from ODMF staff to participate in advocacy and community events for language access, civic engagement and disability justice.
* (re: Learning Community) – Collaborations from the COVID-19 Data & Storytelling cohort project produced new data, findings and recommendations on the impacts of the pandemic within many communities – the report notes the project’s work impacted Black, Indigenous, immigrant and undocumented communities and the systemic changes needed to affect inequitable and unjust outcomes shaped by racism and marginalization. Highlighted project outcomes are described on page 37 of the annual report.

Performance measurements data for the Communities Matter Allocation are provided in the report on page 78.

Homelessness Prevention (YFHPI) Highlights ($3.5M expenditure for 2021). In 2021, the report indicates Best Starts for Kids rapidly responded to changing housing needs of families navigating lost incomes and abilities to work by innovating case management services to provide seamless supports to households in need. Among the 2021 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for this allocation, the following were included:

* The YFHPI served 3,202 individuals in 2021 through supports including assisting with housing searches, connecting to employment resources, language and cultural support, working directly to resolve conflicts with landlords, and budgeting and housing stability planning.
* 94 percent of clients who’ve exited the program did not need homelessness services within the next year.

Performance measurements data for the Homelessness Prevention (YFHPI) Allocation are provided in the report on page 79.

**INVITED**

* Sheila Ater Capestany, Division Director, Children, Youth and Young Adults, and Strategic Advisor for Children and Youth, King County Department of Community and Human Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposed Motion 2022-0222
   1. 2021 BSK Annual Report
2. Transmittal Letter

1. Ordinance 18088 and Motion 14673. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Values are total levy amounts and have not been adjusted for undercollections. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Enacted on May 17, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Beginning in 2019 (consistent with the BSK Implementation Plan), YFHPI reporting has been included in the BSK annual report, rather than as a standalone report. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Passed January 23, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Passed March 27, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Passed April 17, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Passed July 5, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Passed September 17, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Passed December 8, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ordinance 18409, Section 95, Proviso P1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Enacted on September 14, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. As indicated in the 2021 BSK Annual Report, $7,264,725 have been invested in the Innovation Fund, including current (through 2021) and previous years expenditures and amounts awarded in contracts. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The King County Auditor's Office's 2017/2018 biennial work plan included an audit of the BSK EPMP. That audit was conducted in 2017 and generated recommendations for the Executive, including: 1) develop performance measures that adhere to the results-based accountability model for all programs receiving BSK funding; 2) develop, document, and apply a plan with detailed criteria for selecting the appropriate types of evaluation for different programs; 3) modify the existing criteria to identify programs for program evaluations to include the applicability of existing evidence; 4) document and communicate data quality control procedures for the current data system; 5) update quality control practices for the new data collection system, including service provider training, before the new system is implemented; 6) require that all individuals conducting BSK evaluation identify potential conflicts of interest and document their mitigation strategies as early as possible in order to increase transparency; and 7) put procedures in place to protect the independence of the evaluation team. A follow-up report from the Auditor’s Office, released on August 2, 2021, indicates that all the recommendations have been fully implemented. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Headline indicators are aspirational, long-term measures that quantify BSK’s overarching results. The 2021 annual report notes that these population-level data are currently accessible online but were not available in time to be included in the transmitted report. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Per the BSK Implementation Plan, programs will have performance metrics to track progress toward implementation milestones including: *How much was done?* *How well was it done?* and *Is anyone better off?* [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Also referred to as the Communities of Opportunity Governance Group. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. BSK Implementation Plan (Attachment A to Ordinance 18373), page 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. BSK Implementation Plan (Attachment A to Ordinance 18373), page 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. BSK Implementation Plan (Attachment A to Ordinance 18373), page 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Total includes evaluation and programming. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Performance measurements data for the TA/CB allocation are provided in the report on page 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)