## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 31 | **Name:** | Tillery Williams |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2019-0239 | **Date:** | December 2, 2020 |

**SUBJECT**

Best Starts for Kids 2018 Annual Report, “Communities building impact”, transmitted in accordance with Attachment A to Ordinance 18373[[1]](#footnote-2) (Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan).

**SUMMARY**

On May 29th,2019, the Executive transmitted to Council Proposed Motion 2019-0239, which would accept the 2018 Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Annual Report. The report provides information on all BSK financial investments made in 2018, as well as BSK performance measures and outcomes. These annual Reports are required by the BSK Implementation Plan (approved by Ordinance 18373). Staff analysis has determined that the executive transmitted BSK Annual Report meets the requirements as outlined in the BSK Implementation Plan.

Proposed Motion 2019-0239 was a non-mandatory dual referral to the Regional Policy Committee (RPC) and the Community, Health and Housing Services Committee (CJHHS). The item was heard at the February 12, 2020 RPC meeting, and was voted out with a Do Pass recommendation.

**BACKGROUND**

**BSK Levy.** The Best Starts for Kids (BSK) levy that was approved by King County voters in November 2015 is a property tax that will be 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.[[2]](#footnote-3) The levy is anticipated to generate a total of approximately $404.5 million in revenues over the six-year levy period, based on the most recent revenue forecast[[3]](#footnote-4).

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 year olds); 35 percent for the Sustain the Gain Allocation (5-24 year olds); 10 percent for the Communities Matter Allocation (otherwise known as Communities of Opportunity); and 5 percent for the Outcomes-Focused and Data-Driven Allocation.

**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 2018 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[[4]](#footnote-5) 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:

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

**BSK Innovation Fund.** The 2017-2018 biennial budget ordinance provisoed[[10]](#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[[11]](#footnote-12) appropriated approximately $2.8 million of BSK levy funds for the Innovation Fund.

**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.[[12]](#footnote-13)

**ANALYSIS**

The BSK Implementation Plan outlines requirements related to the transmittal timelines, stakeholder involvement and contents of Best Starts for Kids Annual Reports. The following subsections evaluate whether the 2018 BSK Annual Report is consistent with the requirements outlined in the BSK Implementation Plan.

**Transmittal Timeline.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires that BSK Annual Reports be transmitted by June 1 of each year from 2018 through 2022. The 2018 BSK Annual Report met this requirement.

**Content Requirements.** The BSK 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[[13]](#footnote-14)
* Performance metrics[[14]](#footnote-15)
* Lessons learned
* Strategies for continuous improvement

The transmitted BSK Annual Report includes this information.

The BSK Implementation Plan also requires that on June 1, 2019, both a Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative Outcomes Report and a Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative Independent Evaluation Report be transmitted with the 2018 BSK Annual Report. Both reports were transmitted as required.

**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[[15]](#footnote-16) (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. As stated in the Executive’s transmittal letter to Proposed Motion 2019-0239:

*“A draft copy of the 2018 Best Starts for Kids Annual Report was distributed to the Children and Youth Advisory Board and Communities of Opportunity Advisory Board members. Representatives from each board reviewed the respective portion of the report over which they have oversight, and input and feedback was incorporated into the final report”*.

**Details on Communities of Opportunity Awards.** The BSK Implementation Plan requires BSK Annual Reports include a detailed chart with information on all Communities of Opportunity awards to-date since the last reporting cycle. Page 29 of the 2018 BSK Annual Report summarizes Communities of Opportunity investments for the reporting cycle. Additionally, pages 36 through 40 of the report expound on the $5.3 million in 2018 investments.

The BSK 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. In addition, denotations that each public fund award was not awarded to undertake a prohibited body of work is also required. This is denoted in the transmitted 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[[16]](#footnote-17). Relatedly, the BSK Implementation Plan also requires headline indicators be measured and reported annually as part of the annual report[[17]](#footnote-18). The transmitted report includes the required information. In 2018, Best Starts for Kids did not recommend any revisions to the BSK Performance Measurement and Evaluation Plan, or changes to the plan or programs based on evaluation and data, nor were any new strategies established in the past year. According to the report, no substantive changes in the performance measure targets were made in 2018.

As indicated in the 2018 report, BSK met with all funded partners to identify performance measures and conducted data analyses with many partners. In the report, investments are categorized as ‘laying the groundwork’, ‘building momentum’ and/or ‘delivering impact’, which the report describes is a reflection of the young life and complexity of the project.

**BSK Annual Report Highlights.** The following sub-sections provide highlights from the 2018 BSK Annual Report. A comprehensive list of BSK investments, which is searchable by council district, is also available online.[[18]](#footnote-19)

Invest Early Allocation Highlights. In 2018, “Investing Early” expended $22.9 million to support 139 new and continuing programs. Among the 2018 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for this BSK Levy allocation, the following were included:

* More than 67,000 people accessed critical health services through BSK funded Health Services Programs. Managed by Public Health - Seattle & King County, these programs play a foundational role in BSK strategies for prenatal to age five — and support healthy outcomes at all ages.
* 94 percent of hepatitis B-positive pregnant people in the Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program enrolled before giving birth, compared with 52 percent in 2017 (roughly an 81 percent increase). Furthermore, 100 percent of the babies enrolled in the Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program who were tested in 2017/2018 were negative. The program helps people with hepatitis B protect their newborns from infection by coordinating medical care immediately after birth.
* Support for Infant and Toddlers served 5,157 children and their families, an increase of more than 10 percent from 2017.
* BSK invested $6.7 million in home-based services programs, and more than 1,500 children and families were paired with home visitors who provided trusted, in-home support.
* The families of more than 16,700 children accessed basic necessities, including diapers, clothes, and fresh fruits and vegetables.
* 10,483 people participated in Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups, an increase of more than 26 percent from 2017.
* Child Care Health Consultation reached 518 child care providers, both at formal child care centers and at informal sites where friends, families, and neighbors are the caregivers.
* In 2018, BSK awarded support to 28 home-based service providers and 10 community-based providers to build their skills in program development and implementation.
* BSK trained 460 providers — representing 15 different languages and 10 different roles (doulas, home visitors, child care providers, and more) — to administer the gold standard screening for developmental progress.

Performance measurements data for the Invest Early Allocation are provided in the report on pages 42 through 50.

Sustain the Gain Allocation Highlights. In 2018, “Sustaining the gain” invested $20.9 million to support 255 new and continuing programs. Among the 2018 achievements noted in the BSK Annual Report for this BSK Levy allocation, the following were included:

* 3,873 youth engaged in programs offered by 32 youth-serving organizations funded by BSK that focus on leadership, development and healthy relationships.
* More than 130 schools collaborated with community partners to provide students with safe, supportive, respectful, and engaging environments that foster success both in school and at home. Additionally, 32 awards were made to schools, school districts, and community based organizations working in schools to support and strengthen trauma-informed and restorative practices.
* Under the Healthy and Safe Environments program, more than 120,000 youth and family members were served across all nine King County districts. BSK invested $1.4 million towards this strategy in 2018. As stated in the report, Healthy and Safe Environments works with community partners to create environments where children, youth, and families have access to healthy food and physical activity, where they are supported in avoiding substance abuse, and where their home is both physically and emotionally safe and secure.
* In 2017, 56 schools in 13 school districts received awards to develop plans to implement Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Services (SBIRT), which is a tool that screens for mental health and substance use. As stated in the report, 41 schools began providing services in 2018.
* Students in Bellevue, Renton and Vashon school districts made 5,732 visits to school-based health centers, which offer confidential medical and mental health services.
* 896 young people enrolled in Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline programs. BSK invested $4 million towards this strategy and supported 18 community partners in 2018.

Performance measurements data for Sustain the Gain Allocation are provided in the report on pages 51 through 55.

Communities of Opportunity Highlights.[[19]](#footnote-20) Communities of Opportunity invested $5.3 million in 2018 and engaged with approximately 200 community partners and held over 200 capacity-building, community and workforce development events. Additionally, in 2018, the report highlights that the number of placed-based and cultural partnerships tripled[[20]](#footnote-21), and approximately 50 organizations collaboratively engaged to advance policy and systems change. A summary list of COO awards and activities, organized by COO strategy area, is provided on pages 36 through 40 of the report.

The report further highlights that 46 organizations collaboratively engaged in a baseline evaluation of COO in 2018.[[21]](#footnote-22) [[22]](#footnote-23) A complete summary of baseline evaluation findings, including population-level metrics (headline indicators) and partner-level findings, is available online at <https://www.coopartnerships.org/impact>. Performance measurements data for COO in 2018 are also provided in the transmitted report on pages 58 through 60.

Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI) Highlights. The YFHPI invested $3.1 million in 2018 and engaged with 25 community partners. In 2018, the YFHPI assisted more than 5,700 people – including 1,571 families and 352 unaccompanied youth (ages 18 to 24).[[23]](#footnote-24) According to the transmitted materials, more than 60 percent of persons served were persons of color, consistent with data in the HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) that show people of color are at disproportionate risk of experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, more than half of persons served by the YFHPI in 2018 were children under the age of 18. Performance measurements data for the YFHPI are provided in the annual report on page 56.

Among the achievements noted in the transmitted materials for this BSK Levy allocation, the following were included:

* 94% of clients serviced stayed in housing and did not enter the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS).
* 21% of households resolved their housing crisis through case management and other services.
* Average household assistance to households receiving assistance in 2018 was approximately $1,900.

As further highlighted, YFHPI staff met with community consultants in fall 2018 to assemble a team to learn why homelessness continues to disproportionately impact black and African American households at a disproportionate rate, and to develop better interventions to assist those households. Additional details and updates are to be included in the 2019 BSK Annual Report.

Additionally, the transmitted materials note that the United Way of King County reached out to the YFHPI to provide prevention services at the UWKC Family Resource Exchange (FRE). The YFHPI has, as of the writing of the report, collaborated in four FRE events, and the county has been engaging with other funders to look at other ways all needs in homelessness prevention (beyond the YFHPI’s target populations of youth and families) could be available at future FRE events. Consequently, the report indicates that such funders have established a Homelessness Prevention and Shallow Rent Subsidy Leadership Team that meets monthly and is working to create a prevention system to meet the needs of the majority of households for whom homelessness could be avoided. Further details and updates are to be included in the 2019 BSK Annual Report.

**YFHPI Independent Evaluation Report.** Per the BSK Implementation Plan, the transmitted materials include a report on an independent evaluation (evaluation report) of the YFHPI. Using a randomized-control trial (RCT), the evaluation report explains that this evaluation design will allow testing of the hypothesis that the case management aspect of the YFHPI program is key to preventing homelessness and promoting long-term stability (compared to financial assistance alone). The county joined with the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) on the evaluation’s design.[[24]](#footnote-25)

As described in the evaluation report, the evaluation design entails two study groups: one group receiving case management plus access to flexible funds (standard YFHPI services) and another group receiving flexible assistance with minimal case management to verify financial need and process funding. Enrollment into the randomized-control trial (RCT) began in May 2018 and, according to the report, was on track to conclude with 600 participants at the end of October 2019, with data to be collected for 12 months before the final analysis begins.

It is important to note that participation in the RCT is not required to receive YFHPI services. Additional details regarding evaluation design, RCT enrollment process and study population at baseline are provided on pages 22 through 24 of the evaluation report. According to the report, all YFHPI case managers have participated in at least one in-person training provided by the research team and have been provided with extensive guides to reference during the study enrollment process.

The report notes that LEO will be measuring the extent to which clients who have access to case management will have lower usage of homelessness services as well as better economic, health, criminal justice and other stability-related outcomes (subject to obtaining data access permission from DSHS, the state Institutional Review Board and applicable agencies). Important to note, the study will measure the average differences between those enrolled in the two interventions but will not analyze or publish individual results. In other words, the study will only analyze and publish outcomes in aggregate. Table 3 on page 25 of the report shows data being collected on the financial assistance and case management services provided to both groups.

This study, as highlighted in the report, will be the first to compare financial assistance to a program that combines financial assistance with a comprehensive case management element, and will also be the largest randomized homelessness prevention evaluation to date. As noted in the report, there have been few rigorous studies on preventing homelessness for families at imminent risk of homelessness.

In terms of next steps for the evaluation, the report indicates that the YFHPI and research team will continue to support case managers with training and technical assistance as study enrollment continues, and the research team will continue this year to work with the Research and Data Analysis Division of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services to obtain data access permission from the Washington State Institutional Review Board (IRB) and agencies holding administrative records on behavioral health, criminal justice, healthcare, employment, public benefit and child welfare outcomes. In sum, the report states that work will continue in 2019 toward achieving full enrollment and proceeding with the independent evaluation. As further stated, the study will look at outcomes at 6, 12 and 24 months after study enrollment, and a final report at the conclusion of the study will include all outcomes through 24 months of follow-up.

**INVITED:**

* Sheila 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 2019-0239
   1. Attachment A: Best Starts for Kids 2018 Annual Report
2. Best Starts for Kids YFHPI 2018 Outcomes and Independent Evaluation Report
3. Transmittal Letter

1. Enacted on September 19, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Ordinance 18088 and Motion 14673. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. August 2020 King County Economic and Revenue Forecast, adopted by the Forecast Council on August 25th, 2020 (KCFC 2020-05) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Enacted on May 17, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Passed January 23, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Passed March 27, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Passed April 17, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Passed July 5, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Passed September 17, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Ordinance 18409, Section 95, Proviso P1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Enacted on September 14, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. 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 four recommendations for the Executive: 1) develop measures that adhere to the results-based accountability model for all programs; 2) develop detailed criteria for selecting the appropriate types of evaluation for different programs; 3) document data quality procedures for the current data system and the future system; and 4) develop and document procedures for the evaluation team, management, and the Executive to protect findings. The Auditor's Office presented their final report to the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee on Nov. 28, 2017 and to the Health, Housing and Human Services Committee on Dec. 5, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Headline indicators are aspirational, long-term measures that quantify BSK’s overarching results. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. 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-15)
15. Also referred to as the Communities of Opportunity Governance Group. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. BSK Implementation Plan (Attachment A to Ordinance 18373), page 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. BSK Implementation Plan (Attachment A to Ordinance 18373), page 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. BSK Awards Made: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/initiatives/best-starts-for-kids/programs/awards.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Communities of Opportunity (COO) launched in 2014 through a public-private approach initiated by King County and the Seattle Foundation to address inequities in the county in health, social, racial, housing and economic outcomes by focusing on places, learning community, and policies and systems changes. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Best Starts for Kids Blog, “Communities of Opportunity expands investments to increase civic engagement and strengthen connection”, March 28, 2018: <https://beststartsblog.com/2018/03/28/communities-of-opportunity-expands-investments-to-increase-civic-engagement-and-strengthen-connections/> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Communities of Opportunity launched a baseline evaluation in 2018 to, in part, assess progress on performance measures, conducted by a multidisciplinary evaluation team working closely with community partners. Additionally, an Evaluation Advisory Group was created to advise COO throughout the baseline evaluation process. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. According to Executive staff, the baseline evaluation, completed in 2018, was funded by the Seattle Foundation, with on-going evaluation activities to be funded by BSK (with in-kind support from the Seattle Foundation). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. The most recent Count Us In 2019 data show a 52 percent decrease (compared to 2018 data) in the number of unaccompanied youth under 18 experiencing homelessness, and a 28 percent decrease in the number of youth and young adults ages 18 to 24. [2019 Seattle/King County Count Us In Report: <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Updated-7.11-King-County-Report.pdf>]. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. The LEO is a collaborative research center in the Department of Economics at the University of Notre Dame. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)