

Regional Planning and Funding Initiatives

Eastside Human Services Forum

Background

The Eastside Human Services Forum was created in 2001, with a founding Executive Board selected in early 2002. There are currently 14 member organizations and 9 organizations or individuals who are Friends of the Forum. The Board of Directors is composed of high level leaders from member groups including local and tribal governments, school districts, hospital/health care organizations, and multi-service providers such as United Way and Eastside Human Services Alliance. The City of Bellevue is currently represented on the Board of Directors by Deputy Mayor Phil Noble, who also chairs the Board. Staff from the City's Human Services Division serve on the Forum Work Group.

Mission

The mission of Eastside Human Services Forum is to foster strong public and private partnerships to ensure a stable network of health and human services for the benefit of all East King County residents. This is accomplished through efforts to:

- create partnerships and efficiencies;
- advocate to protect Eastside interests;
- help inform decision makers (including funders, policy makers, and the public) about issues of importance;
- strengthen the funding base for human services.

Major Accomplishments in 2004 -2005

- *Education:* Sponsored Human Services 101 and 102 educational events for decision makers from government, hospital districts, and school districts; prepared videos of the events which were shown on public access television, including King County Civic TV and Bellevue TV.
- *Publications:* Included *Myths and Facts, Facts and Findings* (2nd edition), reprinted *What Works* (2003); these were distributed broadly to

decisionmakers and providers. Also published *Eastside Story: The Changing Face of Need in East King County* for the first time in 2005.

- *Advocacy:* Provided input to the King County Task Force on Regional Human Services; participated in King County Alliance for Human Services in efforts to develop long-term stable funding for community health and human services; conducted an electronic candidates forum for all contested Eastside state government seats to learn candidates' views on human services; monitored actions by the King County Regional Policy Committee (RPC) and the new Healthy Families and Communities Task Force.
- *Sponsorship:* Served as fiscal sponsor for Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition (ERIC) to facilitate publication of a multi-lingual access guide called *Helpful Connections for You, Your Family, Your Neighborhood*; served as fiscal sponsor for Families and Children Early Support (FACES) East grant to host early childhood parenting seminars in three Eastside cities; co-sponsored FACES East legislative breakfast on early childhood issues.

King County Regional Policy Committee (RPC)

Background

The King County Regional Policy Committee reviews and recommends regional policies and plans, other than transit and water quality plans, that are within the subject matter area approved through a work program for the committee. Beginning in 2002, the RPC established a process involving cities, the county, and human services providers to evaluate and prioritize human services policy directions.

Progress to Date on RPC Human Services Workplan

In 2002, the RPC provided input to the County

Council on human services funding for 2003 which was used by the King County Council to approve a 15% reduction in health and human services funding, rather than the 50% cut proposed by the County Executive. In addition, a Regional Human Services List for a countywide partnership was developed and funding levels for suburban cities, City of Seattle, and King County were identified. The RPC also identified transitional issues that needed to be addressed before long-term planning can occur, including accountability concerns and adoption of a joint legislative strategy related to state funding.

The RPC's major task of reviewing and analyzing possible long-term funding solutions for regional human services, as well as determining a governance structure, was delayed in 2003 by several other activities which had an impact on potential long-term funding solutions. These included actions by the State Legislature related to revenue tools such as giving local authority to increase sales and property taxes, the passage of the special levy for King County Parks, and the completion of the King County Budget Advisory Task Force Report.

For the 2004 King County budget, the County Executive proposed and the County Council approved changes to institute new business practices in the King County Solid Waste system. Included in these changes was charging Solid Waste \$7 million per year in rental fees for use of the Cedar Hill landfill and dedicating the funds to human services programs previously funded with County General Fund (CX) dollars. For the most part, the County held human services funding harmless for 2004 and 2005.

In February 2004, at the urging of the countywide coalition of agency providers, the County Executive announced the formation of the King County Task Force on Regional Human Services. The Task Force built on the work of the RPC to define and discuss priorities for scarce human services resources. Since the Task Force worked on completing the RPC task on long-term funding and governance solutions, the RPC shifted its attention

to the other regional human services primarily funded by the state and federal governments. Specifically, consultants were hired to analyze how federal and state dollars for human services flow into King County and are distributed. An interim report was presented to the RPC in July 2005 and described the framework and potential uses of a newly created database of federal and state resources for health and human services flowing into King County. In 2004, these federal and state funds totaled \$300.5 million. It is anticipated that this new database could become a powerful policy and program planning and development tool for both the RPC and its government constituencies in the next phase of the RPC's workplan on health and human services.

In May 2005, the RPC also approved a resolution requesting a subcommittee to draft legislation for the County Council that included the following:

- a ballot measure for November 2005 that proposed to increase the property tax to provide additional services to veterans and their families;
- the property tax increase or levy should be at a rate of 4.1 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value for a period not less than seven years.

In September 2005, the King County Council approved modified legislation which included the following:

- Broadened the scope of the ballot measure to include some regional health and human services in addition to services for veterans, military personnel and their families;
- Increased the property tax levy to 5 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value for a period of six years; to be divided equally between the two groups;
- Established two county citizen oversight boards to oversee the funds generated by the levy.

This ballot measure, King County Proposition 1, was submitted to voters at the November 8, 2005, general election. The measure was approved.

King County Task Force on Regional Human Services and Healthy Families and Communities Task Force

Mission and Task Force Recommendations

As noted above, King County Executive Ron Sims appointed the King County Task Force on Regional Human Services in early 2004. The mission of the Task Force was to “examine the current *Regional Health and Human Services* system and provide practical and strategic recommendations for stabilizing, improving and maintaining the regional human services system for the future.” The Task Force completed its work in August 2004. The major finding was that the region’s current health and human services system is unable to meet the basic health and human services needs of King County’s residents, particularly as the population and needs have grown. They noted there are three interlocking components required to transform the current response into a more effective regional system:

- *Communicate need:* There is not a common understanding of the continuum of human services or their impact on all citizens; substantial public education is needed regarding the importance of these services to the health and safety of families and the community.
- *Build system:* The region’s current system lacks a coherent long-term strategic framework, integrated systems planning, and the ability to identify and promote the most effective service models; a new infrastructure is needed for more integrated planning and oversight involving key stakeholders on both the regional and local level.
- *Dedicate revenue:* Current regional services are inadequately funded to meet the basic needs of our communities and sources of regional revenues are declining; a dedicated revenue source is needed.

The Task Force also set forth recommendations for future, current, and interim action. One of the recommendations for current action stated that King County and “other jurisdictions should also maintain their current level of funding for human services in the *Regional Services to be Provided through a Countywide partnership* list of services.” Another relevant recommendation was “King County, Public Health-Seattle & King County, City of Seattle, United

Way and the suburban cities should collaborate to reduce multiple contracts with the same agency and to establish standard nomenclature for data elements, service definitions and outcomes to be measured.”

Implementation of Task Force Recommendations

The Task Force’s major recommendation for interim action was for the King County Executive to convene an interim body by the end of 2004 to initiate work on a 12-19 month implementation plan. It was envisioned that this interim group would be representative of key stakeholders, including government, business, faith-based organizations, United Way/foundations, human services providers, and community members.

In March 2005, the County Executive began recruitment for the Interim Group, and an initial meeting of elected officials from the Regional Policy Committee and City of Bellevue was held. King County also hired a staff person to support the interim group in April 2005. The Interim Group was re-named the Healthy Families and Communities Task Force and began meeting in late July 2005 with monthly meetings scheduled through mid-April 2006. The Task Force is focused on: a) determining the financing need for regional human services in King County; b) finding a new dedicated revenue source to fill this need; and c) developing a countywide public education campaign to generate support for human services throughout the various communities in King County. Deputy Mayor Phil Noble represents Bellevue on this new Task Force. City staff participate in the staff group to assist the Regional Policy Committee in their human services workplan and also provide support to the work of the Healthy Families and Communities Task Force.

Other Regional Planning and Collaboration Efforts – Countywide and East King County

In an effort to carry out the City’s roles as a planner and facilitator in human services, Human Services Division staff represent Bellevue on a number of regional collaborative efforts including some specifically focusing on East King County. In addition to the Eastside Human Services Forum

and the King County Regional Policy Committee, examples of major collaborations are as follows:

Regional Collaboration Efforts (Countywide):

- *King County Alliance for Human Services* – countywide coalition of agencies focused on finding stable, adequate and dedicated long-term funding for community health and human services.
- *Committee to End Homelessness* - Made up of representatives from nonprofit organizations, business, local government, homeless advocacy groups, and the faith community, the Committee developed the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County. This plan will end homelessness, not merely manage it, through prevention, by creating permanent housing, and by providing supportive services to help those in need prepare for and maintain long-term housing.
- *Communities Count* – Tracking social and health indicators in King County.
- *Refugee Planning Committee* – Coordination of services for refugees in King County.
- *Aging and Disabilities Services, Seattle-King County* – Coordination and funding of programs serving these populations.
- *Housing Rehabilitation Program Networking Group* – Sharing information on policies and procedures from similar programs in three counties.
- *Outcomes Alignment Group* (City of Seattle, King County, United Way of King County, and City of Bellevue) – Developing a common approach to measuring and reporting human services program outcomes and client demographics.
- *SOAR, helping kids reach for the sky* – SOAR is a partnership of business and community leaders, grant makers, non-profit organizations, schools, governments, parents and faith-based groups in Seattle and King County that works to create alignment between systems, sectors, organizations, providers and practice to ensure children succeed in school and in life. The initiative is housed at United Way of King County.
- *United Way Children, Youth, and Families Impact Council* – One of seven impact councils responsible for investing United Way Community

Safety Net Funds and assessing community needs.

- *King County Funders Alliance for Children and Youth* – Alliance partners work together to develop a common policy framework that aligns their goals and strategies, improves funding decisions, provides a more efficient delivery system, and ultimately, improves the health and education of the region's children and youth. The Alliance includes United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, King County, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, the City of Bellevue and suburban cities, and interested private philanthropic organizations.

Eastside Collaboration Efforts:

- *North/Eastside Human Services Funders Group* – Joint bidder's workshop and common application and reporting forms (nine cities in North and East King County); pooled funding for seven service contracts, with Bellevue as lead (seven cities).
- *Eastside Human Services Alliance* – Coalition of human services providers and others working together to build healthy communities.
- *Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition (ERIC)* – Coalition whose goal is to create a seamless network of culturally competent services for immigrants and refugees living on the Eastside of King County.
- *Eastside Religious Leaders Task Force* of the King County Alliance for Human Services – Faith community support of health and human services.
- *North & East King County Dental Coalition* – Coordinating access to dental care for low-income persons.
- *Providers Network* – Coordinating services for school-age children and youth and their families.
- *A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH)* – Coordinating planning and funding for affordable housing on the Eastside (13 Eastside cities and King County).
- *FACES (Families and Children Early Support) East* – Networking, advocacy, and education partnership promoting early child development and school readiness.