

# The Continuing Impact of the Economic Recession

## Why is this important?

The National Bureau of Economic Research, which monitors the economic cycle, announced in September 2010 that the recession that began in December 2007 ended in June 2009. This recession lasted 18 months, the longest since World War II. The Gross Domestic Product decreased 2.4 percent in 2009, in contrast to a growth of 0.4 percent in 2008. The unemployment rate rose to 9.3 percent in 2009, representing an increase of 3.5 percentage points from 2008.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the recession is officially over, it continues to take its toll on residents. Coming from all walks of life – not just the chronically poor – many find they are ill equipped to survive the financial and emotional effects of an extended recession. Some have never had to ask for assistance before and don't know where to turn for help or that help even exists. The challenge is that the demand for basic needs continues to increase while fewer financial resources are available to provide that help. However, the City of Bellevue and other groups in the community have continued to respond to the recession in creative and collaborative ways.

## What's Working?

Crises often present unique opportunities to improve the way services are provided. Some examples of innovations in partnerships and programs for human services developed in direct response to the economic recession that are continuing are as follows:

- **Human Services Providers:** A group of Eastside agencies providing emergency financial assistance came together in 2009 to improve the access to these services. Supported by a grant from United Way, the collaboration led to a shared intake form and online database system. In the second year of the grant, they pooled one year of anonymous client data from Salvation Army, Hopelink, Bellevue Life Spring, Holy Family St. Vincent de Paul, and Catholic Community Services and explored the concept of a pooled funding mechanism. The group continues to meet and new processes and principles under discussion include: a) single point of entry for clients; and b) instituting a financial cap for clients that applies across all agencies, etc.
- **Local Government:**
  - The cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Redmond, and Sammamish have continued the coordinated food drive in East King

"I am a single parent to my 3-year-old son. I have one part-time job in the kitchen for Renton School District and also just started this past week at a second part-time job; for Bellevue College. I need help with childcare costs. I have applied to DSHS and been put on their waitlist...it is 4-6 weeks long at a minimum to find out if I am approved or not.....I then called over a dozen social service agencies..and was told by each of them that the only childcare assistance is through DSHS....I was laid off and my unemployment has now ended. I have been seeking full-time work and have not been able to find anything as I do not have a college degree... It seems as though full time work will not be forthcoming for me for quite some time until the job market improves drastically and employs the glut of college-educated employees out there to create space in the job market for those of us without a degree. ...I have found two part-time jobs that will allow me to scrape by if I have someone to care for my son. If I do not, then I will have to quit both jobs and stay home to care for him, however, then I will not be able to pay bills like rent or to buy food, etc....Please Please Please do you have any suggestions, ideas, guidance, or help to offer? I am completely out of options."

*E-mail from single mother*

County begun in 2009, called the **Eastside Month of Concern for the Hungry**. In 2011, the drive began with the Mayor’s Day of Concern for the Hungry on September 24, and ran through October 22 to benefit area food banks and emergency feeding programs, e.g. Emergency Feeding Program, Hopelink, Renewal Food Bank, Issaquah Food Bank, the Mercer Island Food Pantry, and the ARAS Foundation.



➤ The **Eastside Timebank** was started through a collaboration of representatives from the cities of Kirkland, Bellevue, and Redmond; Hopelink; Kirkland Rotary; and representatives from the local faith community. First piloted in Kirkland in 2010 and expanded to Bellevue and Redmond in 2011, it is like an old-time community where neighbors help neighbors, connecting through high-tech tools. The time bank is based on the idea that each person has unique gifts, talents, and resources to share, and everyone has needs that others can fill. Every hour of service that a time bank member provides to someone in the community earns one “time dollar,” which can be exchanged for an hour of service from another member. All services are valued equally. An online database makes it easy to see what skills and services neighbors have to offer, and what services they need, so people can match their skills and needs with others in the community.<sup>2</sup>

- **Faith Communities:** Catholic Community Services received a small two-year grant

of \$40,000 per year from King County to try and stimulate more faith communities to get involved in providing more homeless services, e.g. shelter, interim housing, etc. This includes connecting them with other groups like Congregations for the Homeless.

- **Business:** While Microsoft Corporation cut back on cash giving slightly in 2010, it is training more out-of-work people through vouchers for free classes. The company also created a “leadership” designation for employees who volunteer regularly (before, only those who donated \$1,000 or more were recognized).<sup>3</sup> In February 2009, Microsoft began partnering with state governments to distribute vouchers for free computer training and IT certification. Called *Elevate America*, the program was designed to help address one of the worst economic downturns in U.S. history by improving the computer literacy of unemployed or under-skilled workers. Florida, New York and Washington were the first among 32 states to partner with Microsoft during the two-year program, which ended in August 2010. Microsoft said 880,000 free e-learning and certification exam vouchers were distributed in order to help the millions of workers who will require training in basic- or intermediate-level IT skills to adapt to the shifting economy. While Microsoft deemed the educational program a success, the training program also has shed light on how wide the digital divide has become in some of the nation’s communities.<sup>4</sup>

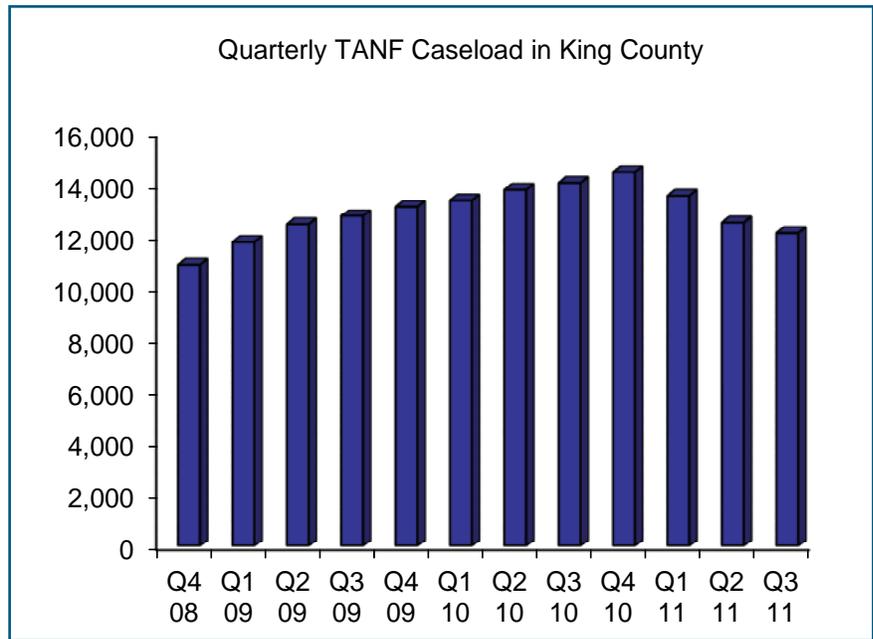
## Basic Needs Indicators in King County

United Way of King County continues to track Basic Needs indicators throughout King County as a barometer to determine how people are faring as these difficult times continue, particularly vulnerable populations. Key indicators include requests for assistance with basic needs, emergency food distribution, utility bills, worker layoffs, employment security data, unemployment benefit levels,

and foreclosure data.<sup>5</sup> Some examples of these indicators are as follows:

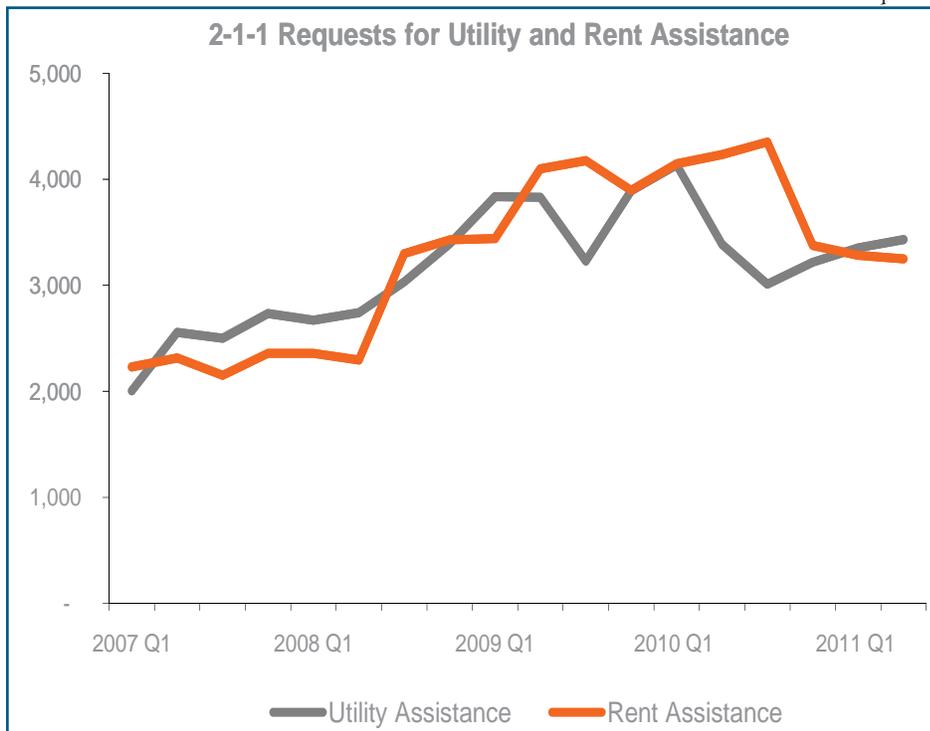
**1. Requests for Basic Needs Assistance**

- The number of requests for assistance with rent and utilities remains high.
- The largest number of calls come from South King County, followed by Seattle.
- As many as half those requesting rent assistance do not qualify for the Housing Stability Program because their income is insufficient when compared to their housing costs.
- The Housing Stability Program has not had sufficient resources to meet the needs of all those who are eligible.



Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

- Applications for financial assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) rose in the third quarter of 2010 and have declined in the next three quarters.



Source: Crisis Clinic

- Caseload is leveling off as new applications have declined.

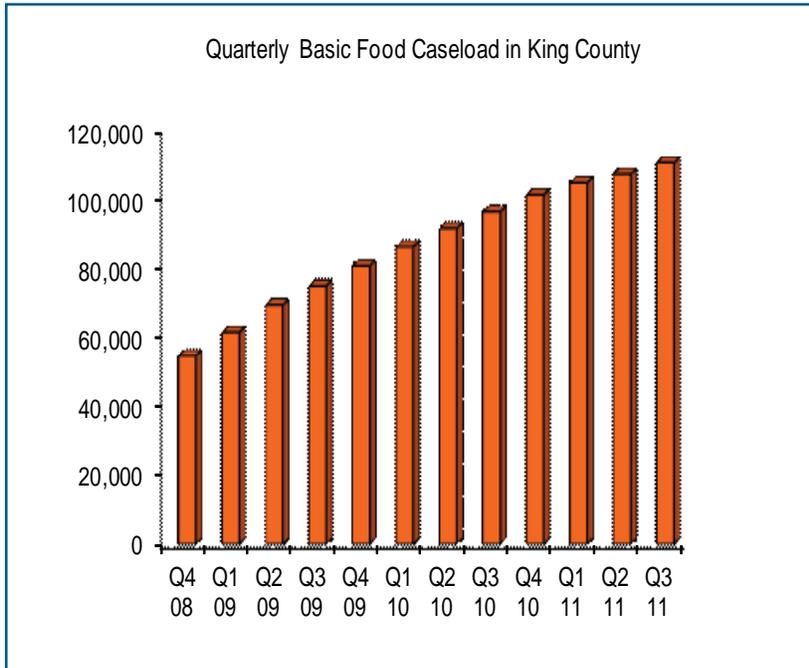
**2. Distribution of Emergency Food**

- Applications for the Basic Food Program (formerly food stamps) increased steadily in late 2008 and early 2009. Since 2009, the number of new applications each month has remained at high levels.
- Caseloads continued to grow steadily as people remain on food assistance longer.
- An average of 10,000 King County residents apply for food stamps each month.

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services provides financial, medical and food assistance.

- One in 20 King County residents are enrolled in the Basic Food program.

- The Basic Food caseload grew by nearly 150% between October 2007 and October 2011.



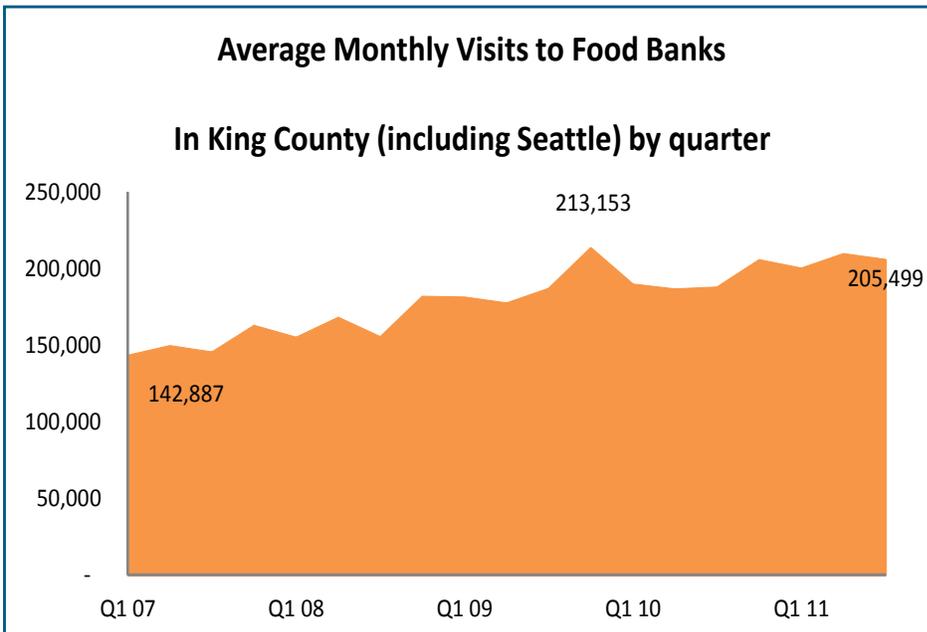
Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

2008 compared to the same months in 2007.

- Based on data from Seattle food banks, the largest increase in food bank beneficiaries was for children 0-2, followed by other children under 18.

### 3. Unemployment

- The unemployment rate rose sharply in February of 2009 and has remained near 8% or more since then.
- This is the longest period of sustained, high unemployment since monthly unemployment rates began to be measured in the early 1940's.
- The unemployment rate for November 2011 was 8.3% for King County and 8.3% for Washington State.
- The unemployment rate for African Americans in Washington State was 21% in 2010 and 17% for Latino workers.

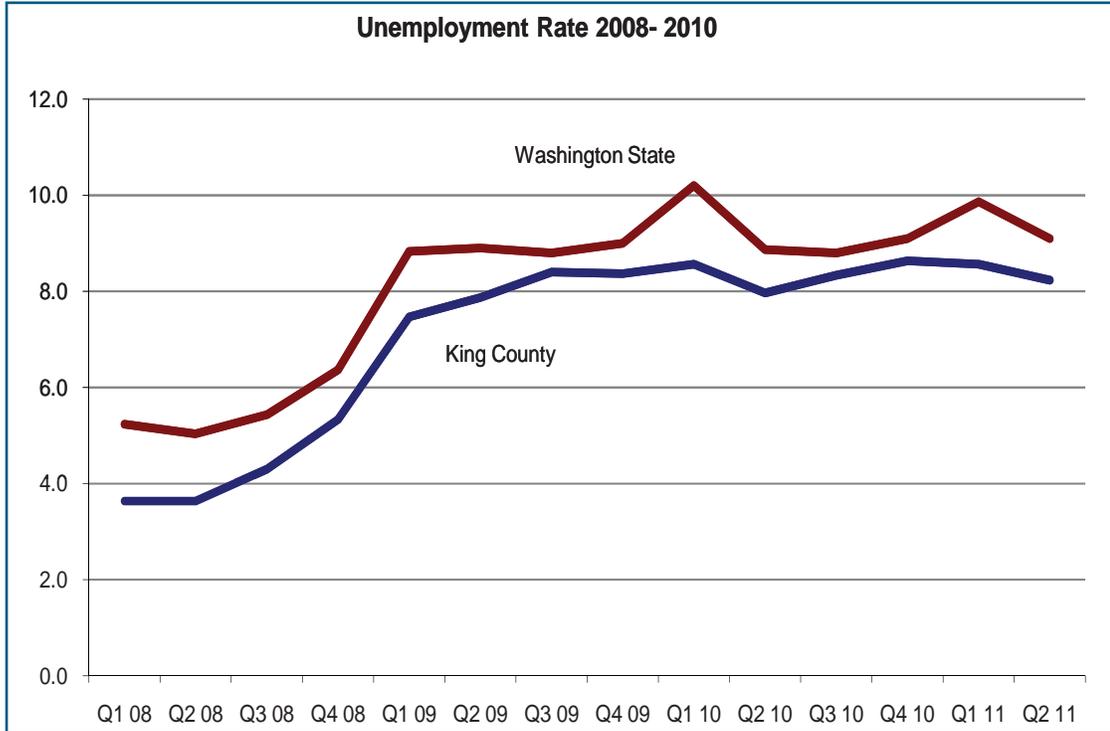


Source: Food Lifeline

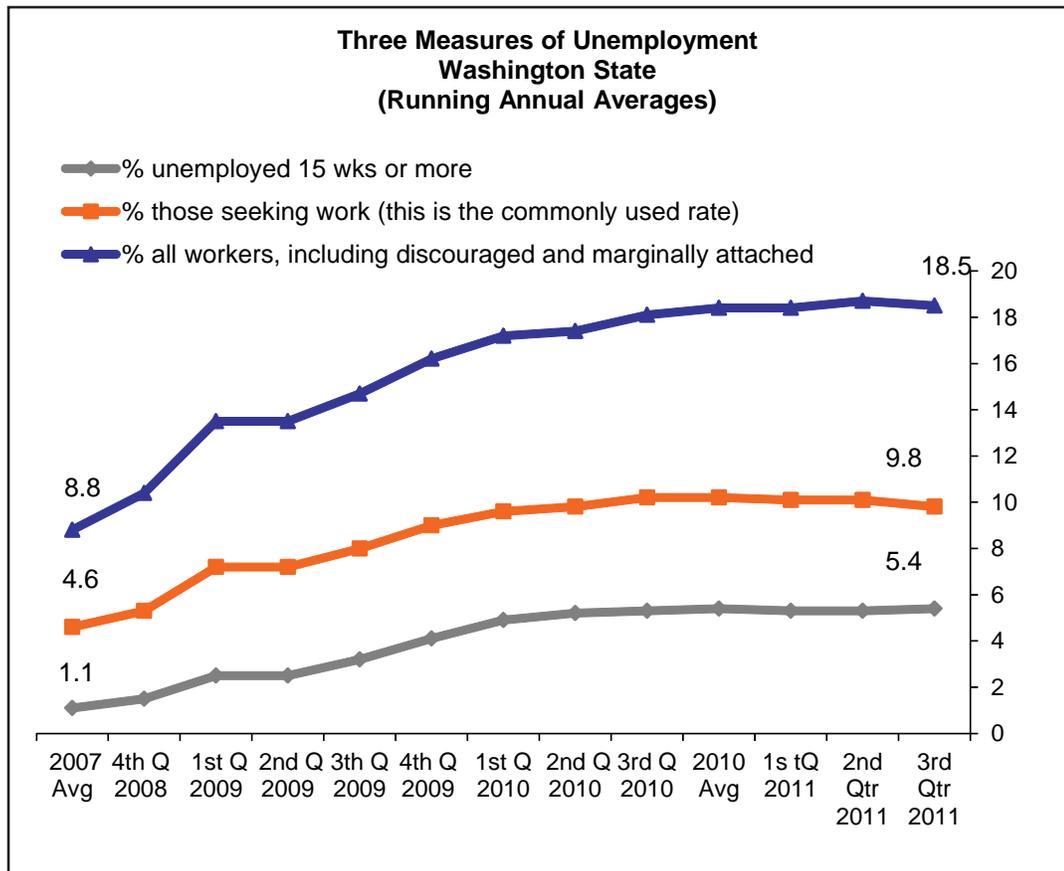
- 5.3% of Washington's workers have been unemployed for over 15 weeks.
- The Washington State unemployment rate is over 18% when discouraged workers, marginally attached workers and those employed part time for economic reasons are included in the workforce population.
- The November 2011 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 8.7% for Washington State and 8.2% for the Seattle metropolitan area.
- The percentage of unemployed workers in

- The average monthly visits to food banks is 44% higher than the number recorded in 2007.
- Some individual food banks saw increases as much as 30% during some months in

Washington getting unemployment benefits dropped from 45% in 2001 to 36% in 2008.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department



- Since May 2010, over 33,000 jobs have been added to Washington’s economy. The gains are primarily in the private sector, and over two-thirds of the gains have occurred in 2011. In spite of these gains, unemployment remains stubbornly high in Washington and King County, although the rate in King County is continuing to decline.

- The combination of regular unemployment benefits and emergency benefits and extensions allow workers who are eligible for all these programs to receive benefits for up to 99 weeks total, however some of the emergency benefits ended on July 31, 2010. Increasing numbers of people are reaching the end of their unemployment benefits.

#### 4. Unemployment Benefit Levels

- In Washington State, the maximum weekly benefit amount is \$630. The minimum is

#### 5. Foreclosures in King County and Bellevue

- Foreclosures continue to rise in King County,

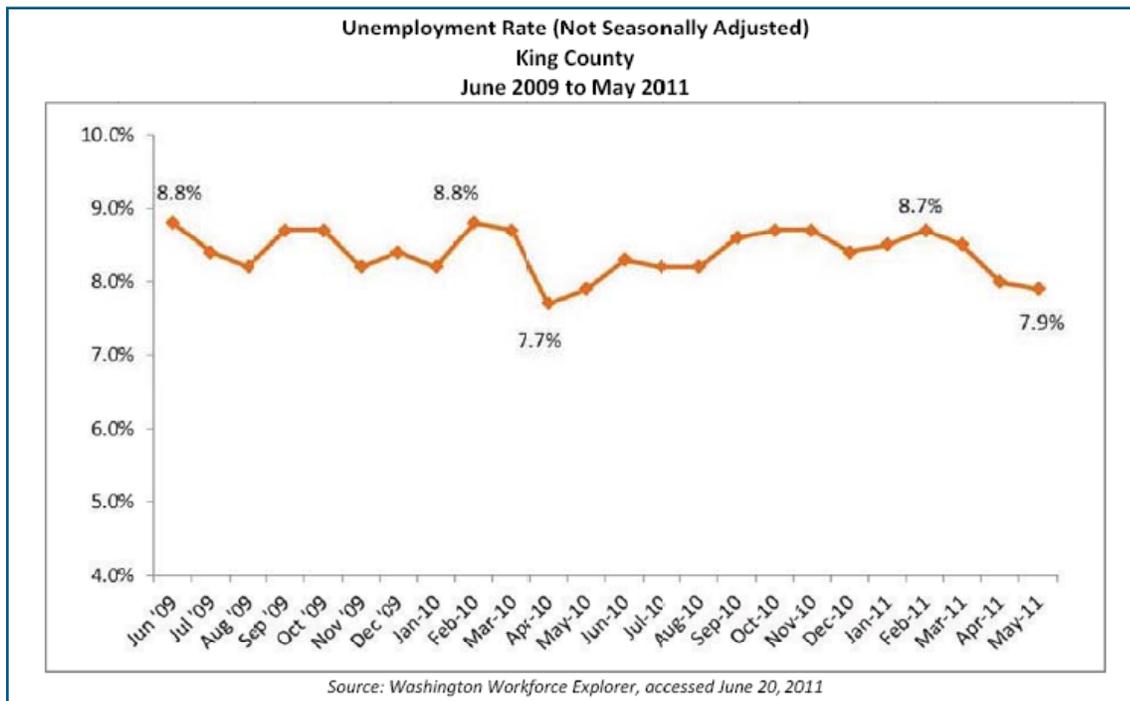


Chart retrieved from Communities Count Data Updates - May 2011

but are down by 30% when compared to April 2010.

- The quality and stability of the housing we live in is a critical element to our health and well-being. Families that lack access to

\$133 to \$225, depending on eligibility for federal recession-related programs which are based on the date their claim took effect. No one who is eligible for benefits will receive less than this, regardless of his or her earnings. Within those limits, the average benefit is around 50% of average earnings during the highest two quarters in the calculation period.

stable, affordable, safe and clean housing are more likely to experience stress and depression, be exposed to unsafe environmental conditions (e.g., mold), and are more likely to be displaced or end up homeless.

- Currently, about 25% of claimants receive the maximum benefit amount and 6 percent receive the minimum.

- The chart on the next page shows foreclosure date in King County since before the recession through May 2011. Foreclosures have increased to 4,701 thus far.
- The second chart shows the month-over-month change in foreclosures, which have slowed in the past three months. Foreclosures in May 2011 dropped 24 percent compared to May 2010.

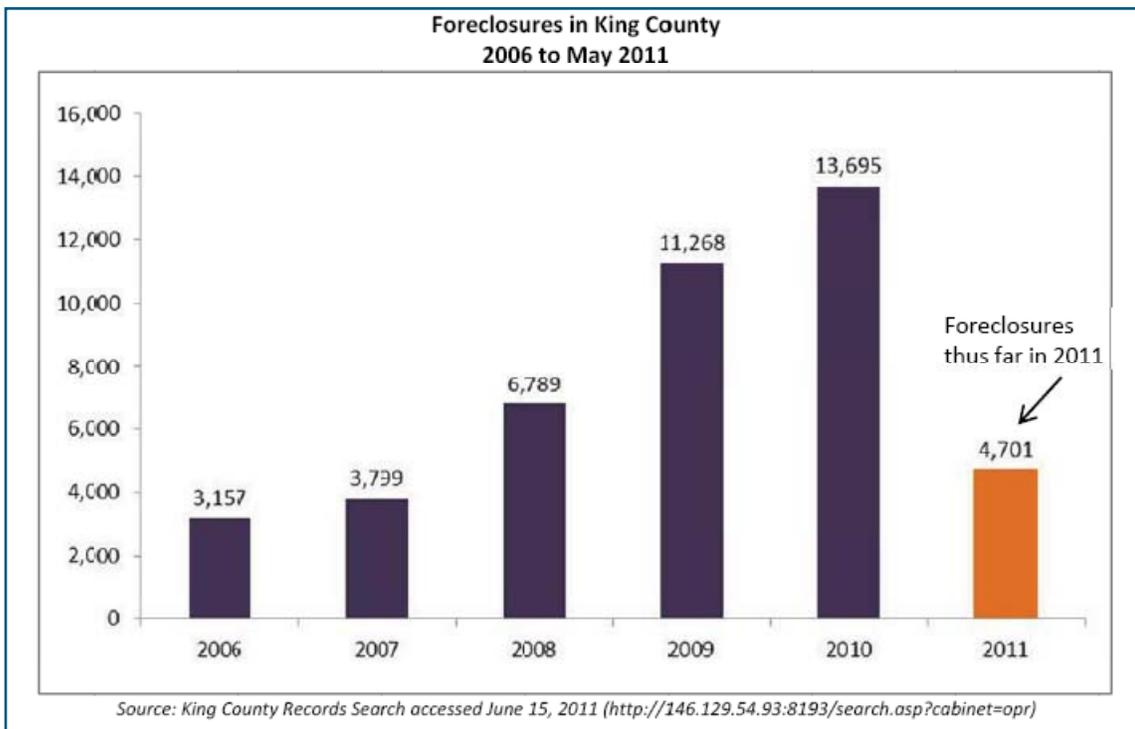


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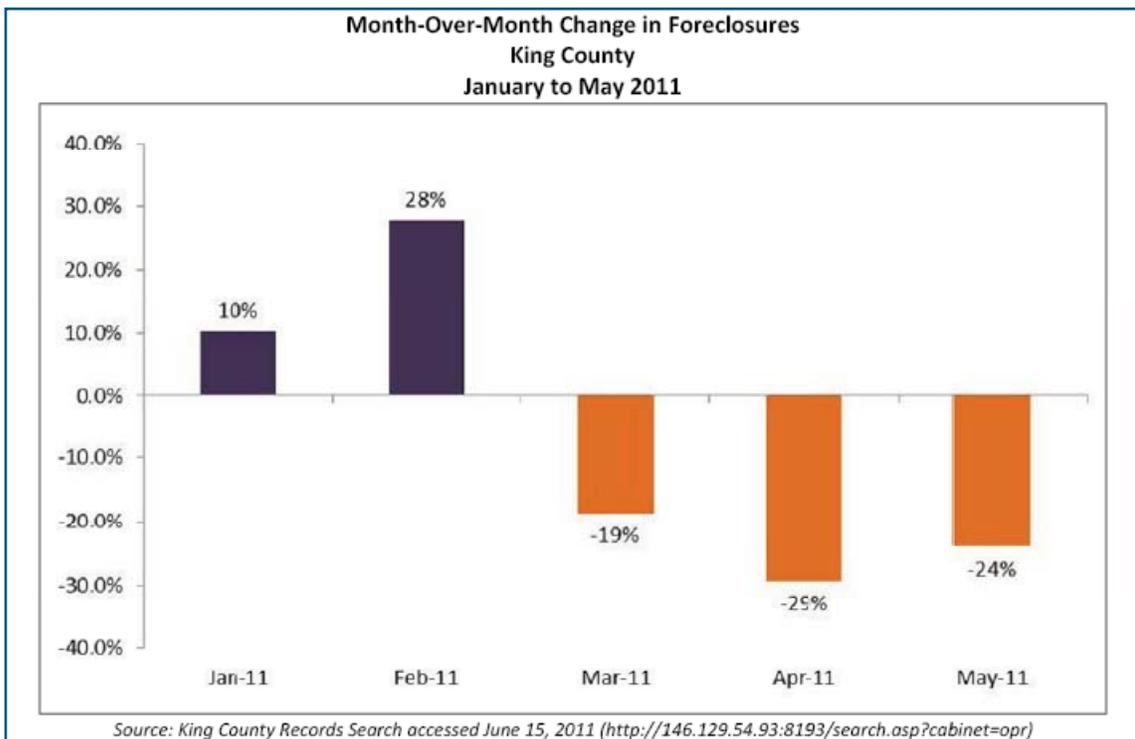
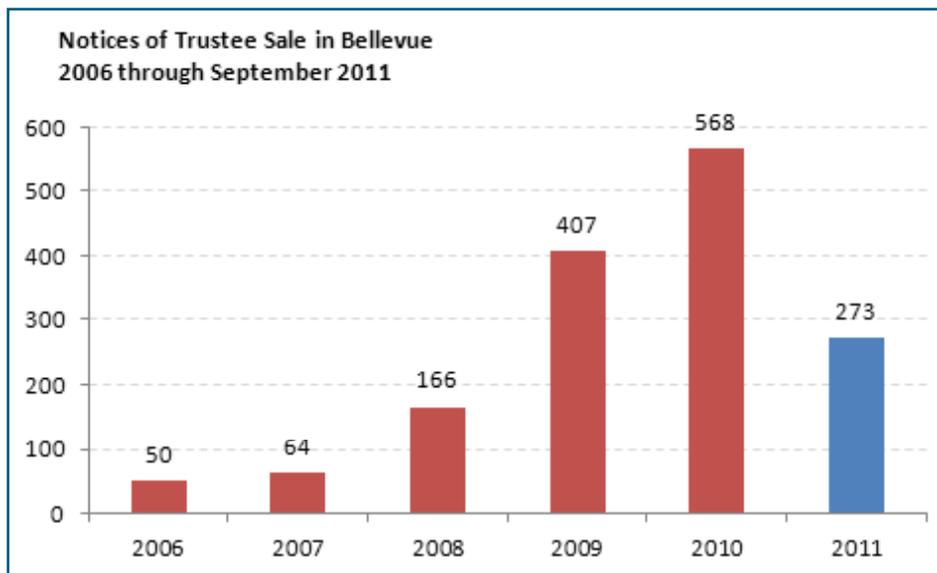


Chart retrieved from Communities Count Data Updates - May 2011

- Notices of trustee sale (NTS) in Bellevue rose steadily from 2006 to 2010 with 2009 and 2010 seeing unprecedented totals.
- The number of NTSs through the second quarter of 2011 appears to show a reversal of this upward trend. Yet, the number of NTSs still remains high.



(Note: See Goals 1 and 5 sections in this report for more information on basic needs and employment.)

## Effects of the Recession Bellevue Residents

- In 2011, three new questions were added to the phone/online survey to measure the impact of the economic recession on Bellevue residents. Overall, the survey found that 64% of Bellevue residents have been negatively impacted by the economy.
- According to the phone/online survey, 60% of respondents indicated they had personally been affected by the current recession either “Very badly”(7%), “Quite badly” (10%), or “Somewhat badly”(43%).
- Thirteen percent (13%) indicated they had been unemployed (not by choice) during the past year. The length of time they were unemployed ranged from 1 month to more than a year.
- In response to the question, “What happened to your income in the past year?,” 15% reported it was “Significantly reduced,” 20% indicated it was “Slightly reduced,” and 39% said it remained the same.

## Human Services Providers

- Nonprofit health and human services groups are facing their own possible

double-dip recession as Washington State cuts billions of dollars out of its safety net – reductions that could cripple some nonprofit contractors. With the State’s two-year budget cutting some \$3 billion in such services, many nonprofits will be forced to reduce salaries, cut hours or lay off employees to stay solvent.<sup>6</sup>

- Fifty-three agencies responded to the provider survey, a response

rate of 88%. Some of the responses to the question “As a result of the economic downturn, how have you seen the social service needs of your clients change” included the following:

- “The families we serve often work in entry level jobs; however, they are less available due to people taking jobs they are over qualified for, leaving limited job opportunities for the families in our program. Just in 2011, we have seen an increase in the number of families calling for housing with over 200 families eligible for our program waiting for a unit to become available.” (Hopelink)
- “We have seen a lot of families who are experiencing insufficient income for rental payments and often faced with utility shut off notices. In addition, they are faced with being laid off or a reduction in work hours. This has reduced their income significantly and they cannot even afford to buy food for their families.” (Refugee Women’s Alliance)
- “Patients continue to need health care services, but have even less social support for these needs. Loss of insurance, State funded programs, unemployment and other social service cuts have made it even more difficult for patients to prioritize their health and

get the services they need.” (Health-Point)

- “Demand for services has increased among homeless youth and young adults in all categories of services including housing, employment support, mental health counseling and emergency shelter.” (Friends of Youth)
  - “Decreases in public funding for the unemployed or working poor has had an impact on the client’s ability to receive needed services for substance abuse and mental health.” (Therapeutic Health Services)
  - “Our clients are needing help more often and have larger financial assistance needs. Clients report their biggest barriers are employment and healthcare costs.” (The Salvation Army)
- A number of providers indicated they had waiting lists for their services due to the demand:
    - “We turn 18 people away for shelter for every person we take. The wait for counseling can be as long as three months.” (Eastside Domestic Violence Program)
    - “400 people are on a waiting list for a financial assistance appointment.” (Salvation Army)
    - “There are currently 425 people on the wait list.” (Catholic Community Services, Volunteer Chore Services)
    - “We have 16 men on our waiting list at the moment. The number grows each day.” (Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council, Congregations for the Homeless)

## City of Bellevue Services

City staff are continuing to see Bellevue residents in need and/or seeking help. Following are examples of requests for basic needs services reported by City staff:

- **Crossroads Mini City Hall** is still seeing residents who never needed to ask for help before and overwhelmingly are seeking jobs. More people are asking what sectors actually have jobs and more are under-

employed. The jobs they have now often pay less than they earned before and the longer they are unemployed, the harder it is to find jobs. There is also a need for medical care since many have lost insurance when they lost their jobs. There are fewer opportunities for people with disabilities, including mental disabilities, to get jobs and volunteer opportunities. This group is more hidden now. There are also more refugees and immigrants coming in looking for resources, including jobs.<sup>7</sup>

“As soon as you are unemployed, everything falls apart. Many have been unemployed for a long time, and at this point many have run out of unemployment benefits, or are losing their homes..”  
*Crossroads Mini-City Hall staff*

- **Service First** staff at City Hall report inquiries from residents for financial assistance, including foreclosure information, home repair loans, rental assistance, scholarships, and low-income/senior utility discounts.<sup>8</sup>
- **Crossroads Community Center** staff identified the need for a Hygiene Center since they help homeless get passes to use the Aquatic Center to shower. They also work with homeless individuals to try to connect them with shelters while they are waiting lists to receive housing. Other needs they are seeing are for ready-to-eat food for homeless, clothing, and bus passes for people to be able to go to social service appointments, job interviews, work, etc.<sup>9</sup>
- **Code Compliance** staff noted an increase in nuisance cases, such as hoarders, housing code violations where either the owner or landlord needs help correcting violations, landlord/tenant issues, and isolated older adults. For example, there was an elderly woman living downtown with her house falling apart, not paying her bills, not eating, etc. The Code Compliance officer worked with her to get a relative to be more involved. They also noted there are some domestic violence situations where the wife may be left in the home after the violence has occurred and she cannot care

for the house alone. Another office noted an increase in vacant abandoned houses, where residents have just “walked away,” as well as an increase in multi-generational households.<sup>10</sup>

- **Utilities Department** reports a 16% increase in the number of delinquent utility bills between 2005 through the end of 2010 and an 18% increase in the number of utility shut-offs during the same time period. The biggest increases in both measures were from 2008 to 2009. The shut-offs trended down by 12% from 2009 to 2010.<sup>11</sup>

## Effects of the Recession on Funding for Human Services

### Corporate Giving and Private Philanthropy

- Corporate profits are on the rebound, but most big businesses say it will be some time before they can give as much cash as they did before the recession, according to a Chronicle of Philanthropy survey of 162 of the country’s largest corporations. Seventy-three percent (73%) polled said they expect their giving in 2010 to be about the same as in 2009. Some companies tried to respond to needs aggravated by the bad economy by encouraging employees to volunteer more, giving more money to groups that serve people hard hit by the recession, and donating more products and services.<sup>12</sup>

“Foundation funding has been flat for the last couple of years; however, individual donations have consistently increased by 15% per year.”  
*Sound Mental Health*

- *Giving USA 2011*, an annual tally of American philanthropy, noted that giving by foundations remained steady in 2010, falling an estimated 0.2% (a decline of 1.8% adjusted for inflation). Family foundations continue to be an important source of grant funding, providing approximately

48% of all grants by independent, community, and operating foundations in 2010.<sup>13</sup> Corporate giving rose an estimate 10.6% in 2010 (8.8% adjusted for inflation). Giving to Human Services remained steady in 2010, growing by 0.1% (a decline of 1.5% adjusted for inflation). Giving to support organizations providing relief and recovery services to Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake offset losses experienced by many basic needs organizations as a result of the recent economic downturn.<sup>14</sup>

“Support from foundations and individuals has remained flat. This has caused us to rely more heavily on our fundraising which although very successful for the last 2 years, is not guaranteed for the future.”

*NAMI-Eastside*

- Findings from the Foundation Center’s annual “Foundation Giving Forecast Survey” indicate that, in the context of an uneven economic recovery, U.S. foundation giving was nearly unchanged in 2010. This followed a record 2.1% reduction in foundations support between 2008 and 2009. The beginning of a resurgence in the stock market in the latter half of 2009 helped raised foundation assets by 4.5% above their 2008 total by year’s end. The findings suggest that 2011 giving will grow between 2% - 4%. Looking ahead to 2012, grantmakers appear to be fairly optimistic about their prospects. On balance and assuming no unexpected economic strife, foundation giving should realize another modest year-over-year gain.<sup>15</sup>

“Foundations have limited funding cycles and/or changed funding priorities . . . . The program is challenged to find foundations that are a match and accepting applications for funding. Foundation support and individual donors are reduced by 40%. As a result of reduced revenue, the program will need to look at restructuring staffing and service delivery.”

*Catholic Community Services, Volunteer Chore Services*

- Locally, foundations appear to be regaining losses in their portfolios which resulted in a decrease in funds available for grants. As of March 2011, The Seattle Foundation's investment performance continued to be strong. Importantly, the 3-year period encompassed the sharp drop in markets in the last 3 quarters of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009. Those losses have been recovered, but performance is still negatively affected by commercial real estate investments. Commercial real estate is showing signs of recovery, but it still faces severe challenges.<sup>16</sup>

### Individual Donors

- Despite a strong commitment to nonprofits in 2009, average charitable giving by high net worth households decreased between 2007 and 2009. Average charitable giving dropped 34.9 percent from \$83,034 in 2007 to \$54,016 in 2009, after adjusting for inflation.<sup>17</sup>

"Donations from individual donors and from the churches have dropped by around 15 percent. We have had to hire a fund developer in order to make up that funding gap, which means we haven't been able to hire a job developer or fund a day center."  
*Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council, Congregations for the Homeless*

- A national study of 17,500 donors, conducted by Cygnus Applied Research in Chicago, showed that four in five donors plan to give at least as much in 2011, if not more, than they did in 2010 which provided one of the first real signs that charities can soon expect donations to rebound after the nation's four years of economic pain. The study also found that the majority of Americans will make their 2011 donations online rather than through the mail, in response to calls, or other techniques.<sup>18</sup>

"Food drives yield less food to support this program."  
*Hopelink*

### Public Sector

All levels of government (federal, state, local) are continuing to face significant financial challenges as a result of the current economic recession. At the local level, normally stable sources of funds, e.g. sales and property taxes, experienced significant decreases and have not rebounded as quickly as projected. However, the city councils in five major cities in East King County – Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Issaquah, and Mercer Island – all approved increases in funding for human ser-

"As a result of public funding cuts and reductions, the program has instituted furlough days and reduced staffing positions."  
*Catholic Community Services, Volunteer Chore Services*

vices in 2011, increasing the total investment in human services to nearly \$5 million. While this represents a strong commitment to human services by our cities, it will be far from adequate to address deep funding reductions at the county, state, and federal levels.

**City of Bellevue:** The City Council approved nearly \$2.7 million in human services funding for 2011, an increase of close to 10%. Included in this total is a special allocation of \$112,000 in 2011 and also in 2012 for programs serving those most affected by the economic recession, e.g. basic needs (food emergency financial assistance, basic survival goods for children); employment-related support services (adult day health, dental care, child care subsidies); and access to services (Cultural Navigator, 24-hour Crisis Line).

However, first quarter 2011 numbers showed that Bellevue's overall sales tax revenue continued to fall and business and occupations tax revenue did not recover as fast as was budgeted. As a result, as of June 2011, the City forecasted a roughly \$6 million shortfall over the 2011-2012 budget period, or about 2% reduction each year.<sup>19</sup>

**King County:** The continuing economic

downturn and King County's ongoing structural gap which combined, have required the reduction of \$209 million of County General Fund over the last three years (2009, 2010, 2011), has also resulted in the virtual elimination of King County General Fund support to human service programs across the county. In 2011, just over \$600,000 of General Fund is support human services, compared to \$11.4 million in 2009 and \$850,000 in 2010. In 2006, the County's General Fund contribution to human services was over \$26 million.<sup>20</sup> The renewal of the Veterans and Human Services Levy, passed by voters in August 2011, will provide continued funding for some regional human services, but is not adequate to address the need.

"King County funding has decreased by 20% since 2008. KCSARC initially reduced therapy, additional funds (State and Mental Illness Drug Dependency) have allowed us to bring therapy services back to 2010 levels but the demand is increasing."  
*King County Sexual Assault Resource Center*

**State of Washington:** Faced with a \$5.1 billion shortfall, the budget passed by the Washington State Legislature included moderate to severe reductions in health and human services funding for low income King County residents, particularly for those not eligible for Medicaid funding. These cuts in prevention and intervention services will likely result in more people using emergency rooms, becoming homeless, and being sent to jail.

Some of these reductions included the following:

- **Disability Lifeline Program** was eliminated effective October 1, 2011, but preserved medical services for eligible clients; created three new programs, and eliminated cash assistance grants to all but the aged, blind and disabled program. More than 6,100 in King County will lose cash benefits that have supported housing and basic needs.
- **State Food Assistance (food stamps) Program** was reduced by half which will affect

31,000 Washington residents, including over 15,000 children.

- **Housing Trust Fund** was reduced again to \$50 million (compared to nearly \$200 million in the last biennium); the creation and preservation of affordable housing will be severely limited.
- **Basic Health Plan** enrollment is frozen at the current level of enrollees, affecting over 14,000 in King County.

"Due to funding reductions we are placing new regulations on how many times a household can receive financial assistance."

*Salvation Army*

- **Adult Dental** coverage for Medicaid beneficiaries is eliminated for everyone except pregnant women, disabled adults and for emergency services, thus shifting care to emergency rooms. Over 30,000 adults are affected in King County.<sup>21</sup>

## Responses to the Recession Federal Stimulus Funding

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided additional funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) in early 2009. Bellevue received \$191,689, of which \$182,105 was allocated to capital/facility projects (Home Repair Program and two programs serving older adults) and \$9,584 for CDBG-R grant administration.

In 2009, Bellevue also was awarded \$1.2 million through the federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) which was used for electric vehicle charge spots, hybrids and electric vehicles fund, traffic demand management, sports facilities lighting upgrades, residential energy conservation, an interactive environmental web portal, and administration.

Recently, HUD announced their Emergency Homeowner's Loan Program (EHLP) for Washington State residents. Washington

homeowners who have experienced a drop in income of at least 15 percent due to circumstances beyond their control may qualify for a 0% APR, forgivable loan that pays past due mortgage payments and past-due charges for a maximum loan amount of \$50,000. This support can help save a family home from foreclosure.<sup>22</sup>

### Local Government Initiatives

In times of crisis, people turn to their local government for leadership and support. The role of the City is to provide this leadership – to inform and encourage, relieve and assist those who are suffering the impacts of the crisis.

**Bellevue Cares Initiative:** In March 2009, the City of Bellevue’s Leadership Team convened an interdepartmental staff task force to identify major areas of concern and propose steps the City could take to resolve or mitigate those concerns. Following is an update on some of the strategies that have continued in response to the impacts of the recession:

**1. Provide an information clearinghouse (primarily web-based)** – to include recession-related relief programs, related city and human services, volunteer needs and opportunities (a community resource guide with “need help” and “can help” sections). (<http://www.bellevuewa.gov/recession-community-resources.htm>)

**2. Allow payment plans for utility bills,** more lenient shut-off policies, and ex-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Senior/Disabled Discount Program:</b> Approx. 600 households receive discounts of 40% or 75% on their utility bills.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Utility Tax Rebate Program:</b> Annual rebate checks distributed in the amount of \$102.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Leak Adjustments:</b> Adjustments and payment arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Payment Arrangements:</b> Provide up to a 2-week extension after the disconnect date to pay the account in full</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Delinquency Charges:</b> Waive the delinquency charges, which average approx \$10</li> </ul>

tended discount and rebate programs. Programs currently offered by Bellevue Utilities Department are listed below.

**3. Engage community partners** in activities that respond to economic needs and help the community survive and thrive during tough times. Established in 2009, Bellevue’s Neighbor Link program began by engaging neighborhoods in community service projects aimed at helping families suffering impacts of the recession. The result was more than 30 projects, including food and clothing drives, fund-raising events, neighborhood clean-ups and activities benefitting human-services programs. Again in 2010, Bellevue neighborhoods collected several tons of food, school supplies, baby supplies and other items for families in need. The city offered assistance with planning and promotion, and enlisted community sponsors to help neighborhoods celebrate the success of their community service and community-building projects. Neighbor Link operates throughout the spring and summer, culminating in a communitywide celebration of Bellevue neighborhood achievements. Picnics in 2009, 2010, and 2011 drew more than 300 people to the City Hall lawn to enjoy music and lunch.<sup>23</sup>

**4. Maintain close communications with human services providers** to monitor needs and collaborate on solutions to community problems. (See above for information about the Eastside Month of Concern for the Hungry and the collaboration by agencies and referral providers of emergency financial assistance to make it easier for people to access their services.)

**5. Provide City employees with opportunities to give** time, money and resources to support the needs of other employees and community members. City employees participate in the Eastside Month of Concern for

the Hungry and volunteer opportunities are publicized through the online Employee Classifieds.

**Eastside Human Services Forum – EastsideHelps:** EastsideHelps is a community initiative developed by the Eastside Human Services Forum in collaboration with the cities of Kirkland, Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, and Mercer Island. This website, launched in mid-June 2009, provides information and resources, encourages local action, and helps local citizens make connections to **Get Help** and **Give Help**.<sup>24</sup>

## Corporate and Private Philanthropic Initiatives

**United Way of King County’s Emergency Response to Basic Needs:** United Way began its Response for Basic Needs in November of 2008 in partnership with a number of local corporate and private philanthropic organizations. In 2009, United Way launched the Bridge to Basics program to educate people about public benefits. Additionally they expanded their Free Tax Preparation Campaign, which helps more low-income people tap into tax credits and refunds.

- During the 2010 tax season, more than 600 United Way volunteers prepared 14,000 tax returns, bringing \$19.7 million in federal refunds to the community, including \$6.2 in Earned Income Tax Credits.
- Since fall 2009, Bridge to Basics volunteers have helped more than 7,000 people connect to food stamps, children’s health insurance, heat and utility assistance, and job training.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Seattle Foundation**

- **Building Resilience Initiative:** Through their Building Resilience Initiative (BRI), The Seattle Foundation continues to lead a collaboration to provide a broad philanthropic response to the community’s increased needs and get people on the right foot for recovery. Their aim is to

mobilize extra resources for immediate services that will keep people from losing their housing or going hungry, as well as increase access to longer-term services that can help people to improve job skills, enhance financial literacy and return to greater self-reliance.

BRI has made \$4.2 million in grants to more than 30 organizations including Hopelink, Neighborhood House, Refugee Women’s Alliance, Chinese Information and Service Center, and many others. During the past two years, these organizations have seen a tremendous increase in the number of clients needing critical services such as mortgage foreclosure counseling, employment training, legal assistance, housing referrals and case management. BRI has also helped increase the ability of communities to respond to the unique needs of their residents through informal social networks. The Seattle Foundation hopes to raise \$6 million over three years for the BRI. As of January 2011, they have raised more than \$4.2 million in aligned and pooled contributions to support the local community.<sup>26</sup>

- **GiveBIG Event:** In what’s being called the biggest single day of charitable giving in King County history, more than 18,800 donations totaling more than \$3.5 million were made to nonprofit organizations on June 23, 2011, during The Seattle Foundation’s GiveBIG challenge. A “stretch pool” of an additional \$500,000 was provided by GiveBIG partners, bringing the total amount raised to more than \$4 million. The stretch pool will be distributed among all of the approximately 900 nonprofits that received donations during GiveBIG. Each nonprofit will receive a portion of the stretch pool according to the percentage it received of the total amount of GiveBIG donations.<sup>27</sup>

## Implications for Action

- Sustained support for human services and community based efforts will need to con-

tinue in the short term; in the long term, there is a need to continue to explore creative solutions for dedicated, stable, and sustainable funding for local and regional human services, particularly to mitigate the fluctuations in public sector support. This may require a paradigm shift in the way that human services are funded.

- On a positive note, the economic recession has presented opportunities for greater collaborations among non-profit human services programs to provide more coordinated and efficient access to their services. These delivery system improvements should be supported and encouraged to continue.

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