

Ensuring that  
**Veterans,  
Seniors and  
Resilient  
Communities**  
are connected and  
supported across  
the region.



**King County**

Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy

# Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL)

**King County Executive Dow Constantine announces his plan to renew the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) for 2024-2029.**

The VSHSL expires at the end of 2023. Executive Constantine has proposed legislation to renew the levy on the August 2023 ballot.

This booklet presents a high-level overview of the levy's accomplishments over the years, and lays a foundation for the next VSHSL.

*Investing in the people, providers, and programs that strengthen connection and build accessible communities.*

**10¢**  
per \$1,000 of  
assessed  
value

**+\$17**  
more per year  
based on estimated  
2024 home values

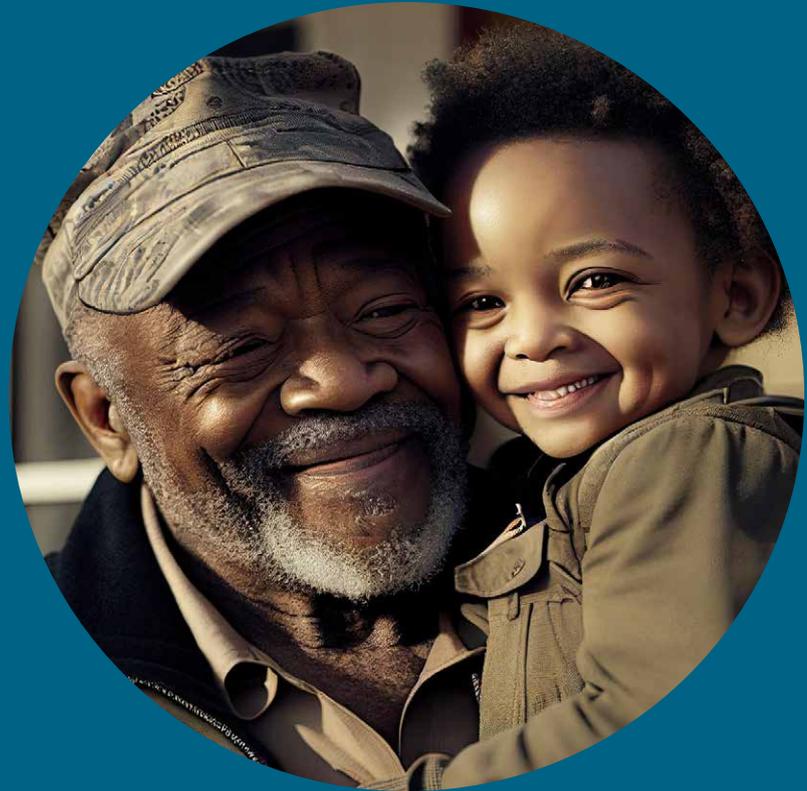
**\$581  
million**  
over six years  
(2024-2029)  
to support the  
communities

**Renewing  
the VSHSL for  
2024-2029**

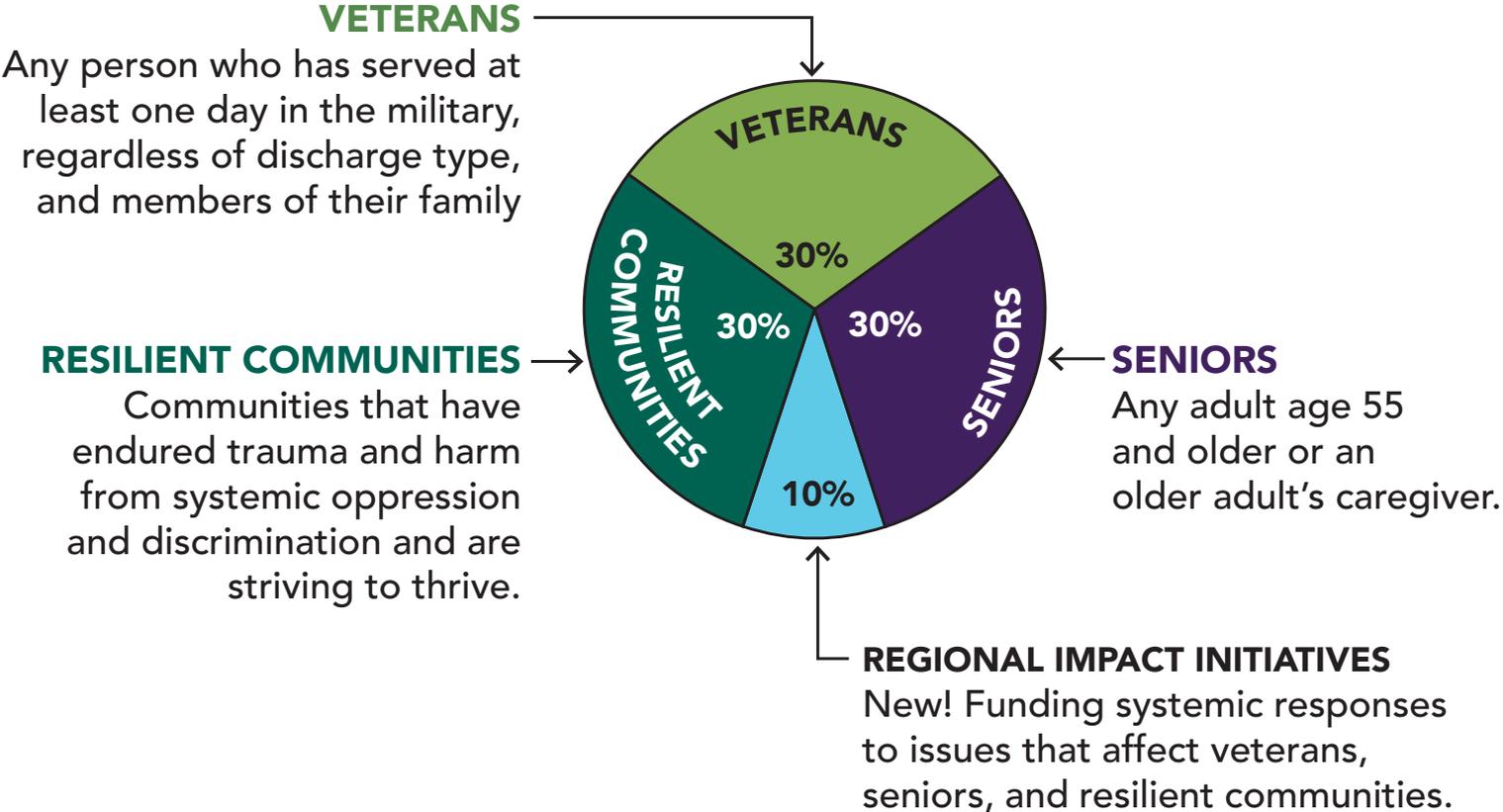
# What Will the VSHSL Renewal Mean For Communities?

## If renewed, the VSHSL will:

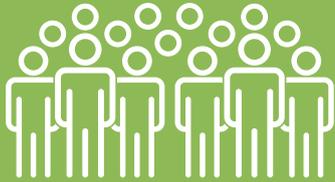
- Fund permanent supportive housing, specifically for veterans
- Keep reducing veteran homelessness
- Expand investments in the human services workforce
- Double current funding for senior centers
- Maintain access to counseling and mental health supports for veterans and seniors
- Dedicate King County staff to strengthen resident and resource connections
- Deepen community-centered programming for survivors of gender-based violence



# VSHSL Funding Breakdown



# Since 2018, the VSHSL has...



Served more than  
**185,000 people**,  
including more than  
**27,000 veterans**,  
servicemembers, or their  
families, and more than  
**100,000 seniors**



Funded more than  
**300 programs**

Led by more than  
**150 community-based  
organizations**, a third  
of which are small  
organizations

# 18 YEARS of VSHSL



## 2005

King County voters approve the original levy for veterans and human services for 2006-2011.

## 2007

A second **King County Veterans Program** (KCVV) location opens with the help of levy funds.



## 2011

Voters reaffirm their support for veterans and human services by renewing the levy for 2012-2017.

## 2012

The levy reached an annual average of 800 people experiencing homelessness between 2012 and 2017 and helped them access housing.



## 2017

Voters approve VSHSL, expand services for seniors, and deepen investments for 2018-2023.

## 2018

The VSHSL Implementation Plan is enacted; dedicating more than 25% of total levy proceeds to housing stability between 2018-2023.



## 2019

**Senior Hubs** launch, bringing a unique approach to serving seniors in King County.



## 2020

Partners use the VSHSL to pivot and adapt services and programming throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2020

- **Geriatric Regional Assessment Team** (GRAT) gets reboot from King County, offering assessment and early intervention for older adults where they live to prevent escalation toward crisis.

### GRAT

- Benefitting more than **350 seniors** since its relaunch
- **93.4% of seniors served** had at least one case plan need met



- **Mapping Prevention 2020** created and shared community data to better understand how communities can prevent domestic, sexual and family violence outside of systems of policing and punishment.

## 2021

- **DVHopeline**, a countywide, 24-hour, multi-lingual, multi-modal domestic violence hotline, launches.
- First-in-the-nation pilot program houses homeless veterans. **Collaborative Case Management** blends rental assistance with supportive services to help veterans secure stable housing.





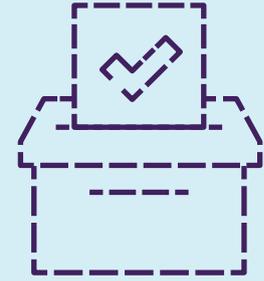
## 2021

King County and **501 Commons** launch first employment and wages surveys to help build stronger nonprofits.



## 2022

- The VSHSL provides one-time hiring and retention bonuses to eligible nonprofit contractors to help stabilize the nonprofit human services workforce.
- **VSHSL assessment report** demonstrates the levy's impact in the community and recommends modifications in the VSHSL renewal to better meet community needs.



## 2023

- Executive Constantine proposes placing the VSHSL renewal on the August primary ballot.
- The 2018-2023 VSHSL expires on December 31.



# Build Nation's Strongest Local Veterans Program



Veterans strengthen our region, and King County is building the nation's strongest local veterans program to support them. The levy sustains and expands innovative partnerships and programming, comprehensive case management, and behavioral health counseling for veterans and their families and caregivers.

- More than 27,000 veterans, servicemembers and their families were served by VSHSL with fewer eligibility barriers than many federal programs.
- More than 2,000 veterans received coordinated case management annually at the King County Veterans Program, including job search assistance or financial help.

## SUCCESS STORY

### **Michael**

Michael, a 67-year-old veteran who served in Vietnam, found KCVP while staying at a shelter for people experiencing homelessness. After finding permanent housing through KCVP, Michael mentioned to his Social Service Professional that he was experiencing severe pain in his mouth that had contributed to significant weight loss. Not only had he been unable to chew on one side of his mouth for nearly two years, but he was also unable to find a program that was able to help in that time. Through the KCVP Wellness Fund, a program launched in 2022 to support veterans, service members, and their families with medical and behavioral health costs, Michael was able to have the critically needed dental work performed by a dental office of his choosing.



## SUCCESS STORY

### Sandy

Sandy came to a levy-funded partner to begin treatment for military sexual trauma. At the beginning of treatment, Sandy had a hard time getting out of her house and going anywhere. Sandy steadily advanced from individual therapy to a women veterans' therapy group, then to a mixed gender therapy group for support, understanding, and healing. She suffered some setbacks along the way. Nevertheless, her resiliency championed again, and little by little, she began to recover. She is getting out on her own again and socializing, as well as participating in activities that are meaningful for her. She still has some symptoms, but she is living life on her own terms.

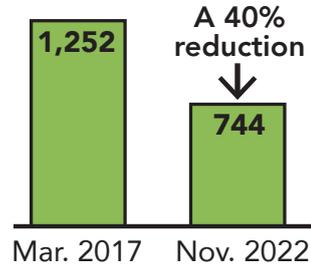


More than **260 veterans, servicemembers, and family members** accessed more than 15,000 mental health counseling sessions.

# Keep Reducing Veteran Homelessness

The levy connects federal and state resources with local veterans and housing to reduce homelessness. If renewed, the VSHSL levy will further reduce veteran homelessness by creating at least 200 dedicated affordable housing units for veterans, making permanent the Collaborative Case Management pilot program, and funding housing navigators to assist people in their affordable housing search.

- Contributed to a 40% reduction in veteran households experiencing homelessness in King County between 2017 and 2022.
- Built 234 units of permanent supportive housing for veterans and their families.
- Launched the first-in-the-nation Collaborative Case Management pilot program that helped more than 100 homeless veterans and their families move into permanent housing.



## SUCCESS STORY

### Allison

Allison served as a U.S. Marine between 2017-2019. However, upon her discharge from service, she found herself in a vulnerable living situation. After a domestic violence incident, she became homeless and began staying in shelters and hotels. Eventually, Allison was screened by Veterans Administration staff and placed in transitional housing. She was then connected with KCVP where they referred and approved her for a Collaborative Case Management housing voucher. Allison moved into her new apartment in December 2021 and recently renewed her lease for another year. Allison's newfound stability has contributed to a cascade effect of health benefits, including one-on-one counseling, an opportunity to resolve long overdue medical needs, and a renewed potential to seek out employment opportunities.



## SUCCESS STORY

### **Nate**

A call to the Veterans Crisis Line was the beginning of Nate's journey home. After fleeing domestic violence at home, Nate found himself experiencing homelessness in King County. Through the combined arms approach of the KCVP and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Nate was connected to case managers of both programs when visiting KCVP. As the KCVP Social Service Professional worked quickly to connect Nate's family to the KCVP Collaborative Case Management program, SSVF coordinated temporary shelter to ensure he would not sleep on the street. Over the next two months the programs worked together to help Nate receive a housing voucher, apply and pay move-in costs for an apartment, and purchase furniture. Nate continues to thrive with a permanent place to call home.



*"[KCVP] and Supportive Services for Veteran Families have helped me through one of the darkest times of my life. I do not have the words to explain how grateful I am."*

– Nate

# Making King County Age-Inclusive; Double Funding for Senior Centers

The levy will reinforce senior services that made a difference in the pandemic, strengthen and sustain senior center programming to provide social connection, and invest in green energy improvements like heat pumps, solar panels, and air filtration that help senior centers reduce their carbon footprint, cut utility bills, and provide refuge in extreme weather. The VSHSL recognizes the essential role of senior centers in our community and will help them become even more accessible and sustainable for the long term.

## What we've done:

- Served more than 100,000 seniors.
- Funded 39 senior centers to serve more than 28,000 seniors each year since the program launched in 2020.
- Accelerated senior centers' transformation into an inclusive network of geographically and culturally representative spaces, reflective of the diverse populations in King County.



## SUCCESS STORIES

### **Inclusive Programming**

South Park Senior Citizens, partnering with AgePRIDE and GenPride, recently launched LGBTQIA+ inclusionary activities that will provide for sensitive programming and a safe place of belonging for all seniors in the community.

### **Culturally Responsive Services**

When the pandemic hit, senior centers and hubs like the Chinese Information and Service Center used levy funds to provide home-bound or isolated older adults with technology and instruction on how to participate in virtual classes.

### **Adaptive Service Delivery**

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, the Eritrean Association in Greater Seattle adapted their community meal program by delivering food to home-bound elders.

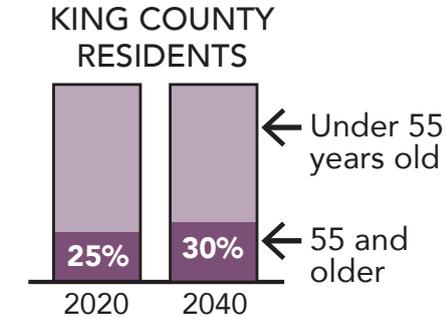
### **Fostering Connection**

Three Mondays per month, Spanish speaking seniors gather and socialize at the Far East Senior Hub senior centers. They share stories, laugh, make friends, and eat lunch together. The programming brings seniors together to foster cultural community connections

*"I've greatly enjoyed getting to interact with others of my age in wonderful activities."*

– Magdalena, a Far East Senior Hub participant

25% of King County residents were aged 55 or older in 2020. This **proportion is expected to increase to 30%** by 2040.



As the population of older adults increases statewide, so does the population of older adults from racially and ethnically diverse communities or backgrounds.

The VSHSL **launched a language services program** to support community partners in translating program materials and providing interpreter services to clients.



# Strengthen Communities and Build Resiliency; Deepen Investments in Critical Workforce

The pandemic reminds us that human services workers are essential. When many parts of the economy shut down, the need for human services programs like domestic violence advocacy, rent assistance, and shelter increased. The region's vibrancy requires an effective and sustainable human services workforce that can prevent crises and help solve them in real time. The levy plays a critical role in investing in the people who support those in need, make our communities a place where people can thrive, and ensure human services are accessible, effective, and equitable.

- Funded 675 bonuses to 55 agencies



## SUCCESS STORY

### **Mary** (not her real name)

After fleeing a domestic violence situation, Mary and her 2-year-old child were sleeping in her car in severe heat. This situation also triggered post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms from the trauma and distress. The staff at Muslimahs Against Abuse Center (MAAC) sprung to action to quickly arrange temporary housing, while also developing and implementing a plan to provide one-on-one support and weekly check-ins to help her access resources, apply for benefits, and build independence. Today, Mary has a full-time job and an apartment in a community of her choice, with access to a preschool for her child. Mary regularly calls MAAC to give positive feedback for how much the support has changed her life for the better.



Help build more than 1,000 units of affordable housing and 198 new shelter beds.





Between mid-2021 and September 2022, DVHopeline received 16,000 calls or texts and referred nearly 7,000 of those callers to additional support.

Funded mobile advocacy services for more than 1,200 survivors of gender-based violence from January 2020 through September 2022, a trauma-informed approach designed to follow survivors across a wide range of needs from the moment they reach out for assistance. 84% of those survivors were connected to an advocate within one day of reaching out to an organization.



*“By increasing our knowledge and visibility, we have been able to serve a larger number of clients.”*

– Community Partner Organization

## **Results from VSHSL-funded nonprofit wage survey show underinvestment in human services, lack of sustainable wages in nonprofit sector.**

*Survey results reinforce the need for funders and community providers to address the problem.*

 60% of surveyed staff would consider leaving the nonprofit sector to get better pay. 54% would consider leaving the nonprofit sector because of burnout or other fatigue.

 Nationally, turnover in nonprofits is 19%, compared to 12% for all industries.



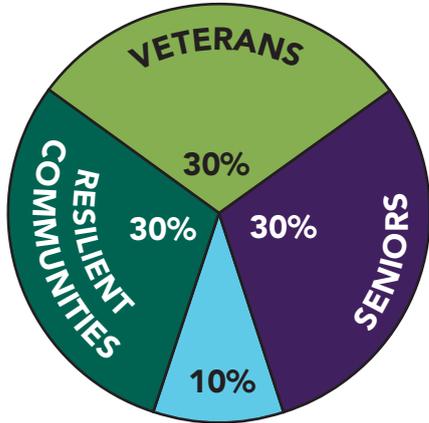
Low wages perpetuate inequities for women and BIPOC communities who make up a disproportionate number of social service staff.



Inflation, as of October 2021, was 6.2%. Overall, the median salary increase budget was 3% that year.

# 2024-2029 VSHSL Funding

Funding Distribution Across Communities



**REGIONAL  
IMPACT  
INITIATIVES**

Forecasted funding breakdown (in \$ million)

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total
Veterans, military servicemembers and their respective families	\$25.6	\$26.9	\$28.2	\$29.6	\$31.1	\$32.7	<b>\$174.2</b>
Seniors and their caregivers	\$25.6	\$26.9	\$28.2	\$29.6	\$31.1	\$32.7	<b>\$174.2</b>
Resilient communities	\$25.6	\$26.9	\$28.2	\$29.6	\$31.1	\$32.7	<b>\$174.2</b>
Regional Impact Initiatives	\$8.5	\$9.0	\$9.4	\$9.9	\$10.4	\$10.9	<b>\$58.1</b>
<b>Yearly Totals</b>	<b>\$85</b>	<b>\$90</b>	<b>\$94</b>	<b>\$99</b>	<b>\$104</b>	<b>\$109</b>	

**2024-2029 Total**

**\$581**

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

# Levy Timeline

2023

Q1

**February:** Executive transmits legislation to the Council.

Q2

**May 12:** Final date to file enacted ballot measure to King County Elections.

Q3

**August 1:** Primary election

**October 31:** If levy is approved, Executive transmits Implementation Plan for proposal.

Q4

**December 31:** 2018-2023 VSHSL expires.

- Following enactment, DCHS and other Executive branch staff will develop a proposed VSHSL Implementation Plan and transmit to the King County Council.
- All strategies and programs in the renewed levy will be in accordance with the updated VSHSL Implementation Plan.

**January 1:**  
2024-2029 VSHSL begins, if approved.

2024

Q1

Q2



# King County

Department of Community and Human Services

## **About Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS)**

DCHS provides equitable opportunities for people to be healthy, happy, and connected to community. DCHS oversees more than \$1 billion in public funds to ensure King County residents can access a broad range of services, including behavioral health treatment, housing access, child care resources, education and employment opportunities for youth and young adults, veterans services, senior supports, and reducing barriers for those with developmental disabilities all toward the goal of strengthening our communities.

## **About Adult Services Division**

As part of DCHS, the Adult Services Division (ASD) stewards and administers the VSHSL to deliver services to veterans, seniors, and resilient communities in King County. ASD provides services that are directly responsive to the human service needs of adults and families throughout King County.

# STAY CONNECTED



## Learn more

Check out these helpful links to learn more and get involved.

[VSHSL Website](#)



## Get Involved

Subscribe to the VSHSL newsletter and the DCHS blog for the latest news on the VSHSL renewal, including the 2023 VSHSL Summit and upcoming community meetings.

[VSHSL Newsletter](#)

[DCHS Blog](#)



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