



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

Ordinance 19267

Proposed No. 2021-0062.2

Sponsors McDermott, Balducci, Kohl-Welles
and Dembowski

1 AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the
2 qualified electors of King County at a special election to be
3 held in King County on August 3, 2021, of a proposition
4 providing for resident oversight and authorizing a property
5 tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in
6 chapter 84.55 RCW for a six-year consecutive period at a
7 rate of not more than \$0.19 per one thousand dollars of
8 assessed valuation in the first year, and limiting annual levy
9 increases to three percent in the five succeeding years, all
10 for the purpose of funding prevention and early
11 intervention strategies and a capital grants program to
12 improve the health and well-being of children, youth and
13 their communities.

14 **STATEMENT OF FACTS:**

15 1. In 2015, King County enacted Ordinance 18088, placing a six-year
16 Best Starts for Kids levy on the ballot. King County residents voted and
17 approved the Best Starts for Kids levy to fund programs and services that
18 support promotion, prevention and early intervention for King County's
19 children, youth and families.

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20 2. The goals of the Best Starts for Kids levy that voters approved in 2015
21 are to ensure babies are born healthy, King County is a place where
22 everyone has equitable opportunities for health and safety as they progress
23 through childhood and communities offer safe, welcoming and healthy
24 environments that help improve outcomes for all of King County's
25 children and families.

26 3. Since its inception, the Best Starts for Kids levy has funded five
27 hundred and seventy programs and has reached over five hundred seven
28 thousand babies, children, youth and families throughout the county with
29 community-driven programming. Levy programs trained sixty-eight
30 thousand child care providers, pediatricians, community health workers
31 and other staff who work with children and youth on healthy child
32 development and racially and culturally appropriate care. The Best Starts
33 for Kids levy distributes resources across the region, focusing investments
34 on those most in need.

35 4. In June 2020, the council directed the executive in Motion 15651 to
36 produce an assessment report to inform deliberations regarding renewal of
37 the current Best Starts for Kids levy. The report includes assessment of
38 early measurements and successes, challenges in launching this first levy,
39 an analysis of the levy's advancement of equity and early
40 recommendations for renewal. Executive staff combined findings of staff
41 research, a community survey conducted in June 2020, community input
42 from ten geographically based virtual community listening sessions as

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43 well as five virtual stakeholder listening sessions, and input from ongoing
44 Best Starts for Kids community partner learning circles. In total, almost
45 seven hundred and twenty community responses informed completion of
46 the report. The council accepted the assessment report in Motion 15769.

47 5. The existing Best Starts for Kids levy will expire at the end of 2021.
48 Renewal of the Best Starts for Kids levy requires voter approval.

49 Acknowledging the importance of the Best Starts for Kids levy in serving
50 the county's children, youth and families with upstream promotion,
51 prevention and early intervention programs, and, in light of the current
52 impact the COVID-19 pandemic, has had on the health and well-being of
53 the children, youth and families of King County as well as the regional
54 economic and human services systems including child care, the Best Starts
55 for Kids levy warrants renewal.

56 6. Over twenty-five thousand babies are born in King County each year.
57 County residents under twenty-five years old comprise thirty percent of
58 the population. Fifty-three percent of the people under eighteen years old
59 in King County are Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

60 7. Research shows that there are significant disparities in the health and
61 well-being of King County residents. The percentage of children five and
62 under living in poverty is as low as five percent in some regions of the
63 county and as high as fifteen percent in other regions. Infant mortality is
64 four times higher for American Indian/Alaskan Natives compared to
65 whites and more than two times higher for African Americans. Thirty-

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66 eight percent of toddler and preschoolers are not flourishing and resilient
67 in King County, and that number rises to seventy-one percent for
68 elementary-aged children. Among youth, thirty-three percent report
69 depressive feelings and twenty-four percent report using alcohol or other
70 illicit drugs. Twenty-six percent of youth say they do not have an adult
71 they can talk to and thirty-three percent do not feel strong connection to
72 their family. Two thousand students, disproportionately low income and
73 Black, Indigenous and People of Color, drop out of school each year in
74 King County while research shows that by 2024, almost ninety percent of
75 living wage jobs in the county will require some sort of post-secondary
76 education.

77 8. Child care is unaffordable for many families in King County, and child
78 care for our youngest residents now costs more than in-state, public
79 college tuition. King County's child care workforce is disproportionately
80 made up of women and Black, Indigenous and People of Color, as well as
81 immigrants and refugees. Wages remain low, with providers earning near-
82 poverty-level salaries.

83 9. In 2010, Ordinance 16897 was enacted, establishing the King County
84 Strategic Plan, 2010-2014. In 2015, the council passed Motion 14317,
85 updating and revising King County's vision, mission, guiding principles
86 and goals. Included within the county's goals are improving the health and
87 well-being of all people in King County, implementing alternatives to
88 divert people from the criminal justice system and ensuring that county

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89 government operates efficiently and effectively and is accountable to the
90 public.

91 10. The county's guiding principles in the King County Strategic Plan,
92 2010-2014 command that pursuit of the county's goals should address the
93 root causes of inequities to provide equal access for all. In 2015, the
94 county established the office of equity and social justice and, the following
95 year, the office of equity and social justice produced the 2016-2022 Equity
96 and Social Justice Strategic Plan. King County actively engages in equity
97 and social justice efforts to eliminate racially and ethnically disparate
98 health and human services outcomes in King County, and this is a priority
99 that shall guide the council and the executive in the process of designing,
100 administering and evaluating the policies and programs related to the
101 renewed Best Starts for Kids levy, if approved by voters.

102 11. In 2014, Ordinance 17738 was enacted, establishing the youth action
103 plan task force and providing policy direction regarding the development
104 of a youth action plan. In addition to their work with the youth action
105 plan, the youth action plan task force members helped shape the current
106 Best Starts for Kids levy. In 2015, the council passed Motion 14378,
107 adopting the completed youth action plan. The youth action plan
108 continues to provide guidance and policy direction for the Best Starts for
109 Kids levy.

110 12. The strategies supported by the Best Starts for Kids levy achieve a
111 variety of outcomes. Headline indicators used to measure these outcomes

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112 for children under six include the following: babies born with healthy
113 birth outcomes; children who are flourishing and resilient; children who
114 are ready for kindergarten; and children who are free from abuse or
115 neglect. Headline indicators for children and youth five to twenty-four
116 years old include the following: third graders who meet reading standards;
117 fourth graders who meet math standards; youth who are flourishing and
118 resilient; youth and young adults who are in excellent or very good health;
119 youth who graduated from high school on time; youth and young adults in
120 school or working; high school graduates who earn a college degree or
121 career credential; and youth who are not using illegal substances. Headline
122 indicators for Communities of Opportunity include: adults reporting good
123 or excellent health; youth who have an adult to turn to for help;
124 individuals engaged in civic activities; households paying less than thirty
125 percent or less than fifty percent of their income for housing; local
126 residents who are displaced; youth who eat fruit and vegetables at least
127 four times a day; households with income above two hundred percent of
128 poverty; and youth and young adults in school or working.

129 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

130 SECTION 1. Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this
131 ordinance unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

132 A. "Child care workforce demonstration project" means a strategy to improve the
133 provision of child care in King County supplementing wages of a test group of persons
134 who provide child care in exchange for wages and then reporting out on the effects of the

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135 strategy upon the quality of child care, including, but not limited to, the strategy's effects
136 upon workforce turnover, workforce experience of poverty and workforce experience
137 levels.

138 B. "Children and youth" means persons through twenty-four years old.

139 C. "Communities of opportunity" means the strategy described in Section VII of
140 the Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan, that is Attachment A to Ordinance 18373.
141 Communities of Opportunity is designed to improve equity by addressing the race- and
142 place-based inequitable health and well-being outcomes in King County. Communities
143 of Opportunity supports communities in improving the health, social and economic
144 outcomes of those specific communities, and does so by partnering with communities to
145 shape and own solutions.

146 D. "King County child care subsidy program" means a strategy to reduce or fully
147 subsidize the cost of child care to low-income families in King County.

148 E. "Levy" means the levy of regular property taxes for the specific purposes and
149 term provided in this ordinance and authorized by the electorate in accordance with
150 Washington law.

151 F. "Levy proceeds" means the principal amount of moneys raised by the levy and
152 any interest earnings on the moneys.

153 G. "Limit factor" for the purposes of calculating the levy limitations in RCW
154 84.55.010, means one hundred three percent.

155 H. "Strategy" means a program, service, activity, initiative or capital investment
156 intended to achieve the purposes described in subsection 4.B. of this ordinance.

157 I. "Technical assistance and capacity building" means assisting organizations

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158 seeking or receiving levy proceeds to enable the organizations to apply for, implement
159 and improve delivery of a strategy or strategies for which expenditures of this levy are
160 eligible.

161 J. "Youth and family homelessness prevention initiative" means an initiative
162 intended to prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming
163 homeless.

164 **SECTION 2. Levy submittal.** To provide necessary moneys for the purposes
165 identified in section 4 of this ordinance, the King County council shall submit to the
166 qualified electors of the county a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy in
167 excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for six consecutive years,
168 with collection commencing in 2022, at a rate not to exceed \$0.19 per one thousand
169 dollars of assessed value in the first year of the levy period. The dollar amount of the
170 levy in the first year shall be the base upon which the levy amounts in year two through
171 six shall be calculated. In accordance with RCW 84.55.050, the levy shall be a regular
172 property tax levy subject to the limit factor as defined in section 1 of this ordinance.

173 **SECTION 3. Deposit of levy proceeds.** The levy proceeds shall be deposited
174 into a dedicated subfund of the best starts for kids fund, or its successor.

175 **SECTION 4. Eligible expenditures.**

176 A. If approved by the qualified electors of the county, such sums from the first
177 year's levy proceeds as are necessary may be used to provide for the costs and charges
178 incurred by the county that are attributable to the election.

179 B. After the amount authorized in subsection A. of this section, the remaining
180 levy proceeds shall be used to:

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181 1. Promote improved health and well-being outcomes of children and youth, as
182 well as the families and the communities in which they live, including, but not limited to:
183 capital investments for buildings and facilities, including, but not limited to, housing, that
184 serve children and youth; ensuring adequate services and supports for pregnant persons
185 and newborns; access to safe and healthy food; developmental screening for children and
186 youth; programs that care for children and youth when they are not at home including
187 child care and out-of-school-time programs; programs and services that promote social
188 and emotional well-being, mental health and a sense of belonging, connection and
189 positive identity in children and youth; and programs and services that provide academic
190 support and promote academic achievement;

191 2. Prevent and intervene early on negative outcomes, including, but not limited
192 to, poor birth outcomes, developmental delays, chronic disease, social emotional
193 isolation, mental health challenges, substance abuse, dropping out of school,
194 homelessness, domestic violence and effects of systemic racism and incarceration;

195 3. Reduce inequities in outcomes for children and youth in the county; and

196 4. Strengthen, improve, better coordinate, integrate and encourage innovation in
197 health and human services systems and the agencies, organizations and groups addressing
198 the needs of children and youth, their families and their communities.

199 C. Of the eligible expenditures described in subsection B. of this section, an
200 amount of each year's levy proceeds shall be allocated first for the purposes in
201 subsections D. and E. of this section. In the levy's first year, which is 2022, the total
202 amount allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be twenty-two and
203 one-half percent of the first year's levy proceeds remaining after the amount authorized in

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204 subsection A. of this section. In the levy's subsequent years, the amount to be allocated
205 for the purposes in subsections D. and E. of this section shall be allocated so that the six-
206 year total sum of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section
207 shall be no less than two-hundred forty million dollars. The implementation plan
208 required by section 7 of this ordinance shall describe the annual allocations of levy
209 proceeds that accomplish allocation requirements of this subsection C. of this section.
210 After the annual allocation of levy proceeds required by this subsection C. of this section,
211 each year's remaining levy proceeds shall be divided in the following proportions and
212 used for the following purposes:

213 1. Fifty percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer strategies
214 focused on children and youth under six years old and their caregivers, pregnant persons
215 and individuals or families concerning pregnancy.

216 2. Thirty-seven percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer
217 strategies focused on children and youth age five or older;

218 3. Eight percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer
219 Communities of Opportunity; and

220 4. Five percent shall be used to plan, provide, fund and administer the
221 following:

222 a. performance measurement of levy-funded strategies, evaluation and data
223 collection activities;

224 b. stipends for children and youth serving as appointed members of the King
225 County children and youth advisory board under conditions prescribed by the final
226 children and youth advisory board update report required by section 6 of this ordinance in

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227 the final form of the children and youth advisory board update report that the council
228 adopts by ordinance.

229 c. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by metropolitan
230 park districts in King County. Of the moneys identified in this subsection C.4.c., an
231 amount equal to the lost revenues to the metropolitan park districts resulting from
232 prorationing as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, up to one million dollars, shall be provided
233 to those metropolitan park districts if authorized by the county council by ordinance;

234 d. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by fire districts,
235 in an amount equal to the lost revenues to the fire districts in King County resulting from
236 prorationing, as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, for those services, to the extent the
237 prorationing was caused solely by this levy and if authorized by the county council by
238 ordinance; and

239 e. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by public
240 hospital districts, in an amount equal to the lost revenues to the public hospital districts in
241 King County resulting from prorationing, as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, for those
242 services, to the extent the prorationing was caused solely by this levy and if authorized by
243 the county council by ordinance.

244 D. Except for levy proceeds reserved for the purposes in subsection E. of this
245 section, the levy proceeds annually reserved in subsection C. of this section shall be used
246 to plan, provide, fund, administer, measure performance and evaluate a youth and family
247 homelessness prevention initiative, a King County child care subsidy program, a child
248 care workforce demonstration project and technical assistance and capacity building
249 activities, including one million dollars annually for a capacity building grant program

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250 that includes providing support to grantees to assist with the development of
251 infrastructure in geographic locations lacking services or service infrastructure. The
252 grant program to support capacity building that includes providing support to grantees to
253 assist with the development of infrastructure in geographic locations lacking services or
254 service infrastructure shall be described in the implementation plan required in section 7
255 of this ordinance and must include the development of new organizations and expansion
256 of existing organizations. The youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, King
257 County child care subsidy program, child care workforce demonstration project and
258 technical assistance and capacity building activities required in this subsection shall be
259 described in the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance.

260 E. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, if the total projected levy
261 proceeds exceeds eight hundred twenty-two million dollars, the levy proceeds greater
262 than eight hundred twenty-two million dollars shall be used to provide grants designed to
263 support repairs and expansion of buildings and facilities, that serve children and youth,
264 and to support the construction of new buildings and facilities that will serve children and
265 youth. Such buildings and facilities that serve children and youth shall include, but not
266 be limited to, housing and child care, early learning and recreational facilities. However,
267 the total levy proceeds used to provide grants shall not exceed fifty million dollars.
268 Additionally, if the total projected levy proceeds falls below eight hundred seventy-two
269 million dollars, the amount of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes of this subsection
270 shall be first reduced before any other reduction in the total amounts allocated for the
271 purposes in subsections C. and D. of this section. This capital grants program shall be
272 described in the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance.

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273 Additionally, the executive shall propose in the implementation plan required in section 7
274 of this ordinance the amount of levy proceeds to be allocated for the capital grants
275 program and a process for determining annually if a reduction to the amount of levy
276 proceeds allocated for the purposes of this subsection is necessary and the amount of any
277 such reduction. The executive shall also propose in the implementation plan required in
278 section 7 of this ordinance a policy for prioritizing capital investments in new buildings
279 or facilities as compared to capital investments in existing buildings or facilities.

280 **SECTION 5. Call for special election.** In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321,
281 the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with
282 the primary election on August 03, 2021, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular
283 property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director
284 of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state
285 constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the
286 said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council
287 shall certify that proposition to the director of elections in substantially the following
288 form:

289 PROPOSITION___: The King County Council passed Ordinance ____
290 concerning funding to improve the well-being of children, youth, families
291 and communities. If approved, this proposition would fund promotion of
292 positive outcomes, prevention and early intervention related to: child care;
293 healthy pregnancy; newborn family supports; youth development;
294 community well-being; and crisis prevention and intervention for children
295 and youth, including homelessness prevention. It would authorize an

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296 additional six-year property tax levy for collection beginning in 2022 at
297 \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation with the 2022 levy amount being
298 the base for calculating annual increases of up to 3% in 2022 - 2026.

299 Should this proposition be:

300 Approved? _____

301 Rejected? _____

302 SECTION 6. Governance. The King County children and youth advisory board
303 described in K.C.C. 2A.300.510 shall serve as the oversight and advisory board for the
304 levy and its strategies, except for Communities of Opportunity, if the levy is approved by
305 the qualified electors of the county. The communities of opportunity-best starts for kids
306 levy advisory board described in K.C.C. 2A.300.520 shall serve as the advisory body for
307 Communities of Opportunity if the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the
308 county. If the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the county, the executive shall
309 by October 01, 2021, transmit to the council for consideration and adoption by ordinance
310 a best starts for kids governance update report that describes and explains necessary and
311 recommended changes to sections of the King County Code and applicable ordinances
312 that describe the composition and duties of the King County children and youth advisory
313 board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board. A
314 proposed ordinance or ordinances shall accompany the best starts for kids governance
315 update report, which ordinance or ordinances, upon enactment, would accomplish the
316 changes recommended by the best starts for kids governance update report. Among the
317 purposes of recommended changes listed and described within the best starts for kids
318 governance update report shall be to update the King County children and youth advisory

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319 board's duties and composition as needed to enable the King County children and youth
320 advisory board to oversee and advise on the levy and to extend the existence of the
321 communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board to coincide with the
322 levy. The executive shall consult with the King County children and youth advisory
323 board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board in
324 preparing the children and youth advisory board update report.

325 **SECTION 7. Implementation plan.**

326 A.1. Not later than July 31, 2021, the executive shall transmit to the council for
327 review and adoption by ordinance a proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan
328 that identifies the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of
329 levy proceeds described in section 4 of this ordinance. The Best Starts for Kids
330 implementation plan shall also include a framework to measure the performance of levy
331 strategies in achieving their outcomes and require an annual report on levy expenditures,
332 services and outcomes, including:

333 a. total expenditures of levy proceeds by program area by ZIP Code in King
334 County; and

335 b. the number of individuals receiving levy-funded services by program area
336 by ZIP Code in King County of where the individuals reside at the time of service.

337 2. The executive shall develop the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation
338 plan in consultation with the King County children and youth advisory board and the
339 communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board. In developing the
340 Best Starts for Kids implementation plan required in this section 7, the executive shall
341 consider and promote harmony with the previous Best Starts for Kids Implementation

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342 Plan that is Attachment A to Ordinance 18373, specifically describing which strategies
343 from the previous Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan shall continue in the
344 proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan. Additionally, in developing the Best
345 Starts for Kids implementation plan, the executive shall ensure that residents throughout
346 King County and in any city in King County can access levy-funded strategies regardless
347 of the availability of similar services and programs provided by their city or in their
348 community. In developing the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan, the
349 executive shall also to the maximum extent possible take into consideration the King
350 County Youth Action Plan, adopted by Motion 14378.

351 B. Levy proceeds may not be expended for the purposes described in section 4 of
352 this ordinance until the effective date of the ordinance with which the Best Starts for Kids
353 implementation plan is adopted.

354 **SECTION 8. Exemption.** The additional regular property taxes authorized by
355 this ordinance shall be included in any real property tax exemption authorized by RCW
356 84.36.381.

357 **SECTION 9. Ratification and confirmation.** Certification of the proposition by
358 the clerk of the county council to the director of elections in accordance with law before
359 the general election on August 3, 2021, and any other act consistent with the authority
360 and before the effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

361 **SECTION 10. Severability.** If any provision of this ordinance or its application

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362 to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the
363 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.
364

Ordinance 19267 was introduced on 2/2/2021 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 4/20/2021, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Ms. Balducci, Mr. Dembowski, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Kohl-Welles, Ms. Lambert, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Upthegrove, Mr. von Reichbauer and Mr. Zahilay

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DocuSigned by:
Claudia Balducci
7E1C273CE9994B6...

Claudia Balducci, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:
Melani Pedroza
8DE1BB375AD3422...

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, _____.

DocuSigned by:
Dow Constantine
4FBCAB8196AE4C6...

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None