



Seattle Human Services Coalition Recommended Budget Policy Framework for an Equitable Recovery

The Seattle Human Services Coalition is a multi-cultural, multi-racial community of human service providers and concerned individuals **committed to helping everyone across Seattle fulfill their potential by building a foundation of well-being for all residents.** When all people, regardless of race, or gender, or where they were born, have the opportunity to reach their full potential in life, everyone benefits through the shared contributions that create strong thriving communities.

In the best of times, human service providers are essential to build and support well-being across the city, so that everyone has what we need to thrive at every stage of life. Human services are an essential part of the infrastructure of well-being across Seattle, working to ensure that all our communities can thrive - across diverse neighborhoods, cultures, and generations. From youth development to senior centers, community clinics, domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy, food banks and meal programs, homeless shelters as well as prevention of homelessness, human services build well-being. We enable Seattle residents to reach their full potential.

When life is threatened by unpredictable storms like the current coronavirus pandemic, human services are even more critical to provide support and repair well-being. People from all walks of life have been challenged in different ways by the current public health crisis. Human service providers have stepped up: marshalling our resources and run toward the danger to respond. We call on our elected officials to continue to move forward together with us to support each other with the awareness that we are truly in this together.

We also have to re-build from this pandemic: what kind of system do we want to build for our future? The coronavirus pandemic has done damage to the health and economic lives of Seattle residents in varying degrees. In doing so the pandemic has uncovered underlying imbalances and inequities in our social systems that, like cracks in a building's foundation, have made it more difficult for too many of us to weather this storm. Yes, the storm hit all of us, but we weren't all in the same boat. As we re-build from the pandemic, all of us must commit to redesigning and improving our social systems so that everyone has the solid materials and sturdy foundation we need to thrive. **SHSC members urge our elected leaders and policy makers to apply what we've learned in this crisis to budget decisions so we can recover equitably, re-building our systems to work for everyone.**

What does it mean to make budget policy decisions with the goal of an Equitable Recovery?

First, an Equitable Recovery requires that you do no harm to the people of Seattle who have been hit hardest.

- At a minimum this means no cuts to successful, needed community health and human services.
- This also requires making no cuts to improvements of services made during the pandemic, such as:
 - Sustain the increase in shelter capacity and type of shelter that restructure our programs away from congregate shelter, and into models that support health – best is housing, next is private rooms, and at the least semi-private sleeping space. All should be 24/7 services.
 - Sustain the increased accessibility through virtual/remote access.

Second, an Equitable Recovery calls for re-envisioning the use of City of Seattle resources and more equitable revenue with the highest goal being rebuilding to remedy inequities that have been built into our systems.

- Establish new, progressive revenue.
- Fund true cost of providing human services including more equitable compensation of human services workers on par with value and difficulty of their work.
- Examine the SPD and Criminal Justice budget allocation and reduce funding:
 - Shift Criminal Justice system from punitive to restorative;
 - Reduce incarceration and probation systems and other systems which are not shown to improve community safety;
 - Reallocate resources to community-led housing, health, and human services.
- Work with regional partners to assure that everyone has access to technology and internet connection.

*We know that Seattle's Mayor and Councilmembers share with us the desire to live in a city that is both just and thriving. Budget policy is one place that our policy makers can take concrete steps to move in that direction. **The members of SHSC urge you to move Seattle closer to being a just and thriving community by applying this recommended framework to create budget policy for an Equitable Recovery.***

Member Coalitions

- * Advocacy, Organizing & Capacity Building * Community Health Council of Seattle King County *
 - * Disability Services Committee * Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence * King Co Early Learning Coalition *
 - Meals Partnership Coalition * Non-Profit Anti-Racism Coalition
 - * Seattle Food Committee * Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness *
 - * Seattle Helpline Coalition * Services for Seniors * Youth Development Executives of King Co *
- 206.325.7105 | shsc@shscoalition.org | www.shscoalition.org**

[October 2020- Post-mayoral budget proposal addendum](#)

SHSC 2021-22 Budget Recommendations for Seattle City Council following Mayor's proposed budget

- The Seattle Human Services Coalition appreciates the City Council's creating and passing the **Jump Start progressive revenue source** which has provided the means for minimizing cuts to services in this time when the pandemic has suppressed revenues, but support to residents is critical. We also appreciate the way the Mayor's proposed budget not only **continues current community health and human services but also adds to these resources** that build well-being and trust that City Council will sustain that funding.
- At the same time **SHSC members urge City Councilmembers to apply to budget decisions the awareness that has surfaced widely during this crisis about the urgent need for racial equity so we can recover equitably, re-building our systems to work for everyone.** This will have a positive impact on reducing the need for emergency services.
- An Equitable Recovery calls for re-envisioning the use of City of Seattle resources and more equitable revenue with the highest goal being rebuilding to remedy inequities that have been built into our systems. **We feel strongly that Council can go further than the Mayor's proposed budget does.** As some Councilmembers noted in the opening Budget Committee session, shifting our institutional structures charged with community safety away from militarized responses and toward systems that support well-being requires **divesting from responses that endanger communities as well as investing in more supportive responses.**
- We appreciate that some actions and resources are planned for 2021, but urge City Council to take the counsel of Black-led community organizations & put further steps in place in 2021 than those outlined by the Mayor's proposed budget.