



**SEATTLE
HUMAN
SERVICES
COALITION**

**City of Seattle
Budget Recommendations
to Build an Equitable Recovery**

Summer 2021

SHSC 2021 & 2022 City of Seattle Budget Recommendations to Build an Equitable Recovery

Table of Contents

- **What is an Equitable Recovery?**..... p.1
- **Top priority actions to build an Equitable Recovery**.....p.1
- **Second tier priorities for investments to build an Equitable Recovery**.....p.3
 - Food Banks.....p.3
 - Meals.....p.6
 - Elders.....p.8
 - Youth Development.....p.10
 - Neighborhood Helplines.....p.12
 - Gender-Based Violence.....p.13
- **Full description of an Equitable Recovery**.....p.16
- **Summary Table of Recommended Investments**.....p.20

SHSC 2021 & 2022 Budget Recommendations to Build an Equitable Recovery

- ▲ Our overarching goal is for the City to invest its resources to build an **Equitable Recovery**.

What is an Equitable Recovery and why do we need it?

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.

This pandemic has also heightened awareness of oppressive inequities throughout our social structures. We have to re-build from this pandemic. In doing so we have the opportunity to ask: 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, much of that based on long-term racial oppression, which 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 reimagining and improving our social systems to make them more equitable so that everyone has the solid materials and sturdy foundation we all need to thrive. **SHSC members urge our elected leaders and policy makers to move forward together with us and BIPOC-led organizations to support each other so we can recover equitably, re-building systems that work for everyone.**

- ▲ **Top priority actions to build an Equitable Recovery is first to sustain current, successful community health and human services**, including adjusting contracts for inflation according to ordinance.

Public investments in community health and human services are the walk of the talk of social justice. The Mayor and City Council have demonstrated ongoing leadership and vision by sustaining and continuing to strengthen these critical investments. However, the pandemic and ongoing dramatic increases in income inequality in our city have increased the importance of actions to build well-being and move us beyond dependency allowing more Seattle residents to thrive.

Any cuts to current levels of successful community health and human services would undermine progress toward our shared goals, as we support our communities in this uncertain environment.

It is important to note that with the costs to provide services in Seattle rising significantly, it is necessary to include the adjustment for inflation mandated by ordinance in order to maintain current levels of service.

Support fair wages for human services workers to help all Seattle residents reach their full potential. Achieving the top priority to sustain current, successful services requires that we begin the work to compensate human services workers more equitably in alignment with the difficulty and responsibility of the work.

Governments at all levels rely on the skills and expertise of nonprofit organizations to build well-being in communities so that individuals can reach their potential at every stage of life. Yet, many governments have not been good partners when it comes to reimbursing nonprofits for the costs of providing quality services.

Human service providers and elected officials agree that human services workers are precariously underpaid for the difficult work they do. The people who take care of our children, provide healthcare in community-based clinics, help people without homes connect with resources, engage our elders, support our youth, and care for people with disabilities are often paid at such a low level that they qualify for the very same public support programs they administer. **Their pay does not reflect the education required, difficulty, or value of their work to build the economic, emotional, physical, developmental, and social well-being for all community members.**

This pay discrepancy, with compensation well below the market rate for jobs with similar worth or value, means that it is increasingly difficult for human services workers to live in our communities and stay in human services jobs. This results in high turnover and the disruption of relationships between providers and program participants which are essential for the successful outcomes we all want, as well as resulting in additional recruitment and training costs for providers and funders. Equitable pay would recognize the important role human service organizations play in supporting the future workforce, offering attractive entry-level positions, and pathways for professional advancement, thus stabilizing and strengthening the services and organizations that build well-being in our communities.

We now have the opportunity to take the meaningful first step to correct the long-term legacy of under-paying human service workers for the skills, education, experience, and integral importance of this work: we urge the City of Seattle to work with providers to conduct a comparable worth pay equity analysis of human services jobs as compared with jobs in different fields, especially those in the private sector, that require similar skills, education, and difficulty by allocating resources for a robust comparable worth analysis of benchmark jobs.

Recommended investment: \$600,000 to \$750,000 in 2022

King County is currently conducting a wage survey of providers focusing on those who receive funding through the Veterans Seniors and Human Services Levy and while this information may be

useful, it does not look at the core components of the jobs and how they are compensated. Only a true comparable worth analysis will take this meaningful step.

Questions about this issue or the recommendation?

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▲ **Second tier priorities for investments to build an equitable recovery are focused in two areas:**

▲ **Operational increases that should be maintained to ensure an equitable recovery.**

The increased investment during COVID for some human service sectors, while not necessarily meeting the need caused by COVID, at least got us closer to the levels needed pre-COVID. This increased level of service and investment needs to be maintained to reach our shared goals. And services that experienced a decrease in funding need to receive increased investment in operational dollars to ensure the full spectrum of interrelated services are available to support our communities to recover.

▲ **Systemic changes that are needed in order to reach more equitable outcomes.**

These changes may require capital funds as well as program investment and will be foundational to the way we center our communities. In this section especially, we encourage you to refer to the important work done by the Black Brilliance Research Project as a guiding light. <https://southseattleemerald.com/2021/03/03/black-brilliance-research-project-releases-final-report/>

Second tier priorities for investments to build an equitable recovery include the following actions recommended by human service providers across the city.

Seattle Food Committee, which comprises the people who run the 27 food banks that Seattle residents depend on, recommends the City make investments that build the capacity of our food system to equitably support the increased need in our community. Across our city, food banks have expanded access to food by increasing home delivery and offering everything from drive-thru or personal-shoppers to ensure community members can safely receive healthy food during the pandemic.

Food prices have increased dramatically. Food banks are one of the first places individuals and families turn to in a time of crisis. A Seattle Times articles from March 6, 2021 reported a Nielsen study that the median amount spent on food totaled about \$152 per week, a 25% increase between February to August 2020 over the same period in 2019.

Not only does a food bank visit provide food, it also has a direct impact on a family's wallet by helping them save their limited resources for other basic needs including housing and utilities. With the pandemic, food banks are having an even greater impact for families, as food bank staff workers help people navigate other services and supports.

The COVID-related impact at the individual agency level can at times be quite exceptional, whether small or large. Small agencies, such as Seattle Indian Center, have seen their service rates more than quadruple during the past year without a significant growth in the amount of food available - despite temporary extra help from State and Federal sources - so their customer families are receiving less food as a result.

Mid-sized agencies have managed to keep up better but need expanded investments in 2022 in order to maintain that as temporary forms of support end. For instance, Chicken Soup Brigade serves more than triple the customers per month as they did pre-COVID but has at least found the needed food resources to maintain their level of service for all these new customers during the pandemic.

Large agencies have also experienced tremendous increases in demand from their communities, demand which is not currently diminishing. Food banks such as Ballard or Rainier Valley, have seen incredible overall agency growth in services and significant expansion in labor intensive programs like home delivery. With Food Lifeline ending their food distributions in Rainier Beach and at North Seattle College last month and with National Guard support ending in July, new City resources are needed to replace these to ensure community food needs can still be met.

Despite vaccines and the move to reopen, we anticipate that the recovery from the pandemic will be a multi-year effort. It is critical that we invest in an *equitable* recovery. For food banks this means strengthening our capacity to meet the increased need for healthy, culturally appropriate food, as well as serving as a trusted resource that breaks down barriers to services and helps our clients navigate a range of programs that lead to an the support to build an equitable recovery.

We recommend the city invest in an equitable recovery that builds the capacity of food banks, including:

- **Building agency capacity with investments in staffing.** Food bank workers have been on the front lines of this crisis since day one. As we experienced increased demand, the National Guard stepped in to provide additional capacity. With the departure of the National Guard and volunteers slowly returning, food banks are hiring temporary and permanent staff to meet the increased need around food and connection to critical services. For example, many food banks have dramatically expanded their home delivery programs. Shifting back to a business as normal strategy is not 100% possible due to low vaccination rates in economically fragile communities.

To maintain this level of delivery, food banks must invest in hiring more staff. When more people access food banks there is a corresponding increase in the need for a range of human services. An investment in staffing will allow food banks to increase their staffing and better help program participants navigate much needed services. This includes all of the new services and resources that have changed primarily because of COVID, such as rental assistance, eviction prevention, healthcare access, and other benefits in which food bank staff enroll program participants.

At the same time, we need to ensure our staff receive equitable pay with living wages. Most members of our teams receive significantly less than this, which is why we recommend **an**

investment in staffing to help food banks provide more equitable compensation and increase staffing. The Seattle Food Committee is also in full support of the comparable worth analysis recommended by all the members of SHSC.

Recommended investment: \$2,500,000

- **Advancing racial equity and increasing access to healthy food by providing food banks with greater purchasing power.** Investments in the food system to increase capacity for purchasing of culturally and dietarily appropriate foods. Providing food banks with more **flexibility to meet the needs of their community** through funds that support local farmers and markets. This also allows food banks to move beyond overreliance on grocery store donations and to expand existing efforts to purchase from small, minority-owned farms and culturally responsive vendors that are rooted in our communities. This purchasing power is important in achieving our shared goals with the city to advance racial equity in our food system.

Recommended investment: \$1,000,000

- **Investing in all city food banks.** The Seattle Food Committee includes 27-member food banks that work together to provide food to residents across the city. Several food banks are not funded by the city. We recommend that the city leverage Federal Relief Funds in food banks, regardless if the food bank currently holds a city contract, with a long-term strategy of ensuring more food banks that support Seattle residents are funded through the next HSD RFP.

Recommended investment: \$300,000

- In addition to operational investments to meet the increased needs, it is time that the city **invests in the food system's infrastructure.** According to a June 2020 article from *The Commonwealth Fund* titled *Essential Social Services Are Struggling to Survive the COVID-19 Crisis*, the authors wrote, "Funders are increasingly recognizing that their aid must help organizations pay rent and establish technology capabilities and infrastructure. Funders should consider awarding less-restrictive funds to CBOs in the future to better position them in the event of another crisis."

Similarly, our food system's physical capacity has been tested with the pandemic and found insufficient. Most agencies have struggled with their facilities, equipment, and vehicles in order to meet high demand. Many food banks have very limited storage space, which prevents food banks from receiving, storing, and distributing perishable and non-perishable items. The CARES funding that was provided was limited in scope and could only address immediate needs. This restrictive funding could not be used towards investments that would improve the long-term capacity to meet both the immediate need of the pandemic and the recovery efforts. For example, funding could be used for a time-limited investment such as a leased truck for a few months or short-term storage but not to purchase new refrigeration that would have a long-term impact. Flexible funding to invest in the physical capacity of individual food banks will help ensure everyone has access to healthy, culturally and dietarily appropriate foods.

Recommended investment: \$2,000,000

For more info on these recommendations contact: Jen Muzia at jenm@ballardfoodbank.org or 206-789-7800 ext. 8 or Marcia Wright-Soika at marciaws@familyworksseattle.org or 206.694.6726.

Meals Partnership Coalition is made up of the people that provide meals that are nutrient dense and culturally appropriate to Seattle residents who need nutritional support. Together they recommend these budget actions to reach our shared goals:

MPC first received funding support from the City in 2000 as a coalition of more than 100 providers. To “create efficiencies”, the City administration of 2012 withdrew system support to MPC, resulting in difficulties coordinating resources, yet the coalition continued to work together to maintain and grow an emergency meal system. In spring of 2020 we stepped up to an extremely large plate, delivering millions of meals throughout the COVID 19 pandemic.



Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic, Meals Partnership Coalition (MPC) meal providers were on the front line as first responders each day, serving the nutritional needs of those struggling with hunger in our city. Meal providers made sure that those most vulnerable in Seattle did not go hungry, including providing meals at shelters that quarantined those with COVID 19.

- During 2020, system support for MPC was restored at \$82,000. In today’s economy and job market, that provides funding for only one staff member. To make better use leveraging available resources we recommend an additional **investment for staff, training, and education** that is specific to meal programs, such as ServSafe certification.

Recommended investment: \$125,000

- Our most urgent physical need is **additional cold, frozen and dry storage** for the thousands of pounds of fundamental ingredients used each day to meet the need of the myriad meal providers supplying meals to children, elders, homeless veterans, those living in shelter or unsheltered, single moms, families living in vehicles, and more.

Much of the food meal providers use for their meals are recovered and rescued pounds that have very little life left and need immediate cold and frozen storage. Without that storage that food goes to waste. Space is also needed to store all the donated and rescued dry good pounds received each day from grocery rescue, corporate partners, and other donors. For the past several years we (MPC/SFC) have been working with King County Solid Waste and Harvest Against Hunger to find the right type of storage to help create equity in the food system, as well as develop and nurture partnerships throughout the food community; including meal programs, local farmers, and food banks. The King County Executive has proposed \$1 million for a capital build-out, which we hope will be funded. We are looking for a **City funding match for staffing and to equip the warehouse**. This will benefit MPC

providers, SFC providers, local farmers, and others serving the nutritional needs of the Seattle community. Ultimately, it will serve tens of thousands of Seattle residents that count on the programs to meet their nutritional needs.

Recommended investment: \$1,000,000

- **Transportation:** Food Bank Providers have enjoyed much needed transportation support from the City for many years. Food that is appropriate for food bank distribution differs from meal program ingredients the way a grocery store differs from a restaurant. The food that is served by meal programs is exceptionally perishable and needs dedicated refrigerated vehicles to transport pallets of meal ingredients, equating to thousands of pounds daily. These vehicles are vital to the millions of meals that are served by Seattle’s Meal providers annually. Currently MPC is using vehicles provided by OSL, a Seattle based meal provider that works in food recovery, to deliver Food Lifeline, Northwest Harvest, and City Bulk Buy food (as well as PPE) to MPC members and other programs. The 26-foot refrigerated vehicle, dedicated for meal programs, will need an experienced driver, adequate insurance, and maintenance for the vehicle and the refrigeration unit.

Recommended investment: \$150,000

- **Meal Programs Bulk Buy:** Throughout the past 20 years the split for food bank funding versus meal provider funding was 20/80: 20% for meal programs and 80% for food banks. This was an arbitrary number not based on collected data. Both systems have become more adept at data collection and our food distributor partners have also understood the importance of tracking meal provider data along with food bank data.

As a result, in 2020, with recommendations from HSD, an agreed upon split, until further data could be analyzed, was increased to 40/60. Food Lifeline recommended a 50/50 split. Meal Providers support our Food Bank partners and do not want to see a decrease in their funding. We recommend a more equitable distribution of funds bringing funding for both imperative systems into equal balance.



Additional bulk buy funding will be used to purchase culturally appropriate foods, protein, produce, and dry goods, for a variety of populations, including ingredients for Native indigenous meals, east African, Congolese, and Cham communities; Asian and South Pacific, Hispanic, children, elders, those on medical diets, food sensitivities, and others. **We recommend an equitable/balanced distribution of bulk buy funds, increasing support for both systems with a 50/50 split.**

Recommended investment: \$700,000

For more info on MPC recommendations contact:

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Senior Services Coalition People who provide services for Seattle’s elders bring forward these budget recommendations:

- **Operational increases that should be maintained to ensure an equitable recovery.**

Lunch delivery and to-go meals: a hybrid program

During the pandemic, many senior centers and programs transitioned in-person community dining programs to providing delivery and to-go meals for seniors in the community. For all of the Seattle based senior centers, this meant doubling or even quadrupling the amount of meals served.

What it meant for participants and older adults across Seattle is that they were provided with a meal at home during a pandemic when it was recommended that older adults stay at home and not go out due to the high risk of COVID-19.

Throughout the pandemic, it was also discovered that seniors receiving these meals were not the same people who would come in to the senior center or program for an in-person meal. They have different needs and fall under a category of seniors who may not have family or friend support and connecting with people is a struggle.

It is not just the meal. It is human connection and a reason to get out of bed and get dressed each day. There were many stories shared and a few are below:

Best sandwich I ever had -- I have never been waited on in my life and to have someone come to my door and deliver such a wonderful sandwich was the very best. The bread was like my mother made, so many good things in it. Wow, the biggest cookie and an apple. I can't say in words how much I appreciate the wonderful lunches from the Senior Center.

The turkey loaf and mashed potatoes saved my life!

A caregiver wanted us to know that a year ago, the person she supports had slowed down eating to the point where they were not eating every day. Since they have begun receiving our delivered lunches, they are eating every day and she thinks it is because they look forward to a lunch delivery! They get up and dressed by 11:00 to make sure they are ready. She wanted to thank us because of the improvement she has seen in this person's life.

At Sound Generations, for example, the meal delivery and to-go programs were made possible by kitchen and delivery volunteers and the Sound Generations Hyde Shuttle drivers who pivoted from taking seniors to appointments to delivering meals for the senior centers and programs, as well as other partners such as Community Vans.

As we bring back in-person community dining to the senior centers and programs, we know that many of the older adults we serve will continue to stay at home for various reasons and not be coming to a congregate meal. In other words, senior programs have identified a new client base

and need, thus wish to continue to provide our newly established meal services to these previously unidentified program participants. Senior programs want to formalize this as a hybrid program – providing both in-person dining as well as deliveries and to-go meals. Sustaining the hybrid meal programs require additional support and resources.

We recommend the City of Seattle support this new hybrid programming by providing funding for the following:

1. Additional paid staff: to transition from relying on delivery volunteers and Hyde Shuttle because they will go back to normal business practices. Additional kitchen help will also be necessary to assist with making meals and preparing them for delivery.
2. Supplies and Gas: During the pandemic donations were coming in for food and to-go containers and this will not continue. Also will need to pay for gas now in that volunteers and Hyde Shuttle were covering these costs.

Costs will be different for each senior program depending on the needs identified and current resources. More funding would, of course, allow more senior programs to engage in this type of hybrid program. We have included three centers as examples of how funds could be allocated to expand the connections to this newly identified set of elders:

- Ballard NW Senior Center: 1,000 meals/month
 - Staffing: \$1500/month
 - Gas: \$500/month
 - To-go containers: \$300
 - Food: \$1200/month
 - TOTAL = \$42,000/year
- Senior Center of West Seattle: 1,000 meals/month
 - Staffing: \$1500/month
 - Gas: \$1,000/month
 - To-go containers: \$600/month
 - Food: \$2500/month
 - TOTAL = \$67,200/year
- Lake City Seniors Program: 1,500 meals/month
 - Staffing: \$1000/month
 - Gas: \$250/month
 - To-go containers: \$300/month
 - Food: \$2500/month
 - TOTAL= \$48,600/year

Total minimum recommended investment: \$157,800

- **East African Senior Center Program**

The East African community has a vision for developing a more robust senior center program to provide wrap-around programs and services. The need for this development was identified a number of years ago by the Area Agency on Aging, but funding has not yet been allocated. From an equity standpoint, it is time to prioritize this community.

There are several ways this could be accomplished. For example, currently members of the East African Community engage with the meal program that Sound Generations operates two days a week at Yesler Community Center and one day a week at the Northgate Community Center. Both programs operate in partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) Food and Fitness Program. SPR supports expanding the program at both sites.

Aging and Disability services could continue to cover the meal program, but funding is needed for staff to organize the programming and offer social services. The program model could be similar to the successful model used by the Lake City Senior Center Program. In this case, Sound Generations would be committed to providing the infrastructure, senior center, and aging expertise, advocacy, and current partnerships with the East African community for this project.

This collaborative model, whoever the partners are, could leverage partners' existing resources allowing expansion to take place with minimal new investment.

There is currently no senior center focused on the needs of the East African community. What currently exists are meal programs for specific groups (Somali, Ethiopian, Eritrean), some of which operate outside Seattle and open a limited number of days per week.

In the case of the collaborative model in this example, investing \$225,000 per year would underwrite a program coordinator, social worker, administrative support, and rent, and will allow expansion to three days per week at Yesler plus two days per week at Northgate Community Centers.

Recommended investment: \$225,000

For more info on these recommendations contact:

Michael Neguse, Southeast & East African Program Coordinator at Seattle Neighborhood Group, michael@sngi.org; and Joanne Donohue, joanned@soundgenerations.org, O: 206.727.6206 | C: 206.409.0840

Youth Development Executives of King County *People in Seattle who work with our youth make this budget recommendation for 2021 & 2022:*

- Middle school supports from the City of Seattle have been significantly reduced; these are critical development years for youth of ages 12-14 years. The shifts from Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative (SYVPI) investments to a combined youth development & youth employment RFP from the Human Services Department that focuses on ages **14-24**, as well as shifts in the Families, Education, Preschool and Promise levy managed by the City's Department of Education and Early Learning, (DEEL) has resulted in diminishing investments in middle schools and for mentoring and reengagement. Youth development funds have also been redirected to older youth, with a focus on employment services. At the same time King County's Best Starts for Kids funding is directed to all of King County and heavily invests in a different age group with childcare and after school programs. (Ages 5 – 12)

With the Pandemic, the need for increased supports to this critical age group (**12-14**) is clear to ensure young people are able to engage in the transition from middle school to high school, but

middle school funding for community-based programs continues to fall behind. We recommend an annual additional investment of \$3M with a focus on middle school youth development supports. **Recommended investment: \$3,000,000**



The Youth Development Sector has been underfunded and with the racial disparities that COVID-19 has worsened, Seattle’s Youth Development programs are deeply committed to supporting our Black, Indigenous, and Young People of Color to ensure they thrive when they return to school after this pandemic experience and not just survive.

In addressing the third pillar from the [Black Brilliance Research Report](#), YDEKC believes that the City of Seattle should build capacity to invest in young people age 5 to young adult, enhancing the childcare investment and the middle school out of school time network. There are many community-based organizations that are willing to prepare and advance intergenerational support, expanded learning and mentoring that would help address deficit of systemic violence, trauma, and multi-generational support.

An adequate portion of all and any investments should be for children, youth, and families. As the [Black Brilliance Research Project](#) mentions “Childcare and intergenerational out of school time supports were big priorities for several teams, particularly for children facing systemic violence, trauma and multi-generational disadvantages.” (14)

We also encourage you to refer to the **Cost of Funding High Quality Youth Development Programs across the State of Washington**, researched and written in 2020 by YDEKC intern, Teshika Hatch, where you can learn more about the youth development field and sustaining the increasing support and flexibility implemented during the pandemic for childcare for K-5 providers.



Our Mission: YDEKC connects, strengthens, and amplifies the leaders of youth-serving organizations so that Black, Indigenous, and young People of Color thrive.

For more information on YDEKC recommendations contact:

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Guneeta Chadha, Policy & Advocacy Coordinator | gchadha@ydekc.org | (510)709-8229

Seattle Helpline Coalition recommends investing in

- **Neighborhood Based, Grassroots Homelessness Prevention**

Renters in King County owe an average of \$4,750 in back rent, according to the National Equity Atlas. With the end of the eviction moratorium approaching, it is vital that we make rental assistance easily accessible to our community. This year Seattle City Council worked to protect renters through legislation. We now need to increase investment in low-barrier, neighborhood-based rental assistance programs like those of member agencies in the Seattle's helplines, as well as expand access by funding similar grassroots programs at food banks across the city. Three of the four member agencies in the Seattle Helpline Coalition offer food bank programs in addition to their financial assistance programs, as the two are a natural fit and provide opportunities to connect program participants to additional needed resources.

Neighborhood-based grassroots organizations are nimble and responsive to their communities' needs. While there has been significant investment in rental assistance programs from the county and the city to larger organizations, it has not been made available to Seattle resident through smaller agencies who are already working within local communities, have established relationships, and can be easier to access for assistance. Our neighbors typically come to us first for support and we are able to provide financial assistance for their utilities and rent, while also helping them navigate and connect to additional assistance and programs. As local agencies we can remove barriers and bureaucracy that makes rental assistance easier to access.

Throughout the pandemic, the need for financial assistance program through the helplines has increased. At North Helpline, for example, our budget for assisting our neighbors with rent has tripled yet we are still unable to keep up with the need. At Ballard Food Bank we have adjusted as well. Prior to the pandemic rental, assistance was provided when a client was facing eviction, now they pay rent on payment plans that the client has set up with the landlord. Landlords and clients are reaching out to the food bank to make these connections. Ballard has also adjusted the frequency and amount of assistance provided to ensure that clients can access the service multiple times a year as well as increase the amount available based on family size.

People of color are disproportionately experiencing homelessness in our city. Nearly 26% of people who are homeless identified as African American/Black or Native American/Alaska Native in a City survey of 1,000 people experiencing homelessness. This highlights the disproportionate nature of the issue of homelessness that we work to address.

Diversion-based service models are cost-effective and a neighborhood-based approach allows services to address the unique needs of the communities that they serve. In a recent survey of families who received financial assistance from several of the helplines, 90% of the households who returned the survey reported that they remained stably housed after receiving financial assistance.

In addition, at West Seattle Food Bank, 56% of households served have experienced an increase in household income after receiving help. This speaks to the fact that folks who are in times of crisis or transition are accessing these services. With the assistance of neighborhood based organizations, they are able to remain secure in their homes through that time and continue on the path to thrive.

The sooner a program intervenes in a housing crisis, the lower the cost, according to HUD. A study published in 2016 that looked at homelessness prevention programs in Chicago found that one-time financial assistance greatly reduced the likelihood of homelessness (76%). That same study found that the per person benefits of preventing homelessness is a cost savings of over \$20,000 for a community.

To ensure that funds are readily available for neighbors in our community to maintain their housing, we recommend the following investments in rental assistance:

- Increase city's current investment for rental assistance through helplines by \$50,000 in each neighborhood with helplines. **Total Recommended investment: \$200,000**
- Provide funds for Community Connectors at additional food banks, like Rainer Valley Food Bank, to launch more neighborhood-based rental assistance. **Recommended investment: \$600,000**

These investments would leverage current city investments and expand access across Seattle to these vital services that keep our neighbors housed.

<https://southseattleemerald.com/2021/06/03/communities-on-the-margins-brace-for-end-of-the- eviction-moratorium/#more-68007>

For more information on these recommendations contact:

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Jen Muzia, Ballard Food Bank, jenm@ballardfoodbank.org, 206-789-7800, ext. 8

Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence includes people who provide services and support to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) recommend that the City of Seattle equitably and meaningfully address GBV by **investing an additional \$4 million towards the evidence-based model of survivor-driven, mobile advocacy with flexible financial assistance.**

Gender-based violence is a major public health problem that profoundly impacts Seattle and King County residents. Estimates are that as many as 50% of women and a smaller percentage of men have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence in their lifetimes and that the prevalence is similar for people along the gender spectrum. **Domestic and sexual violence are also among the top precursors to housing instability, mental health issues, and substance abuse**, with numerous studies documenting domestic violence as the number one cause of homelessness for women, children, and youth.

Even prior to COVID, gender-based violence programs have experienced huge operational and systemic gaps in capacity. The global pandemic greatly exacerbated these gaps. Since the beginning of 2020, programs have experienced:

- **Unprecedented increased demand for services.** An April 2020 survey of GBV organizations in Seattle and King County showed 56% experienced an increase in the numbers of survivors seeking help.
- **Significant impacts of the pandemic on victims and their families,** including more complex safety and support needs, increased isolation, greater mental health needs, greater economic and housing instability, **increased severity of violence** (including on children) and a shutdown of the courts.
- **Significant impacts of the pandemic on organization staff.** In the survey, 100% of respondents cited staff stress as a major concern. This comes on top of agencies stretched beyond the breaking point due to decades of underinvestment in staff compensation and agency infrastructure.

We must act now to ensure comprehensive and robust support to victims and survivors of gender based violence. Given these gaps, we **recommend that the City increase its investment to address gender-based violence by \$4 million.**

Specifically we recommend that the City:

1. **Invest to stabilize and increase the capacity of GBV community-based organizations, including funding for adequate staffing for critical survivor-driven mobile advocacy with flexible financial assistance,** especially in light of increased demand and complexity of survivors’ needs.

Recommended investment: \$ 3,000,000

Survivor-driven mobile advocacy with flexible financial assistance is an evidence-based practice that leads to increased safety, self-efficacy, and higher quality of life for survivors and should be fully funded by City investments.

Several research studies, including our state’s nationally recognized Domestic Violence Housing First Program, found that the *Mobile Advocacy* model of domestic and sexual violence services promoted long-term stability, safety and well-being for survivors and their children. *Survivor-driven* describes a partnership where survivors lead the process, choose their own goals, and define what is going to be safer for themselves. *Mobile advocacy* meets survivors where they are- both literally and figuratively- meeting out in community and meeting the unique needs and strengths of each survivor wherever they are in the process of surviving abuse. *Flexible financial assistance* offers advocates the ability to use funds in support of each survivor’s unique safety needs, ranging from housing and utility assistance, relocation costs, education, job training, legal/medical fees, transportation, food, and other costs identified as interfering with a survivor’s ability to create a safer and more stable life. Additionally, the flexible mobile advocacy model is particularly suited to smaller, culturally specific, ‘by and for’ providers, allowing them to add capacity and provide housing and other forms of assistance without requiring significant capitol infrastructure.

A recent evaluation of this model (focused on domestic violence survivors who were homeless or at immediate risk of becoming homeless) found that the program was successful in helping 86% of clients gain or maintain stable housing, and decreased the level of danger for most participants. Survivors identified that the individualized services and flexibility of the program, coupled with the meaningful financial assistance, was key to improving their overall well-being.

By supporting the diverse field of community-based advocates who have led the way in supporting survivors disproportionately impacted by oppression, the city will be preventing violence, homelessness, and behavioral health crises, and offering community-based safety alternatives outside of harmful systems. Community based advocacy services designed specifically for survivors of gender-based violence have been shown to be extremely effective in supporting survivors' immediate and long-term safety and helps them avoid needing to engage with less effective and often harmful legal and emergency services. They are also often the primary way survivors connect to other services they need. It's important that these advocacy services are independent of other established systems in order to maintain survivors' confidentiality, safety, and trust, especially for BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and immigrant survivors.

- 2. Invest in expanding existing or new community-based programs specifically intended to provide alternatives to the criminal legal system in protecting survivors' safety and holding people who cause harm accountable. Recommended investment: \$1,000,000**

Community-based, culturally specific, 'by and for' organizations have a wealth of knowledge and expertise in **expanding alternatives to the criminal legal system both through survivor driven advocacy and community based programming.** It is important to note that many gender-based violence survivor advocacy providers in our region are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-led organizations and are reaching and supporting survivors who are disproportionately impacted by systemic oppression. Even with limited funds, capacity, and support from mainstream funding sources, gender based violence programs have offered a range of innovative supports outside of the criminal legal system to protect survivors' safety and hold people who cause harm accountable. Examples include prevention programming, healthy relationship classes, enlisting trusted community members to intervene when violence occurs, restorative and transformative justice models, culturally specific healing spaces, and community accountability. Gender based violence programs need meaningful financial investments to continue this innovative and transformative work.

For more info on these recommendations contact: Merrill Cousin, merril@endgv.org, 206-313-8749; or Amarinthia Torres, amarinthia@endgv.org, 706-766-8189.



Community health and human service providers who run community health clinics, and early learning programs, as well as homelessness prevention and response are also SHSC Member Coalitions (like the Community Health Council of King County, the King County Early Learning Coalition, and the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness) and support this package of recommendations along with their colleagues who contributed Tier 2 recommendations.



Members of the Seattle Human Services Coalition are working together toward an *Equitable Recovery*

What is an Equitable Recovery and why do we need it?

In the best of times, human service providers would be 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, a robust human services response is even more critical to provide support and repair well-being. People from all walks of life are weary and have been challenged in different ways by the current public health crisis. Human service providers have stepped up: marshaled our resources and run toward the danger to respond. We also call on our elected officials to continue to move forward together with us and specifically BIPOC-led organizations to support each other with the awareness that we are truly in this together.

This pandemic has also heightened awareness of oppressive inequities throughout our social structures. We have to re-build from this pandemic: and we have the opportunity to ask: 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, much of that based on long-term racial oppression, which 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 reimagining and improving our social systems to make them more equitable so that everyone has the solid materials and sturdy foundation we all need to thrive. **SHSC members urge our elected leaders and policy makers to move forward together with us and BIPOC-led organizations to support each other so we can recover equitably, re-building our systems to work for everyone.**

We know that our elected officials and policy makers share with us the desire to live in communities that are just and thriving. Evolving public policy and institutional structures are ways we all can take concrete steps to move in that direction. **The members of SHSC urge our public representatives to move Seattle & King County closer to being a just and thriving community by redesigning public policy and practices to lead to an Equitable Recovery.**

We share a vision of a Just and Thriving Community!

We choose to work together to build, nurture, and sustain a community where all people have access to the basic necessities, opportunities, resources, and respect to reach their full potential.

In the world we know today, **racism and other systemic inequities hold us back from equality of opportunity and freedom for all to thrive.** Economic, educational, and health systems are among those systems structured in favor of those with wealth and power. These systems also undervalue the assets and resources in middle and low income families and communities.

We also share the understanding that freedom and justice for all includes both equal support and opportunity as well as personal initiative and mutual accountability.

The vision of a Just and Thriving Community serves as a catalyst and inspiration to bring us together to act on this vision.

Motivation comes from the changes we will see as we all make progress in becoming a just and thriving community, including:

- economic, environmental, and social sustainability;
- freedom from inequity based on race, color, national origin, age, income, veteran status, education level, gender, physical, intellectual, or mental disability, religious belief or practice, sexual orientation, or by language or cultural practices;
- safe and affordable housing;
- adequate nutritious food;
- access to quality physical, mental, and behavioral health care;
- living wage jobs to support self and family;
- affordable and available community activities;
- universal, transformative, empowering quality education;
- high quality, affordable child care that is conveniently located and meets the needs of working parents;
- freedom from physical harm as well as mental and emotional coercion; and
- a sense of being included and connected, with the value of each individual recognized and honored.

We want our children to
inherit a better world.



Tenets for Change

We believe adoption of the following principles is critical to moving forward together:

- Every person is valuable.
- It is an essential human right for every person to have access to the basic necessities and resources for human survival *and advancement*.
- Human services must be operated, staffed, and funded in a manner that is humane, holistic and emphasizes physical and cultural accessibility. People who are in need must not be devalued for having needs, nor should they be devalued in the delivery of services.
- Collaborative partnerships must be established between funders, government, educators, human service providers, media, police, the criminal justice system, and the community at large to reach our shared goals.
- Public Finance reform is essential to build and maintain healthy communities and community services.
- Ongoing assessment and evaluation of basic beliefs and practices is a critical responsibility for every individual in our society to ensure that we do not endorse policies or practices limiting access to crucial resources.

Framework for moving forward

Understanding of the context of our current environment will play a role in how we move forward toward our shared vision of a Just and Thriving Community.

1. Structural Racism

Disparities in outcomes exist relative to race in a wide variety of economic, social, and health outcomes. All of these are connected to social institutions such as education, criminal justice, medical care, banking, housing, and employment. Identifying and dismantling the ways that racism influences the value sets within those systems is necessary to reaching our vision of a just and thriving community.

2. Economic Trends

Economic trends like increasing income inequality and globalization policies that favor capital over labor undermine our goals. These must be addressed in order to see sustainable change in our communities.

3. Social Determinants of Health

The greater the ratio of spending on human services relative to medical services, the better the *health* outcomes achieved. While the U.S. spends far more on medical care than other nations, the U.S. also allocates proportionately less to supports for health like human services and prevention, with the result of life expectancy lagging behind other developed nations. We must build a sustainable network of life cycle services needed to support strong, healthy communities, including both services needed in a crisis and ongoing service that provide the building blocks to success.

4. Measuring Success

This speaks directly to the question of who are human service providers accountable to and how do we honor the role of program participants in determining what success is and how to measure it. We all want our work to produce the most successful results possible and we want to measure those results. We also want to make sure that data collected by human service providers is useful to reaching our shared goals and worth the cost to collect it.

5. Regional Roles

It is decreasingly effective for any of the players in the region to “go it alone.” Not only will the work of individual players be less effective than it could be, but the whole will be less able to reach our shared goals. We need to come together as providers, communities, unions, governments, and other funders to determine our roles and create a true partnership.

*We can accomplish more together
than we all can separately!*

For more information, contact Julia Sterkovsky or Jerry Peerson at the Seattle Human Services Coalition, jsterkovsky@shscoalition.org or jpeerson@shscoalition.org, 206/325-7105.



Summary Table of Recommended Investments	2022
Top priority	
Pay equity analysis of human services jobs p.2	\$750,000
Second Tier Priorities	
Building agency capacity with investments in staffing p.4	\$2,500,000
Advancing racial equity and increasing access to healthy food by providing food banks with greater purchasing power. p.5	\$1,000,000
Investing in all city food banks p.5	\$300,000
Invest in the food system’s infrastructure p.5	\$2,000,000
Additional funding for meal coordination staff and training p. 6	\$125,000
Additional cold, frozen and dry storage for the thousands of pounds of fundamental ingredients used each day p.6	\$1,000,000
Recommended funding level for food transportation p.7	\$150,000
Meal programs bulk buy p.7	\$700,000
Funding new hybrid programming for senior services p.8	\$157,800
East African Community Senior Center program p.9	\$225,000
Middle school funding for community-based programs p.10	\$3,000,000
Increase investment in neighborhood-based rental assistance through Seattle’s helplines p.12	\$200,000
Expand Community Connectors at food banks to launch more neighborhood-based rental assistance programs p.12	\$600,000
Expand survivor-driven mobile advocacy with flexible financial assistance p.14	\$3,000,000
Expand existing or new community-based programs specifically intended to provide alternatives to the criminal legal system in protecting survivors’ safety and holding people who cause harm accountable. p.15	\$1,000,000

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TOTAL RECOMMENDED NEW INVESTMENTS \$16,707,800