

1 ..Title

2 AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the
3 qualified electors of King County at a special election to be
4 held in King County on August 3, 2021, of a proposition
5 providing for resident oversight and authorizing a property
6 tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in
7 chapter 84.55 RCW for a six-year consecutive period at a
8 rate of not more than \$0.19 per one thousand dollars of
9 assessed valuation in the first year, and limiting annual levy
10 increases to three percent in the five succeeding years, all
11 for the purpose of funding prevention and early
12 intervention strategies to improve the health and well-being
13 of children, youth and 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.
- 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 68,000 child
30 care providers, pediatricians, community health workers and other staff
31 who work with children and youth on healthy child development and
32 racially and culturally appropriate care. The Best Starts for Kids levy
33 distributes resources across the region, focusing investments on those most
34 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
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-
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

illicit drugs. Twenty-six percent of youth say they do not have an adult they can talk to and thirty-three percent do not feel strong connection to their family. Two thousand students, disproportionately low income and black, indigenous and people of color, drop out of school each year in King County while research shows that by 2024, almost ninety percent of living wage jobs in the county will require some sort of post-secondary education.

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

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

10. The county's guiding principles in the King County Strategic Plan, 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
96 Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan. King County actively engages in
97 equity and social justice efforts to eliminate racially and ethnically
98 disparate health and human services outcomes in King County, and this is
99 a priority that shall guide the council and the executive in the process of
100 designing, administering and evaluating the policies and programs related
101 to the 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
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
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
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.

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

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

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

SECTION 4. Eligible expenditures.

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

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

1. Promote improved health and well-being outcomes of children and youth, as well as the families and the communities in which they live, including, but not limited to: ensuring adequate services and supports for pregnant persons and newborns; access to

safe and healthy food; developmental screening for children and youth; programs that care for children and youth when they are not at home including child care and out-of-school-time programs; programs and services that promote a sense of belonging, connection and positive identity in children and youth; and programs and services that provide academic support and promote academic achievement;

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

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

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

C. Of the eligible expenditures described in subsection B. of this section, an amount of each year's levy proceeds shall be allocated first for the purposes in subsection D. of this section. In the levy's first year, which is 2022, the total amount allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be twenty-two and one-half percent of the first year's levy proceeds remaining after the amount authorized in subsection A. In the levy's subsequent years, the amount to be allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be allocated so that the six-year total sum of levy proceeds allocated for the purposes in subsection D. of this section shall be no less than two-hundred and thirty-five million dollars. The implementation plan required by section 7 of this ordinance shall describe the annual allocations of levy proceeds that accomplish

allocation requirements of this subsection C. of this section. After the annual allocation of levy proceeds required by this subsection C. of this section, each year's remaining levy proceeds shall be divided in the following proportions and used for the following purposes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

c. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by metropolitan park districts in King County. Of the moneys identified in this subsection C.4.c., an amount equal to the lost revenues to the metropolitan park districts resulting from

prorationing as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, up to one million dollars, shall be provided to those metropolitan park districts if authorized by the county council by ordinance;

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

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

D. The levy proceeds annually reserved in subsection C. of this section shall be used to plan, provide, fund, administer, measure performance and evaluate a youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, a King County child care subsidy program, a child care workforce demonstration project and technical assistance and capacity building activities. The youth and family homelessness prevention initiative, King County child care subsidy program, child care workforce demonstration project and technical assistance and capacity building activities required in this subsection shall be described in the implementation plan required in section 7 of this ordinance.

SECTION 5. Call for special election. In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321, the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with the primary election on August 03, 2021, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular

property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council shall certify that proposition to the director of elections in substantially the following form:

PROPOSITION___: The King County Council passed Ordinance _____ concerning funding to improve the well-being of children, youth, families and communities. If approved, this proposition would fund promotion of positive outcomes, prevention and early intervention related to: child care; healthy pregnancy; newborn family supports; youth development; community well-being; and crisis prevention and intervention for children and youth, including homelessness prevention. It would authorize an additional six-year property tax levy for collection beginning in 2022 at \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation with the 2022 levy amount being the base for calculating annual increases of up to 3% in 2022 - 2026.

Should this proposition be:

Approved? _____

Rejected? _____

SECTION 6. Governance. The King County children and youth advisory board described in K.C.C. 2A.300.510 shall serve as the oversight and advisory board for the levy and its strategies, except for Communities of Opportunity, if the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the county. The communities of opportunity-best starts for kids

levy advisory board described in K.C.C. 2A.300.520 shall serve as the advisory body for Communities of Opportunity if the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the county. If the levy is approved by the qualified electors of the county, the executive shall by October 01, 2021, transmit to the council for consideration and adoption by ordinance a best starts for kids governance update report that describes and explains necessary and recommended changes to sections of the King County Code and applicable ordinances that describe the composition and duties of the King County children and youth advisory board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board. A proposed ordinance or ordinances shall accompany the best starts for kids governance update report, which ordinance or ordinances, upon enactment, would accomplish the changes recommended by the best starts for kids governance update report. Among the purposes of recommended changes listed and described within the best starts for kids governance update report shall be to update the King County children and youth advisory board's duties and composition as needed to enable the King County children and youth advisory board to oversee and advise on the levy and to extend the existence of the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board to coincide with the levy. The executive shall consult with the King County children and youth advisory board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board in preparing the children and youth advisory board update report.

SECTION 7. Implementation plan.

A. Not later than July 31, 2021, the executive shall transmit to the council for review and adoption by ordinance a proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan that identifies the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of

levy proceeds described in section 4 of this ordinance. The Best Starts for Kids implementation plan shall also include a framework to measure the performance of levy strategies in achieving their outcomes. The executive shall develop the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan in consultation with the King County children and youth advisory board and the communities of opportunity-best starts for kids levy advisory board. In developing the Best Starts for Kids implementation plan required in this Section 7., the executive shall consider and promote harmony with the previous Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan that is Attachment A to Ordinance 18373, specifically describing which strategies from the previous Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan shall continue in the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan. In developing the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan, the executive shall also to the maximum extent possible take into consideration the King County Youth Action Plan, adopted by Motion 14378.

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

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

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

322 SECTION 10. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its application
323 to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the
324 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.