



King County

2026 State Legislative Priorities

Local Government Funding for Essential Services

Federal uncertainty exacerbates King County's structural fiscal gap. The cost of essential services and programs continues to grow, the federal government has eliminated and rescinded funding for those essential services and programs, and the Legislature provides limited revenue options for counties and has capped revenue growth from property taxes at one percent. To help us rise to the moment and preserve King County as a welcoming community where every person can thrive, we ask the Legislature to:

- Authorize local option progressive revenue tools that enable local governments to provide state mandated services, respond to federal fiscal changes, and continue to support our residents with needed services outside of state legislative sessions.
- Address inadequate funding for county roads and bridges.
- Provide a dedicated revenue source for King County's public health clinics to support the health care services delivered to 80,000 residents across King County annually.

Public Defense

Ensure that the state constitutional responsibility for public defense is met across the State of Washington, and that counties are able to fully implement new state Supreme Court mandated caseload standards.

Affordable Housing & Homelessness

- Provide robust operating and capital investments for affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, and emergency housing and shelters.
- Increase flexibility of existing revenue tools used to fund affordable housing.
- Increase accountability and technical support for municipalities to help them plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all income levels.
- Reduce siting barriers for permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, emergency housing, and emergency shelter.
- Increase investments in right-of-way encampment resolution programs that move people out of encampments and into housing.
- Preserve funding for eviction defense and rental and landlord assistance programs.
- Adopt policies that encourage and preserve homeownership and help address current and future housing needs.

Human Services

- Build on investments in the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance that support immigrant and refugee populations, including the Housing Stabilization Services Program
- Maintain access to Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) for ages 0-3 and supports for ages 3-5.
- Protect opportunities for employment and meaningful inclusion in the community for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Health Care & Behavioral Health

Recently adopted federal cuts and new Medicaid requirements will make it harder for many Washington residents to receive the physical and behavioral health care they deserve starting in 2026. Community behavioral health providers are especially reliant on Medicaid to deliver core treatment services and support workers, and the risk of widespread disenrollment is high.

- Protect access to care as federal Medicaid requirements and cuts are implemented, and preserve access to health care for those who have been categorically prohibited from Medicaid eligibility.

CONTACT

Mac Nicholson

Government Relations
Director, King County
Council

Cell: 206-218-7510
Email: mac.nicholson@kingcounty.gov

Joe McDermott

State Relations Director,
King County Executive

Cell: 206-604-0964
Email: jmcdermott@kingcounty.gov



2026 State Legislative Priorities

continued

- Maintain the state's investments in essential behavioral health crisis services, including funding to operate new facilities, sustain mobile response services, and preserve substance use disorder services and peer counselors.
- Remove barriers to ensure community-based crisis care is as easy to access as hospital emergency departments.
- Support efforts to maintain access to, and increase premium assistance for, Cascade Care plans purchased via the Washington Health Benefits Exchange or Apple Health.
- Ensure food access in light of federal cuts and eligibility restrictions to SNAP.
- Increase Apple Health enrollment slots.
- Correct oversight in Foundational Public Health Services funding.

Climate & Environment

- Enact the Hazardous Waste Modernization Act to shift the cost of hazardous waste collection and disposal from taxpayers and local governments to the producers of hazardous materials.
- Make permanent the Habitat Restoration Permit Pathway Program (previously the Habitat Recovery Pilot Program) and expand eligibility to more salmon-habitat projects approved or funded by state and federal sources.
- Provide additional funding for Floodplains by Design to help communities work to mitigate the risk of flooding, restore habitat for fish and wildlife, and preserve rapidly disappearing farmland.
- Mitigate the federal defunding of grant money for the Howard Hanson dam.

Transportation & Transit

- Maintain WSDOT infrastructure project investments; complete the Triangle project; fund the roundabout on SR 203/Tolt Hill Road.
- Sustain expanded water taxi funding.
- Provide funding for Safe System approach to traffic safety.
- Establish a Snoqualmie Pass truck parking facility to provide a safe place for truckers to park when the pass is closed.
- Revise the Zero Emission Sales Tax Exemption for Buses to include equipment and remove the cap of \$14 million. King County Metro's plans to acquire zero emission buses would use up to 85% of the cap amount over the next two years. The loss of this exemption will cost Metro millions of dollars that would otherwise be spent on the purchase of vehicles and providing service.
- Strengthen infrastructure protections and driver accountability as a means of preventing damage to our public highways and bridges.

CONTACT

Mac Nicholson

Government Relations
Director, King County
Council

Cell: 206-218-7510
Email: mac.nicholson@kingcounty.gov

Joe McDermott

State Relations Director,
King County Executive

Cell: 206-604-0964
Email: jmcdermott@kingcounty.gov

General Government

- Support our court's ability to provide in-person interpretation for all court users by addressing such issues as rates, scheduling, certification, and cost of training for Court Interpreters across the state.
- Increase county procurement thresholds to create efficiencies and facilitate more investment in women and minority-owned businesses. Currently, counties have the lowest limits, with other jurisdictions having higher limits.
- Create a state disaster relief fund to assist both public agencies and individuals to ensure local jurisdictions and individuals are not devastated by disasters as the FEMA thresholds increase and program practices change; allow jurisdictions to use funds otherwise restricted by state law to specific purposes to use (not borrow) some of those funds for emergency response purposes in a major disaster, if the Governor has declared a major emergency.
- Allow lodging tax revenue to be used to maintain and grow the tourism related workforce.
- Ensure the security of elections and data collected by public agencies.

1

Nov. 3, 2025

sf

Sponsor: Zahilay

Proposed No.: 2025-0287

1 **AMENDMENT TO PROPOSED MOTION 2025-0287, VERSION 1**

2 Insert Attachment A, 2026 State Legislative Priorities

3

4 **EFFECT: Adds the 2026 State Legislative Priorities, which is referenced in line 15-**

5 **16 of the original motion, as Attachment A.**