

Best Starts for Kids 2025 Annual Report

King County Council Regional Policy Committee
September 30, 2026



Best Starts for Kids

- Best Starts for Kids is a property tax levy passed by voters in 2015 and again in 2021. The first levy directed \$390 million in funds toward babies, children, young people, and families. The second levy, which lasts until the end of 2027, is investing more than \$880 million, including two new investment areas: child care and capital projects.
- Best Starts is an example of how communities and government can work together to create a positive generational impact for kids and families.



Our Approach



Promotion

Increasing positive opportunities available to babies, children, young people and their families.



Prevention

Decreasing factors that may prevent babies, children, and young people from growing up to be healthy and happy.



Early Intervention

Intervening early to support children and young people who need additional resources to succeed.



Policy & Systems Change

Working to change systems and policies so that all communities in the region can thrive and prosper regardless of race or place.

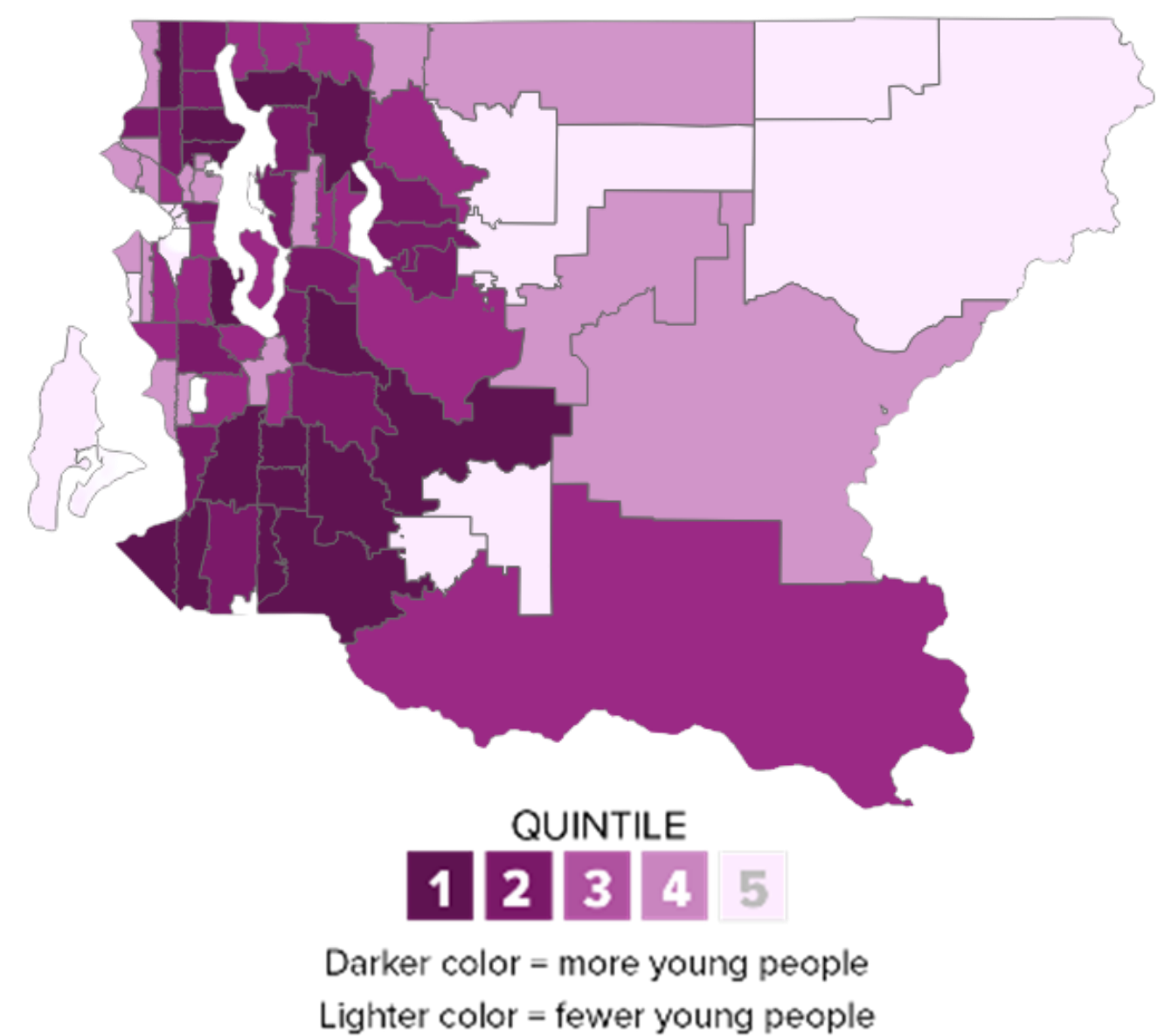


2025 Numbers at a High Level

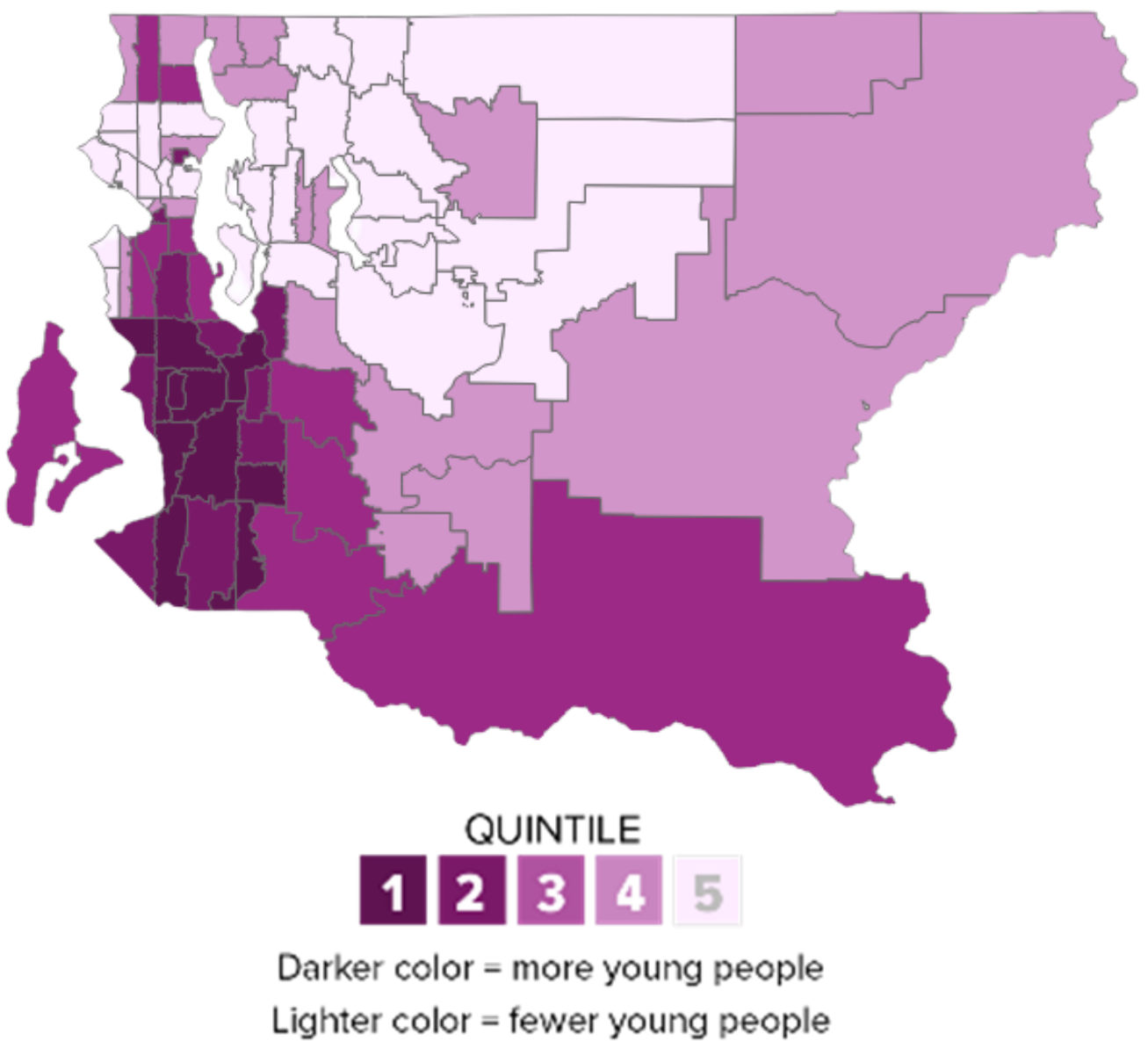
Best Starts partnered with 376 community-based organizations operating 614 programs to directly serve 167,978 children, youth, and caregivers. Best Starts also reached another 119,080 community members through activities and supported 1,637 members of the early childhood and child care workforce across King County.

Youth Population Density and Opportunity Level in King County

Population Density (ages 24 and under)

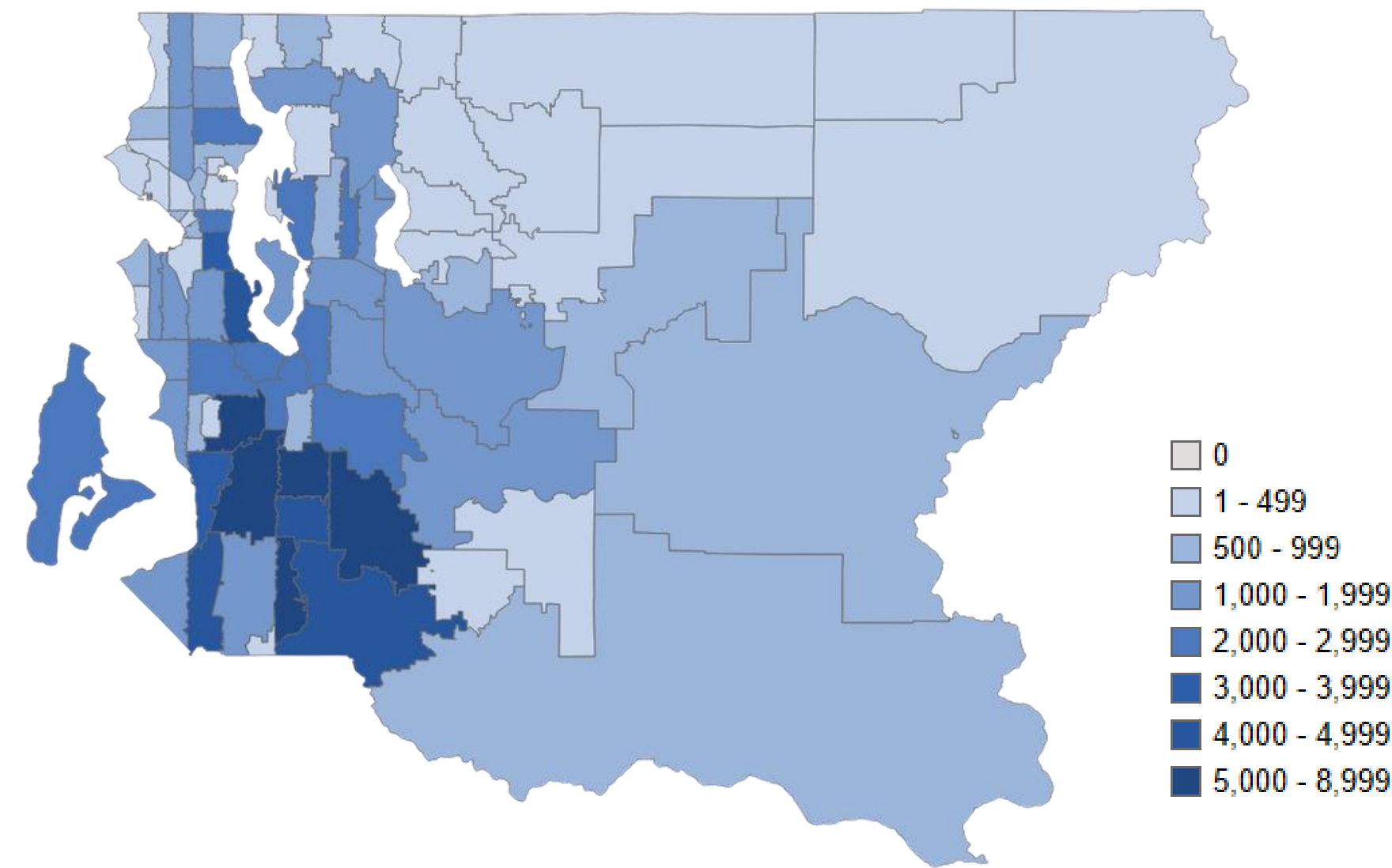


Child Opportunity Levels



Where Best Starts Serves

Best Starts Participants



Best Starts impacts families across King County. ZIP Codes with the most participants typically have more young people, lower opportunity, or both.

Who Best Starts Serves

49% of people served were under 5 years old

31% of people served were 5-24 years old

73% of people served identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color

641 people identified as transgender

1,736 people identified as a gender besides male or female

What Best Starts Funds

Investment Area	2025 Budgeted	2025 Expenditures
Child Care	\$42,844,276	\$23,200,127
Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative	\$5,126,200	\$3,151,104
Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	\$2,346,252	\$1,801,272
Subtotal	\$50,316,728	\$28,152,503
Investing Early (Prenatal to 5)	\$52,383,778	\$52,220,965
Sustain the Gain (5 to 24)	\$38,599,261	\$34,808,221
Communities of Opportunity	\$8,236,013	\$7,896,262
Data and Evaluation	\$5,736,351	\$5,761,192
Capital Projects	\$19,766,925	\$3,681,842
Total 2025 Expenditures	\$175,039,056	\$132,520,985

Key Focus Areas in 2025 Annual Report



**Meeting
Families'
Needs**



**Prioritizing
Well-being and
Mental Health**



**Cultivating
Opportunities
for Children
and Young
People**



**Strengthening
the Workforce**



**Building
Community
Power and
Capacity**

Meeting Families' Needs

Child Care Subsidy helped 478 families afford childcare for 837 children, resulting in 91 percent of primary caregivers reporting a positive change in their careers or education.

78 percent of young people participating in Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline programs made progress toward their educational goals.

Help Me Grow assisted 1,068 parents and caregivers by making 7,008 connections to opportunities for building social relationships.



Prioritizing Well-being and Mental Health



Family-Centered Developmental Programs partners directly screened 1,303 children for developmental progress and made 1,332 connections to needed services.

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers served 7,348 children, 78 percent of whom made progress in their social-emotional development with skills such as relating with caregivers, expressing their emotions, and adapting to change.

The Infant Mortality Prevention Network, under our Parent Child Health Services program, served 241 pregnant patients and 178 reported healthy birth outcomes (a 10 percent increase from 2024), meaning babies had healthy birth weights and pregnant parents did not experience premature birth or miscarriage.

Cultivating Opportunities for Children and Young People

The School-to-Work Program served 196 students and successfully transitioned 90 percent of students into adult supported employment services.

86 percent of youth enrolled in Youth Development programs experienced improved health and well-being.

78 percent of young people participating in Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline programs made progress toward their educational goals.



Strengthening the Workforce



93 percent of Technical Assistance recipients reported that their technical assistance provider helped them create a high-quality funding proposal.

133 child care facilities enrolled in the wage boost and 927 workers received the wage boost.

90 percent of providers who received Child Care Health Consultation support reported increased knowledge of community resources or other consultation topics.

Building Community Power and Capacity

Communities of Opportunities Systems and Policy Change partners engaged more than 4,600 people in capacity and skills-building events that contributed to 19 successful policy, systems, and environmental changes.

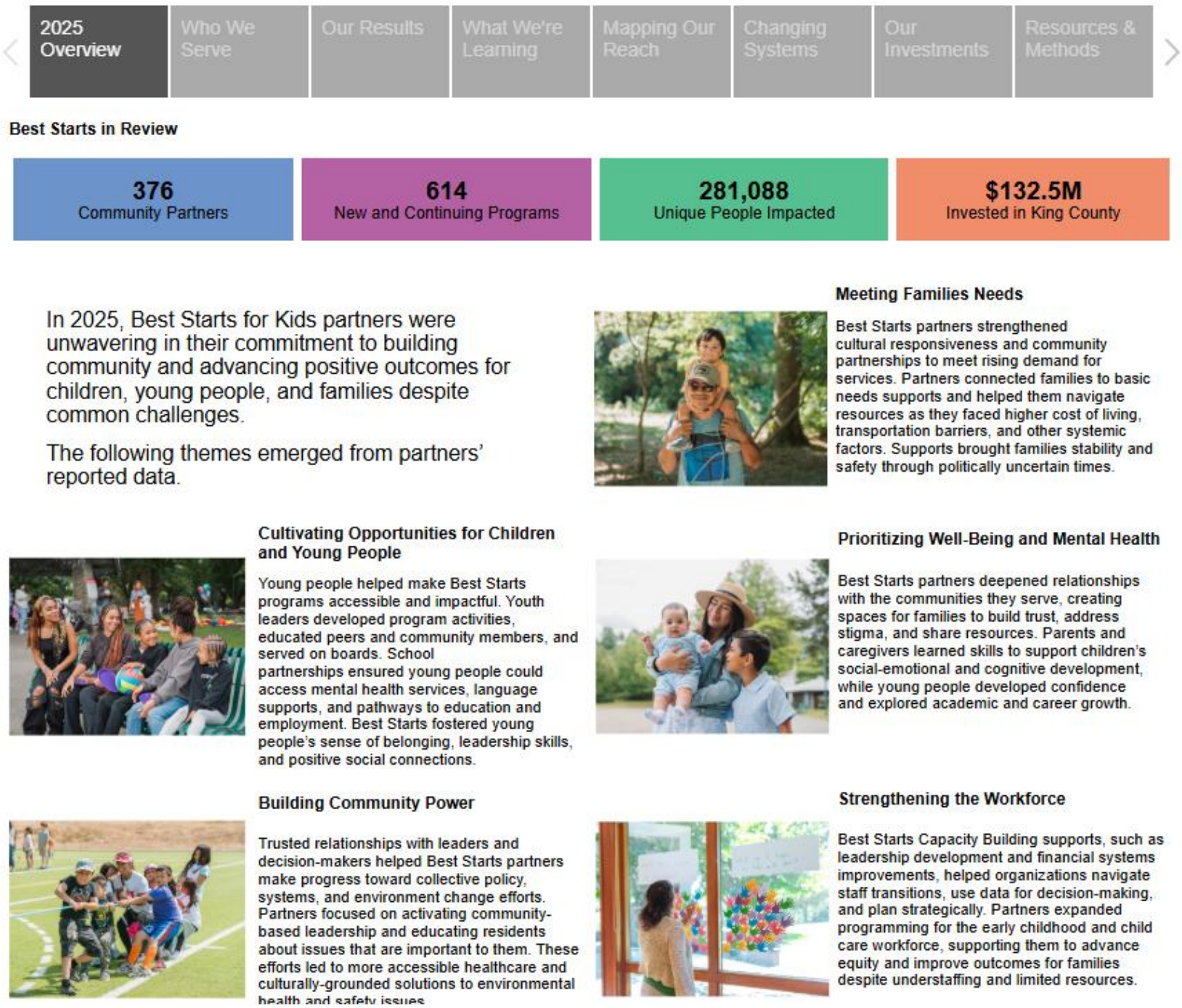
In 2025, Best Starts funded 30 Capital Projects and completed nine. Six of those nine completed projects reported recovered, preserved, or increased service capacity after completing their project.

Healthy and Safe Environments engaged over 5,000 youth in activities and developed 140 youth leaders.



Data Dashboard

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/2025BSKDashboard to view more Best Starts data, including detailed expenditures by investment area and strategy, as well as maps detailing expenditures by ZIP code.



Annual Report and A Year In Review

- 2025 Annual Report aligned with other levy reports to meet Council's needs
- Organized the report by key focus areas, to provide clarity about how our strategies work together
- Created a new designed brief, [A Year in Review](#), that captures key highlights from the report
- We hope this can be a communication tool you can share with your constituents





Questions?

Contact the Best Starts Co-Leads:

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Best Starts for
KIDS