



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**May 13, 2014**

**Motion 14125**

**Proposed No. 2014-0159.1**

**Sponsors** Dunn, Dembowski, Lambert,  
Hague, Phillips, McDermott, Gossett, von  
Reichbauer and Upthegrove

1           A MOTION requiring the executive to develop and submit  
2           for council review and approval a report on improving  
3           programs and services for incarcerated veterans in  
4           department of adult and juvenile detention jail facilities.

5           WHEREAS, King County is home to more than one hundred twenty-seven  
6           thousand current or former members of the United States military, reserves and National  
7           Guard who have served active duty. This population of veterans represents almost seven  
8           percent of the total county population, and

9           WHEREAS, the population of veterans in the state is growing and Washington  
10          State ranks twelfth nationwide for the total number of veterans, and King County is home  
11          to twenty-four percent of the state's population of veterans ranging from young adults to  
12          centenarians, male and female, and identify with a variety of races and backgrounds, all  
13          with equally varied needs, and

14          WHEREAS, the end of the United States military draft and conversion to an all-  
15          volunteer military in the 1970s substantially changed the demographic makeup of the  
16          military leading to the fact that there is a greater proportion of women and increased  
17          proportions of veterans of color than ever before in the history of the United States, and

18 WHEREAS, the local unemployment rate for veterans is estimated at over four  
19 percent for veterans in the job market, and

20 WHEREAS, approximately five percent of King County veterans live below  
21 poverty level and another over nine percent live between one hundred and two hundred  
22 percent of poverty level resulting in fourteen percent of all King County veterans fall  
23 below two hundred percent of poverty level. A disproportionate number of veterans of  
24 color are poor, and

25 WHEREAS, data collected in the Safe Harbors Homeless Management  
26 Information System suggest that sixteen to eighteen percent of homeless single adults are  
27 veterans. A review of the records for calendar year 2012-2013 from Safe Harbors  
28 identified one thousand nine hundred ninety-two veterans served by county shelters and  
29 transitional housing, and

30 WHEREAS, research has shown rates of posttraumatic stress disorder of fifteen to  
31 thirty percent among veterans who have served in combat zones. According to the New  
32 England Journal of Medicine, fifteen percent of soldiers who served in Iraq had  
33 concussions or other traumatic brain injuries while on active duty. These soldiers were  
34 significantly more likely to have posttraumatic stress disorder three months after their  
35 return home than soldiers without brain injuries. The national research suggests that  
36 thousands of King County veterans have or are experiencing posttraumatic stress  
37 symptoms to some degree, and

38 WHEREAS, in 2011, King County's department of community and human  
39 services identified one thousand two hundred ninety-one veteran clients receiving mental  
40 health services and recent research has shown that about forty-eight percent of homeless

41 veterans suffer from mental health issues, with slightly more than sixty-eight percent  
42 suffering from drug or alcohol or drug abuse problems and thirty-five percent having  
43 cooccurring psychiatric and substance use disorders, and

44 WHEREAS, research has shown that poverty, unemployment, chemical  
45 dependency, homelessness and mental illness, including brain injury, are contributing  
46 factors to criminality, and

47 WHEREAS, veterans coming into contact with the criminal justice system often  
48 have a number of unmet service needs across multiple domains, including mental health  
49 issues, substance abuse, homelessness and unemployment, and

50 WHEREAS, by introducing and incorporating veterans' justice programs, barriers  
51 to recovery can more effectively be addressed and resources can be put in place to help  
52 stabilize and support veterans and returns these individuals to their communities, and

53 WHEREAS, national statistics show that about fifteen percent of people who are  
54 incarcerated are veterans, however, in King County current data shows that veterans are  
55 estimated to comprise just two percent of the county jail population, the department of  
56 adult and juvenile detention however, acknowledges that the number of incarcerated  
57 veterans in King County is likely understated, and

58 WHEREAS, the county participates in the Incarcerated Veterans Reintegration  
59 Services, a joint endeavor between the King County department of community and  
60 human services and the Washington state Department of Veterans Affairs, where the  
61 needs of eligible veterans incarcerated in the King County Correctional Facility and other  
62 local jails are jointly addressed, offering veterans alternatives to jail, referrals to housing,  
63 employment and treatment services, and

64 WHEREAS, the King County veterans program serves low-income, homeless,  
65 disabled and at-risk veterans and their families and these veterans, current service  
66 members, National Guard members, Reserve members and certain dependents of  
67 veterans, and

68 WHEREAS, many veterans who become incarcerated also have a history of  
69 untreated drug and alcohol issues, poverty, homelessness or issues related to  
70 posttraumatic stress disorder, and

71 WHEREAS, the King County department of adult and juvenile detention operates  
72 one of the largest detention systems in the Pacific Northwest, with an adult system  
73 responsible for over thirty thousand bookings a year and housing an average of one  
74 thousand eight hundred twenty pre- and postadjudicated felons and misdemeanants every  
75 day, and

76 WHEREAS, the department of adult and juvenile detention currently provides a  
77 variety of services and programming to incarcerated inmates, including veterans, and

78 WHEREAS, the department of adult and juvenile detention exceeds the mandated  
79 minimum of four hours per day, five days per week of inmate programming a week, and

80 WHEREAS, the department of adult and juvenile detention offers thirty-six  
81 inmate programs and services at each of its adult detention facilities in the areas of:  
82 reentry transitional support; educational and vocational classes; health and wellness;  
83 creative expression and recreation; drug and alcohol support and religious services and  
84 counseling, and

85 WHEREAS, the department of adult and juvenile detention does not have  
86 formally established programs serving incarcerated veterans, nor does it have dedicated  
87 facilities or staff for serving incarcerated veterans, and

88 WHEREAS, in February 2013, the executive established the regional veterans  
89 initiative as a countywide program in order to create stronger regional partnerships and  
90 coordination of services for veterans across local, state, federal and community  
91 organizations, and

92 WHEREAS, in 2012 the department of community and human services, mental  
93 health, chemical dependency and abuse services division established the veterans justice  
94 initiative and created the veterans justice coordinator position in 2013, and

95 WHEREAS, the executive's August 2013 report on the regional veterans initiative  
96 review of county veterans' programs stated that while a wide range of services are  
97 available to veterans, the system of veteran services is fragmented and that the county  
98 should work to improve coordination of services in order to increase veterans' access to  
99 services;

100 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

101 A. The executive is requested to develop and submit to the council for review and  
102 acceptance, a report on veterans in the King County jail system. The report should  
103 summarize the recommendations, findings and options identified by the work group on  
104 veterans services in the jail. The report shall be transmitted to the council, accompanied  
105 by a motion to accept the report, by December 31, 2014. The report shall be transmitted  
106 in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy to the clerk of the council, who  
107 shall distribute electronic copies to all councilmembers and the lead staff for the

108 committee of the whole and the law, justice, health and human services committee, or  
109 their successors.

110 B. The overarching goal of the incarcerated veterans report and recommendations  
111 is improving services for incarcerated veterans. The report should include the following:

112 1. Recommendations and options for providing veteran specific services and  
113 programs to incarcerated veterans, including dedicated veterans housing options in jail  
114 facilities or other forms of veteran-only programming;

115 2. Recommendations and options for creating a veterans housing unit, or a  
116 predominantly veterans housing unit, at each county detention facility serving adults;

117 3. Recommendations and options for veterans to not lose existing veterans  
118 administration benefits;

119 4. Recommendations and options for facility arrangements to accommodate  
120 veterans' programs and services;

121 5. Recommendations and options for either new or restructured, or both,  
122 staffing models to provide veterans focused programming and on the utilization of  
123 department of adult and juvenile detention personnel who are veterans to provide  
124 supervision in incarcerated veteran housing;

125 6. Recommendations and options on methodologies for collecting veteran status  
126 of incarcerated veterans, whether collected at time of booking by correctional staff,  
127 through jail health services or through other means;

128 7. Recommendations and options for ongoing training opportunities for jail and  
129 jail health staff on working with veteran specific populations and understanding military  
130 culture and military trauma informed care;

131           8. Recommendations and options for addressing the identified gaps in services  
132 for veterans in King County jails;

133           9. Any other recommendations or options to improve and better coordinate  
134 services for incarcerated veterans; and

135           10. A work plan and implementation timeline detailing when the  
136 recommendations will be implemented.

137           C. The overarching goal of the incarcerated veterans report should reflect  
138 recommendations and options that lead to:

139           1. Reduction in recidivism by veterans;

140           2. Consistent and accurate data on the population of veterans in King County  
141 jail facilities;

142           3. Improvement in the coordination of services provided in King County jails  
143 for incarcerated veterans; and

144           4. Advance successful veteran reentry into the community after incarceration.

145           5. Coordination and collaboration across county departments and agencies  
146 around veterans' issues.

147           D. The executive is requested establish a work group to include, but not be  
148 limited to, representatives of the following agencies and entities:

149           1. The executive's office;

150           2. The department of adult and juvenile detention;

151           3. The department of community and human services, regional veterans  
152 initiative project, community services division veterans program and the mental health,  
153 chemical dependency and abuse services division;

- 154           4. The prosecuting attorney's office;
- 155           5. The department of public defense;
- 156           6. The sheriff's office;
- 157           7. The veterans advisory board;
- 158           8. The veterans citizen levy oversight board;
- 159           9. The Washington state Department of Veterans Affairs;
- 160           10. The Washington state Department of Corrections;
- 161           11. The United States Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration,  
162 Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator; and
- 163           12. Council staff.
- 164           E. The work group is tasked with conducting data gathering and analysis that the  
165 recommendations and options in the report will be based on, including:
- 166               1. Reviewing the county's current methods for identifying veterans in detention,  
167 including jail health programs, examining veteran status collection methods of other  
168 jurisdictions and identifying best or promising practices to collecting veteran status in  
169 jails in order to determine if there are other methods for capturing data on criminal justice  
170 system-involved veterans other than through jail records;
- 171               2. Inventorying all county services available to incarcerated veterans in the  
172 county's jail facilities and how services are provided to veterans within jail facilities; and

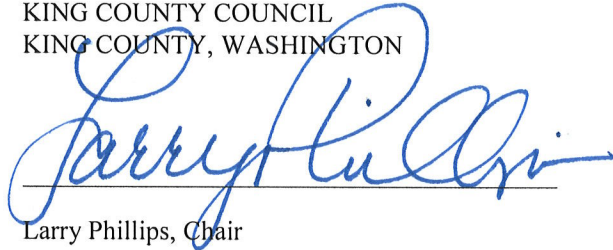


173           3. Gathering and identifying best and promising practices in other jurisdictions  
174 as models for the provision of services to incarcerated veterans.  
175

Motion 14125 was introduced on 4/14/2014 and passed by the Metropolitan King  
County Council on 5/12/2014, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague,  
Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski and Mr.  
Upthegrove  
No: 0  
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



---

Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:



---

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

**Attachments:** None