

Principles for a Proposed County Tax to Support Homelessness Response Downtown Seattle Association

Adopted by the DSA board of directors Jan. 30, 2020

Principles:

- State legislative authorization for a local-option councilmanic County tax in King County for homelessness
- Tax may be based on employment/payroll (not head tax), but must include:
 - Progressive application (e.g., if payroll based, provide a floor and a cap)
 - Protection of small businesses, grocery businesses and lower/medium wage employment
- ***In a county using this tax, other local taxes based on employment/payroll/headcount/employer floor space are preempted***
- Funds may be used only for:
 - Permanently supportive housing for the homeless (0 to 30% of AMI, located within ½ mile of transit)
 - Transitional housing and other housing opportunities for the homeless
 - Enhanced shelter for the homeless
 - Behavioral health care for the chronic homeless
 - Job training and transitional employment programs
- Funds may be disbursed only to regional homelessness authority established by County for any qualified purposes undertaken by the authority. For qualified purposes not undertaken by the authority in any year, funds shall be disbursed to local governments in accordance with plan approved by the authority.
- Funds must be expended in accordance with an annual spending plan adopted by regional authority. Plan must include the following:
 - Adopted with community input
 - Programs must center the voice of the consumer (community members who have lived experience) and address race disparity by adopting anti-racist policies
 - Outcome-based funding, with priority to programs with a record of proven results
 - Data-based decision-making
 - For new housing, preference is given to projects that are 1) utilizing public land that is priced 50% or lower than the market value of the property (using existing state law); 2) use public-private funding sources; and 3) can be completed within two years of grant approval
- Expenditures by regional authority must be auditable and semi-annual reporting required, including evaluation of progress against adopted metrics. All audits and semi-annual reports must be made available to the public on the County website. The County Council must hold at least one annual public meeting to review the results of the audit and semi-annual reports.