



Snohomish County

Human Services

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November 12, 2020

Dave Somers
County Executive
3000 Rockefeller Ave, M/S 305
Everett, WA 98201-4046

Dave Somers
County Executive

RE: Snohomish County Children's Commission Recommendations

Dear Executive Somers:

The members of the Snohomish County Children's Commission (SCCC) send our good wishes and gratitude to you all for your attention, hard work and care for the County's families and children at this troubling time. Karen Matson, Human Services Department's Developmental Disabilities and Early Learning Manager, has kept us informed of the work of the County and we are especially heartened by your support of the Snohomish Health District, local school districts and the Human Services Department. Because of our community's efforts, we trust our County will survive these uncertain times.

The SCCC's annual focus has been children living in poverty and we look forward to continuing that work, first virtually and then in person. As we have previously reported, our work is informed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count initiative. We are grateful for the ongoing contributions of Nate Marti and Kelsey Bang-Olsen from the Human Services Department to help us gather, analyze and report data related to the well-being of children and families in our community. Last year, our recommendations to the County's Legislative Agenda were that the County increase its investment in affordable and supportive housing as well as expand funding and support for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) slots and staffing.

As the Council is aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on those already marginalized. Our neighbors living in poverty, caring for children with disabilities, and/or identifying as people of color must be prioritized, and we applaud your efforts to do so already. The Children's Commission is collaborating with other Snohomish County advisory boards to identify cross-sector strategies that can address these impacts. We encourage Snohomish County to collaborate with other governmental entities and community groups as part of continued effort to identify and move forward on the actions that will best address these disparities.

Based on our current priorities, we recommend that the County:

- Focus support efforts in Black, Brown and Indigenous communities, which are also bearing the impacts of ongoing, systemic racism ("the Second pandemic of 2020")

- Fund Wi-Fi internet access for high-poverty areas and remote/rural locations in Snohomish County
- Support families living with disabilities and/or children living with disabilities
- Continue to provide rental assistance
- Continue to support childcare providers, especially those serving low-income families
- Continue to support the Nourishing Neighborhood program, a crucial initiative for our neighborhoods with limited access to fresh, local produce
- Continue to advocate for increased funding for ECEAP

As the weeks go by, we hope you will continue to keep the Snohomish County Children's Commission, and our entire County community, informed as to the needs as well as the solutions in our shared process of recovery.

With grateful good wishes,

Charlotte Zissel

Charlotte Zissel, Chair
Snohomish County Children's Commission

cc: Human Services Department