



Mental Illness & Drug Dependency Sales Tax Renewal Position

After 8 successful years of implementation, King County is planning a proposal to renew the Mental Illness & Drug Dependency Sales Tax. The MIDD has been a strong source of funding for operating and services funding for Permanent Supportive Housing and also allocated a significant level of dollars for capital expenses in its first year of implementation.

HDC strongly believes King County should renew the .1% MIDD sales tax and include existing and expanded funding for permanent supportive housing (PSH) and related expenses for services and operating, capital, and outreach.

❖ **Benefit of Permanent Supportive Housing**

HDC believes the PSH Program is a critical part of the MIDD strategy. Research from Plymouth Housing Group shows that PSH has resulted in 42% fewer days in psychiatric hospitals and 45% fewer visits to area emergency rooms. Providing these struggling individuals with a place to call home is one of the most important factors in their ability to live happy and successful lives. The MIDD Evaluation has shown the effectiveness of the Supportive Housing strategies in reducing utilization of psychiatric hospitalization, Harborview Emergency Department, and jail. This has also been a high performing MIDD strategy in terms of achieving expenditure targets.

❖ **Countywide Best Practice**

The MIDD tax is one of the County's primary tools to support this nationwide best practice. Therefore, HDC believes the County should increase the amount of MIDD funding allocated for this purpose, expand the reach of PSH, and maximize external funding alignment and leveraging to bring these services to every corner of King County.

While Permanent Supportive Housing has historically been sited primarily in Seattle, HDC believes these dollars should fund programs and support residents across King County, not just in Seattle. As the 2016 One Night Count revealed, over 4,500 people across King County are sleeping outside on any given night, a 58% increase from 5 years ago. Too many (though certainly not all) of these individuals are struggling with chemical dependency and mental illness. MIDD funding is critical for treating these homeless individuals, who are significantly more likely to achieve stability and recovery with a housing first model.

❖ **MIDD II Funding Requests**

Sufficient funding from the MIDD is paramount for the success of PSH in King County. HDC requests MIDD funding for all components of the PSH model, including:

- **Capital:** Housing agencies and developers need up-front resources in order to construct supportive housing units. HDC asks that King County set-aside a reliable amount of MIDD revenue for capital construction of PSH projects.
- **Services and Operating:** PSH projects require treatment and case management services to be viable. We thank you for your commitment to these services under the current MIDD authority and ask that you expand this support in the 2016 renewal. Without reliable rent payments, PSH must rely on other revenue sources to fund operating costs. To ensure these buildings are sustainably funded, the MIDD should also allocate funds toward building operations.

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- **Outreach:** Individuals struggling with mental illness and substance abuse are often challenged to trust authority, or it can take multiple attempts to engage them in housing and services. A strong community outreach and engagement program is critical for PSH providers to gain the trust of potential residents.

King County Strategic Alignment

This funding would be well aligned with the County's All Home Plan, the Health & Human Services Transformation Plan goal to address co-occurring chronic conditions, as well as the Race & Social Justice Initiative by addressing the disproportionality of homelessness among people of color. While there have been concerns about fund supplantation in the past, HDC believes all of these programs would be considered expansions and would therefore be fully eligible for MIDD funding.

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