



For Immediate Release
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County deals with new normal -- How do we create a sustainable Budget?
Countywide Forums seeks feedback on long-term solutions for county and Metro Transit

SEATTLE – Countywide Community Forums of King County (CCF) announced today a series of forums and online survey on finding long-term budget solutions for the county. Called “*King County Budget: Achieving Sustainability Together*” survey, county residents will be asked to provide feedback on current efforts to increase efficiencies, employee health care savings, spending cuts, and ways to diversify revenues. Forums throughout King County and the online survey are available now through October 16th. To register or learn more go to CommunityForums.org or call toll-free at (800) 369-2584.

“There’s a new normal for state and local governments grappling with continued budget shortfalls,” said John Spady, Citizen Councilor Coordinator for CCF. “We’re taking a 40,000 foot view of the county’s budget and asking tough questions about how to create a sustainable budget even in hard economic times. In the end, it’s not just about budget numbers, but we’re asking people what kind of county they want in the future.”

This is the third time CCF has tackled budget issues since the program started in 2008. Over 1,600 people have participated in a budget-related forum, or taken an online budget survey. “For county residents, the government budget gets down to what we value as a community and how best to deliver important services,” Spady said.

The fall round of forums also marks the first time CCF is providing a grant program for their community partners. CCF has 38 partners including the Woodland Park Zoo, Boys & Girls Clubs of King County, and Solid Ground. Organizations will earn grants ranging from \$250 to \$5,000 depending on the number of people each organization gets to participate in an in-person or online forum and survey through October 16th.

A full list of the 38 CCF Partners is available on the CCF website:
<http://communityforums.org/partners-page/>

“Partnering with nonprofit and civic organizations has been an important and valuable part of our mission,” said Maurice Ward, Deputy Citizen Coordinator, and director of Come Clean, a Seattle-based drug counseling service. “We’re reaching into diverse communities with a more meaningful way for people to share their views about important issues. Nonprofit organizations are a natural partner with an interest in the health and wellbeing of communities around the county.”

Participation in the CCF forums is open to anyone living, working, or going to school in King County. The program is overseen by the King County Auditor, is staffed by volunteers, privately underwritten and uses no taxpayer money. Over 2,000 people have registered to be, what program founders call, a *Citizen Councilor*.

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