



**For Immediate Release
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**What makes communities healthy, safe, and successful?
Countywide Forums tackle equity and economic growth issues
Forums and online survey available through May 29**

SEATTLE – “What do you need to be safe, healthy, and successful?” This is a key question being asked of citizens throughout King County during a 6-week round of forums through May 29. Sponsored by the independent program Countywide Community Forums (CCF) of King County, the forums on the topic of *“Equity and Economic Opportunity Across King County”* focus on the conditions necessary for healthy and safe communities, and on impacts to economic opportunity, especially for disadvantaged populations.

Maurice Ward, Deputy Citizen Councilor and founder and executive director of the Multicultural Counseling Services, says, “the value of this conversation as it relates to low-income and minority communities cannot be underestimated. We’ve already had tremendous response to the topic. With economic hardships and budget cutting measures going into effect, everyone needs to be part of the solution and offer answers as to how we can do better.”

“We all want the same things. We all want a place that is healthy and safe, where kids can have an opportunity, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, to succeed based on their merit, and drive, and determination,” says King County Executive Dow Constantine. “There is opportunity out there, but there are also a lot of capable and energetic people who still face barriers – the barriers of race, the income of one’s parents, access to education, and social connections.”

Participation in the forums is open to anyone living, working, or going to school in King County. Options include both in-person forums and an online survey. Access to the online survey or forums continues until May 29. Over 2,000 people have registered to be, what the program calls, a *Citizen Councilor*. To learn more or to register, go to CommunityForums.org or call toll-free at (800) 369-2584.

CCF is also partnering with organizations in the nonprofit, civic engagement, and business areas as part of the community outreach effort on the topic of “Equity and Economic Opportunity”. The following Round 7 “partners” have committed to encourage participation in the CCF program and to host a forum for their members: **Seattle CityClub, Real Change, Compassionate Action Network, the Korean Dry Cleaners Association, the Korean-American Grocers Association, Transpartisan Alliance, FamilyWorks, Greater Seattle Business Association, Fremont Rotary, Washington Conservative Enthusiasts, and the Vashon Youth & Family Services.**

John Spady, citizen councilor coordinator for the CCF program, says that, “this has been our best round to-date for partnerships. These community leaders are committed to civic engagement and we are grateful to have such a diverse and active group of people

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representing communities and different ideas on the topic. In the end, this all about building stronger communities for everyone.”

Over 20 forums have been scheduled and more are planned during the month of May. At the in-person forums a topic video, that includes interviews with community and business leaders and county officials, is shown prior to small group discussions. Participants talk about the issues and then provide input through a survey.

Results of the CCF survey on “Equity and Economic Opportunity Across King County” will be released to the public and media in June. Results from past rounds are available online [at the Auditor’s website](#).

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