

Snohomish County 2023 Draft Legislative Agenda

Behavioral Health, Public Safety, and Housing

Provide a Clear, Direct, Accountable Pathway to Treatment - State v. Blake

Existing bed shortages for housing, homelessness, and substance abuse services have been compounded by the *State v. Blake* decision, which requires diversion into treatment; however, individuals largely remain disconnected to services due to the lack of immediately available beds and obstacles in following up to initiate treatment. In Snohomish County, these challenges have coalesced in the 128th Street/Admiralty Way area, which is experiencing an extremely high rate of overdose and crime due to the influx of fentanyl. The County asks that the Legislature adopts a solution that invests in adequate treatment, diversion, and behavioral health services while providing a clear, direct, and accountable pathway to services for offending individuals.

Build Behavioral Health Capacity and Enhance Accountability

Snohomish County asks the Legislature to consider the role of Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) in the lack of behavioral health treatment availability and timely delivery of care.

Specifically, the County supports:

- The Washington Association of Counties' request for the state to establish behavioral health network adequacy standards, potentially including time and distance standards.
- Holding MCOs to their contractual obligations of service delivery, including maintaining adequate workforce and staffing levels for therapists and clinicians providing treatment.
- Legislative action to ensure that state-contracted mental health providers serve all clients, particularly those at the highest level of need.

Economic and Workforce Development

Support Apprenticeship Programs for Youth

Snohomish County supports the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in requesting an ongoing \$2 million/biennium for the Regional Apprenticeship Pathways Program (RAP). The County also supports increased funding and legislative opportunities to expand local trades and technical education programs, including the Sno-Isle Skill Center and other regional skill centers.

Support a Healthy Manufacturing and Business Climate

Snohomish County asks the Legislature to incentivize sustainable growth and longevity of the advanced manufacturing and aerospace industries, which provide family-wage jobs with potential for growth to thousands of Snohomish County residents. Snohomish County asks the Legislature to support:

- Aerospace Futures Alliance legislation allowing companies to retain a portion of the B&O tax for in-company training; and
- Opportunities to support workforce development, training, and retention, including workforce housing, childcare, transportation, equipment upgrades, and more.

Budget Requests

Everett Multiuse Sports Complex and Indoor/Outdoor Sports Facility

The City of Everett is identifying sites to construct a new Aquasox Baseball Stadium that will also function as a multiuse sports complex, capable of hosting a variety of athletic and other outdoor recreational events. The development of this facility would be a boon to the County and region's economy and residents' wellbeing. Snohomish County supports the Minor League and West Coast League capital budget request and other capital budget funding opportunities for this significant project.

The County also supports the City of Marysville's efforts to develop an indoor/outdoor sports complex.

Support Funding for Afghan and Ukrainian Refugees

Last session, Snohomish County received \$5.558 million to continue operating an Afghan refugee welcoming center offering critical services, including housing placement and vouchers, employment and educational assistance, food, supplies, and more. These funds are now needed to serve other groups, including Ukrainian refugees. Snohomish County supports reappropriation of these funds, administered through Department of Commerce, and flexibility to use funds to serve all needs within the County.

Urban Planning

Incentivize Annexation of Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas

Cities and counties continue to grapple with barriers to annexation in unincorporated urban growth areas (UGA). These pockets of unincorporated urban development are expensive to maintain as the County must provide city-level services without the taxation structure to support increased service delivery; however, cities and residents remain reluctant to take on financial responsibilities associated with annexation. Snohomish County's southwest UGA, encompassing the areas around Lynnwood, Mukilteo, Bothell, Mill Creek, and Everett, would be the third largest city in the state if incorporated. These urban, unincorporated developments are in clear opposition with the intent of the GMA. To encourage annexation of these urban pockets, the County requests that the state reinstate the 0.01 percent credit against the state sales tax to incentivize annexation.

Support Funding for Infrastructure Grants

Snohomish County supports programs that provide money for local infrastructure, including RCO grants and other programs supporting the build out of water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure to support affordable housing development and prevent system failures.