



Legislation Text

File #: CB 119791, Version: 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL _____

AN ORDINANCE related to the City’s response to the 2020 COVID-19 crisis; amending Ordinance 126000, which adopted the 2020 Budget; changing appropriations to various departments and budget control levels, and from various funds in the Budget; declaring an emergency; and establishing an immediate effective date, all by a 3/4 vote of the City Council.

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that COVID-19 disease is a global pandemic, which is particularly severe in high risk populations such as people with underlying medical conditions and the elderly, and the WHO has raised the health emergency to the highest level requiring dramatic interventions to disrupt the spread of this disease; and

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee declared a statewide state of emergency in response to outbreaks of the COVID-19 disease in Washington; and

WHEREAS, in response to outbreaks of the COVID-19 disease in Seattle, Mayor Jenny Durkan proclaimed a civil emergency exists in the City of Seattle in the Mayoral Proclamation of Civil Emergency dated March 3, 2020, modified by Resolution 31937; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, the Governor issued a “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order, which, combined with other measures taken to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, effectively closed many businesses in the state of Washington; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2020, the Governor extended the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order through May 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, many people in Seattle are struggling with the impacts of the COVID-19 disease and the measures

taken to prevent its spread, including unemployment, housing insecurity, food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, local companies have recently reported laying off employees, experiencing substantial revenue losses, dealing with lost business due to fear and stigma, and seeing major declines in foot traffic as tens of thousands of employees are being asked to work from home; and

WHEREAS, these impacts are being felt across all industry sectors, including retail, restaurant, hospitality, transportation, logistics, arts, and culture; and

WHEREAS, the economic impact may have long-term, dynamic, and unpredictable local and regional consequences, necessitating the City to act and plan accordingly; and

WHEREAS, a number of City departments have implemented immediate assistance for affected local small businesses and displaced workers; and

WHEREAS, the City's Small Business Stabilization Fund received nearly 9,000 applications for the first 250 in available grants, demonstrating overwhelming need for continued assistance; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council wish to redirect additional City resources to aid small businesses; and

WHEREAS, more than half of Seattle's residents are renters, and even before COVID-19, a substantial share of renters paid more than 30 percent of their income to remain stably housed; and

WHEREAS, the global COVID-19 crisis shows that our collective health depends on people being stably housed; and

WHEREAS, many Seattle renters are facing job loss, struggling with childcare, and dealing with other unprecedented financial burdens stemming from the global COVID-19 crisis, leaving many unable to pay rent; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding Governor Inslee's eviction moratorium, renters need to pay their rent to ensure long-term housing stability; and

WHEREAS, the United Way of King County's expanded Home Base program to provide rental assistance to King County households that have lost all or part of their income due to the coronavirus pandemic,

originally funded at \$5 million, including \$1 million of City resources, was oversubscribed within days of its creation, further evidencing the impact of the immediate rental crisis; and

WHEREAS, on January 25, 2019, a point in time count enumerated more than 7,700 persons experiencing homelessness in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, among those persons experiencing homelessness, over 3,500 were unsheltered; and

WHEREAS, 70 percent of persons experiencing homelessness across King County find shelter and services in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has published its Interim Guidance on responding to COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness that suggests a variety of responses and preventive measures to limit the spread of the virus among this extremely vulnerable population; and

WHEREAS, both the CDC and Seattle - King County Public Health recommend ensuring social distancing by maintaining at least 6 feet of distance between persons sleeping sheltered and unsheltered; and

WHEREAS, existing shelters that cannot meet the social distance minimum should be de-concentrated through redistribution of clients to alternate shelters, requiring The City of Seattle to invest in 450 new temporary shelter beds across the city; and

WHEREAS, there is insufficient shelter capacity to offer beds to every person sleeping outside and the City is aligned with the CDC recommendation against dispersion of encampments as that can contribute to the spread of the virus through social contact, thus requiring the City to increase access to hygiene facilities, toilets, handwashing, and showers by placing portable units across the City; and

WHEREAS, the most effective response to homelessness is a combination of poverty alleviation through safety net programs such as food banks, job training, and health care access; prevention of housing loss through employment assistance and education, rent support, and connection to appropriate supportive services; and immediate response to homelessness through ready access to shelter and health services, especially behavioral health care, and rapid connection to housing with short- or long-term financial support; NOW,

THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Council finds and declares that:

A. On February 29, 2020, Governor Inslee proclaimed a State of Emergency for all counties throughout the State of Washington as a result of the confirmed person-to-person spread of COVID-19 in Washington State.

B. The COVID-19 disease, caused by a virus that spreads easily from person to person and which may cause serious injury and death, has spread throughout King County and the City of Seattle.

C. On March 3, 2020, Mayor Durkan issued a Proclamation of Civil Emergency declaring a civil emergency within the City of Seattle based on the confirmed spread of COVID-19 in King County and resulting deaths.

D. In recognition of the danger that hospitals may become overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients unless the spread of the disease is slowed, on March 23, 2020, Governor Inslee imposed a stay-home order throughout Washington State prohibiting all people in the State from leaving their homes or participating in gatherings with only limited exceptions for participating in essential activities or essential business services. As of May 8, 2020, that order is in effect through May 31, 2020.

E. In addition to the paramount public health concerns, the spread of COVID-19 and the necessary measures taken to reduce that spread are causing and will continue to cause severe economic dislocation in the State of Washington, King County, and the City of Seattle. On March 26, it was announced that over 133,000 Washington residents filed for jobless benefits the previous week - nine times greater than a week earlier and five times greater than in any week during the Great Recession. Indeed, the velocity of jobless claims is the greatest since the 1930s - even before the effect of Governor Inslee's stay-at-home order is fully felt. In addition, governments at all levels, including The City of Seattle, face major reductions in tax revenues even as they face major new emergency expenditures to combat the pandemic.

F. The United States federal government has taken a number of steps to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people, organizations and businesses, including passing the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in March 2020, which added federal appropriations to programs used by The City of Seattle.

G. The State of Washington has also taken a number of steps to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people, organizations, and businesses of Washington, including passing a COVID-19 relief bill in March 2020, which added state appropriations to programs used by The City of Seattle.

H. The quick acceptance and appropriation of these newly available funds is crucial to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on The City of Seattle and the people and organizations it serves.

I. The City Council determines that the foregoing creates an emergency justifying adoption of the ordinance without a pre-adoption public hearing and justifying making the ordinance immediately effective. Holding a public hearing and following the normal rules for the ordinance becoming effective (e.g. after 30 days) would delay the proposed changes for over one month. This would stymie the City's and region's recovery from the COVID-19 emergency.

Section 2. On May 4, 2020, the City Council passed Council Bill 119783; item 2.5 authorized the Mayor or the Mayor's designee and the Human Services Director to accept \$1,410,045 in non-City funding from the Community Development Block Grant Program. The bill became Ordinance 126074 after being signed by the Mayor on May 6, 2020.

Section 3. The Mayor or the Mayor's designee and the Human Services Director are authorized to execute, deliver, and perform, on behalf of The City of Seattle, agreements for the purposes described below. The funds, when received, shall be deposited in the receiving funds identified below to support the appropriations in Section 4 of this ordinance.

Item	Department	Grantor	Purpose	Fund	Amount
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3.1	Human Services Department	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Emergency Solutions Grants	Shelter redistribution and deintensification	Human Services Fund (16200)	\$1,410,045
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Section 4. Contingent upon the execution of the grant or other funding agreement authorized in Ordinance 126074 and Section 3 of this ordinance, the appropriations for the following items in the 2020 Budget are increased from the funds shown, as follows:

Item	Department	Fund	Budget Summary Level/ BCL Code	Amount
4.1	Human Services Department	Human Services Fund (16200)	Addressing Homelessness (BO-HS-H3000)	\$1,410,045
Total				\$1,410,045

Unspent funds so appropriated shall carry forward to subsequent fiscal years until they are exhausted or abandoned by ordinance.

Section 5. Based on the findings of fact set forth in Section 1 of this ordinance, the Council finds and declares that this ordinance is a public emergency ordinance, which shall take effect immediately and is necessary for the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

Section 6. By reason of the findings set out in this ordinance, and the emergency that is declared to exist, this ordinance shall become effective immediately upon a passage by a 3/4 vote of the Council, and its approval by the Mayor, as provided in Article IV, subsection 1.I of the Charter of the City.

Passed by a 3/4 vote of all the members of the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2020, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this _____ day of _____, 2020.

President _____ of the City Council

Approved by me this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)