



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL  
**CENTRAL STAFF**

# City Funding for Human Services Wage Equity Study

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# City Funding for Human Services Wage Equity Study

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## **2022 Adopted Budget**

- Council added \$600,000 to the Human Services Department (HSD) budget for a study analyzing the comparable worth of human services jobs as compared to jobs in different fields that require similar skills, education, and difficulty.
- Comparable worth studies focus on “equal pay for equivalent work.”

## **Council intended the study to:**

- Consider the core functions and requirements of human services jobs (e.g., level of authority and responsibility, required training, autonomy, environment, difficulty, working conditions, hours) and determine a value for those elements across sectors; and
- Serve as a benchmark for compensating human service providers with fair wages that would equitably align with the value of their work and contribution to the well-being of all community members.

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## **Council recognized the following principles:**

- When human service providers are paid well below the market rate for jobs with similar worth or value, it becomes increasingly hard for such workers to live in our communities and stay in human services jobs.
- Pay inequities contribute to high turnover rates that in turn disrupt the relationships between providers and participants that are essential for successful outcomes.
- Equitable pay helps maintain a stable workforce and ensure that necessary services remain available to communities.

## **Council Budget Action:**

- **CBA HSD-002-B-001 ([legistar.com](https://legistar.com))**

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## Seattle Human Services Coalition (SHSC) – Steering Committee

- SHSC convened a steering committee to serve an oversight and advisory role for the study. The committee supported HSD's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and provided on-going feedback to researchers.
- Members included SHSC staff, nonprofit community leaders, experts on wage equity analysis, and City of Seattle Council staff.

## University of Washington (UW)

- HSD selected UW School of Social Work to conduct the comparable worth analysis of human services jobs.
- July 2022 - HSD Announcement of the Results of the RFQ.

# Timeline

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## January 2022

- **Human Services Wage Equity Study** - 2022 Adopted Budget included \$600,000 to Human Services Department (HSD) for comparable worth study of human services jobs.

## July 2022

- **University of Washington (UW)** – HSD selected UW School of Social Work to conduct the study in collaboration with national and international scholars.

## May 2022

- **HSD Application process** - HSD announced the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process.
- **Seattle Human Services Coalition (SHSC)** – SHSC convened a steering committee to support HSD's RFQ process and provide an oversight/advisory role through-out the study.

## February 2023

- **UW Report Published** – UW findings from a market analysis and job evaluation of wages in Seattle and King County confirmed that human services workers are underpaid.
- **Wage Gap** – Human services workers are paid at least 30% less than workers in non-care industries. Workers who leave human services jobs are paid an earnings premium of 7% more per hour for comparable work in different industries.

# Questions?