



Housing Affordability & Community Needs

Building a Seattle Where People Can Afford to Live & Thrive:
A Community-Informed Policy Direction on Housing,
Childcare, & Basic Needs

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & SUPPLY

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT
& BASIC NEEDS

HOMELESSNESS & STABILITY

FOOD ACCESS

CHILDCARE & FAMILIES

REVENUE & INVESTMENTS

WHY THIS MATTERS

Across conversations, surveys, & group discussions, people were clear: preserve what we have, fix what's broken, & do more, faster, & more fairly. Families, workers, & neighbors are stretched thin. When one piece fails, housing, childcare, wages, & safety, the whole system falls apart.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING

"People want better outcomes, not more disruption. Sweeps without services don't work. Navigation to housing & care should be clear, humane, & consistent."

"Seattle has strong housing developers, both nonprofit & for-profit, but the system makes it too hard, too slow, & too expensive to build & maintain affordable housing. Existing affordable housing is fragile & must be protected."

"Childcare is unaffordable, especially for infants & toddlers. Families are one crisis away from collapse. Choice doesn't exist when care costs more than rent."

"Ambitious goals require real funding. People support progressive revenue if it is tied to clear outcomes."

CORE PRINCIPLES WE HEARD

- Affordability is the foundation of community stability
- Families are fragile: systems must be reliable, not reactive
- Preserve existing affordable housing
- Make it easier & less expensive to build new housing
- Services should be easy to find & easy to use

"When Seattle works for the people most impacted, it works better for everyone."



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recommendations!



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & SUPPLY

Seattle protects existing affordable housing while accelerating production by reducing barriers, streamlining permitting, & partnering with nonprofit & for-profit developers.

Some early wins: modernize landlord-tenant rules, adjust fees, & incentivize family-sized units.

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT & BASIC NEEDS

Seattle prioritizes underserved neighborhoods, anti-displacement programs, & homeownership to strengthen stability.

Some early wins: activate community spaces & align investments across housing & childcare.

HOMELESSNESS & STABILITY

Seattle shifts to service-focused, trauma-informed care for unhoused residents, centralizing navigation, expanding prevention, & developing specialized shelters.

Some early wins: create safe zones, improve shelter safety, & coordinate outreach with housing placement.

FOOD ACCESS

Seattle ensures access to healthy, culturally relevant food through community-led production & partnerships with schools, stores, & farmers.

Some early wins: update Food Action Plan, expand nutrition programs, & increase food bank & mobile pantry capacity.

CHILDCARE & FAMILIES

Seattle treats childcare as essential infrastructure & with a goal of universal, affordable care.

Some early actions include closing infant/toddler gaps, expanding after-school & summer programs, & integrating academic, arts, & career supports.

REVENUE & INVESTMENTS

Seattle pursues progressive, coordinated revenue strategies to support housing, childcare, & community services while attracting long-term investment.

Some early wins: substantially revise the design review process, provide grants, & streamline city approvals.



Please note: These are paraphrased recommendations.
To view the full recommendations & early wins. Scan the QR code here:



Economic Development & Workers' Rights

Building an Economy That Works for Workers & Businesses:
A Community-Informed Policy Direction on Economic
Development & Workers' Rights

WORKERS' RIGHTS & LABOR
STANDARDS

BUSINESS COSTS, TALENT, &
COMPETITIVENESS

REGIONAL ECONOMIC ALIGNMENT

PUBLIC INVESTMENTS &
ACCOUNTABILITY

SMALL BUSINESS AFFORDABILITY

WHY THIS MATTERS

Seattle's economy depends on workers being treated fairly, supporting key industries, & small businesses thriving. Across conversations, people were clear: strong labor standards & a healthy business environment are not in conflict, they depend on each other.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING

"Seattle has passed strong labor protections, but enforcement is under-resourced. As labor standards expand statewide, a lack of coordination creates gaps & confusion."

"High costs make it hard to retain workers & recruit talent. Businesses struggle to navigate City systems & access available support."

"Economic development & workers' rights require coordination across jurisdictions. Fragmentation slows progress & wastes effort."

"Public dollars should support employers who treat workers well & invest in communities."

CORE PRINCIPLES WE HEARD

- Strong labor standards require real enforcement
- Economic development is tied to housing, affordability, & public safety
- Small & community-based businesses need clearer, easier access to support
- Regional coordination matters: workers & businesses don't stop at city limits

"A strong economy is one where workers are protected, businesses can grow, & public investment rewards responsibility."



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recommendations!



WORKERS' RIGHTS & LABOR STANDARDS

Seattle strengthens labor partnerships, ensures stable funding for the Office of Labor Standards, increases staffing, coordinates regionally, & aligns public investment with labor standards.

Some early wins: convene a regional labor standards task force & establish a Labor Delegation.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC ALIGNMENT

Seattle aligns economic development, labor policy, & workforce programs across jurisdictions to reduce duplication & coordinate training pipelines.

Some early wins: launch regional workforce programs & embed apprenticeship & union training into planning.

SMALL BUSINESS AFFORDABILITY

Seattle will provide lifecycle support for small, WMBE, & community-owned businesses by centralizing procurement access, reducing administrative burdens, & strengthening commercial corridors to prevent displacement.

Some early wins: embed small business affordability considerations across departments, streamline permitting & fees, connect entrepreneurs to capital, & pilot curb-to-counter activation initiatives.

BUSINESS COSTS, TALENT, & COMPETITIVENESS

Seattle expands digital tools, training, & infrastructure for workers & small businesses while supporting workforce stability, keeping Seattle competitive, innovative, & attracting employers in an evolving economy.

Some early wins: pilot mid-size employer playbooks & strengthen hiring pipelines.

PUBLIC INVESTMENTS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Seattle uses contracting & tax reinvestment to reward high-road employers, track equity, & reduce costs.

Some early wins: expand community wealth-building pilots, support homeownership.



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Transportation & Environment

Moving People Safely While Protecting Our Climate:

A Community-Informed Policy Direction on Transportation & Environment

VISION ZERO, STREET SAFETY & ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

ENHANCED DEPARTMENT COORDINATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TRANSIT, MOBILITY & PUBLIC ACCESS

PUBLIC SPACES, STREETS AS PLACES & COMMUNITY ACTIVATION

CLIMATE, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

FREIGHT & MOVEMENT OF GOODS

WHY THIS MATTERS

Transportation & environmental decisions shape daily life, like how safe it feels to cross the street, how clean the air is, how much households pay, & how prepared neighborhoods are for climate impacts. Across conversations, people were clear: we are facing urgent challenges, & the city must act faster, more, & with better coordination.

CORE PRINCIPLES WE HEARD

- Climate & safety are emergency issues, not long-term abstractions
- Equity requires investing first where harm & risk are greatest
- People want action, not endless process
- Connected systems change behavior better than piecemeal fixes
- Clear communication builds trust during disruption & construction

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING

“People want clear information about climate risk & meaningful action focused on the biggest sources of pollution. Accountability matters.”

“Safety should not depend on where you live. Building complete, connected networks all at once is more effective than scattered projects.”

“The current process is frustrating & slow. Over-studying issues drains public trust & momentum.”

“Climate & transportation transitions must not unfairly burden low-income households or ratepayers. Safety & infrastructure standards should be equal across the city.”

“If we act together, focus on what matters most, & move with urgency, we can protect people, the climate, & our neighborhoods at the same time.”



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VISION ZERO, STREET SAFETY, & ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Seattle sets 5-year Vision Zero, climate, & vehicle miles traveled targets, prioritizing pedestrian, cyclist, & micro-mobility safety.

Some early wins: install scooter/bike corrals, protected walkways, & complete key bike lane gaps.

TRANSIT, MOBILITY & PUBLIC ACCESS

Seattle expands bus lanes, mobility hubs, & 24-hour service while ensuring equitable access.

Some early wins: paint bus lanes, extend ORCA pass programs, & strengthen North-South/East-West connections.

CLIMATE, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Seattle prioritizes affordable clean energy, climate resilience, & decarbonization for vulnerable communities.

Some early actions include publishing polluter data, investing in nonprofit clean energy upgrades, expanding community solar, & upgrading public buildings.

ENHANCED DEPARTMENT COORDINATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Seattle centralizes engagement, streamlines permitting, & improves interagency coordination.

Some early wins: formalize a single permitting contact & establish inter-departmental accessibility planning.

PUBLIC SPACES, STREETS AS SPACES, & COMMUNITY ACTIVATION

Seattle transforms streets into safe, active public spaces, integrating housing & equitable access.

Some early wins: finalize Pike Place Market pedestrianization, host neighborhood events, & expand streets-to-parks coordination.

FREIGHT & MOVEMENT OF GOODS

Seattle prioritizes safe, efficient freight corridors, maintains industrial lands, & integrates freight planning with multimodal transport.

Some early actions include implementing signalized crossings, launching a regional freight task force, & expanding combined freight/transit lanes.



Please note: These are paraphrased recommendations.
To view the full recommendations & early wins. Scan the QR code here:



Arts, Culture, & Creative Economy

Arts, Culture, & Creativity as Core Civic Infrastructure:

A Community-Informed Policy Direction on Arts, Culture, & the Creative Economy

AFFORDABILITY

CULTURE

INTEGRATION

WHY THIS MATTERS

Arts & culture shape who we are, how we belong, & how we experience our city. Across conversations, people were clear: Seattle's creative community is struggling with affordability & instability, even as culture remains one of the city's greatest strengths. Investing in arts & culture strengthens civic life, supports economic development, & builds social cohesion.

CORE PRINCIPLES WE HEARD

- Artists need stability to create & stay in Seattle
- Culture is a driver of housing, education, & economic outcomes
- Public investment should reflect culture's civic value
- Marginalized communities & art forms must be centered, not regulated out
- Arts & culture should live beyond any one department or administration

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING

"Artists & cultural organizations need predictable, flexible funding to survive & grow. One-time grants & restricted dollars don't create stability."

"Culture should not sit in a silo. It should shape housing, transportation, economic development, education, & public safety"

"Seattle needs a bold, shared story that centers creativity, justice, & opportunity."

"Creative expression from marginalized communities is often over-regulated rather than supported. Investment, not punishment, creates safety & vibrancy."

"A city that invests in artists invests in belonging, resilience, & shared future."



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AFFORDABILITY

Seattle stabilizes funding for artists & provides housing, transportation, childcare, & health supports, while prioritizing creative funding streams.

Some early wins: launch a interdepartmental Arts & Culture Affordability Strategy, pilot multi-year grants, redirect funding to community arts, & invest in shared digital platforms.

CULTURE

Seattle positions arts & culture at the center of civic identity, elevating diverse traditions & embedding artists in community life.

Some early wins: increase visibility through awards & events, advance legislation, & form an interdepartmental creative economy team.

INTEGRATION

Seattle embeds arts & culture across city systems while streamlining permitting & formalizing artist participation.

Some early wins: issue an Executive Order on 1% development contributions, launch a shared cultural asset platform, & pilot permanent cultural spaces.

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Civic Narrative & Major Initiatives

A Shared Story for Seattle: Belonging, Care, & Action:

A Community-Informed Policy Direction on Civic Narrative & Major Initiatives

A SHARED NORTH STAR

DOWNTOWN AS A LIVED NEIGHBORHOOD

GET THE BASICS RIGHT

CULTURE & PUBLIC REALM AS CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY, & CIVIC PARTICIPATION

WHY THIS MATTERS

Across conversations, surveys, & group discussions, people were clear: preserve what we have, fix what's broken, & do more, faster, & more fairly. Families, workers, & neighbors are stretched thin. When one piece fails, housing, childcare, wages, & safety, the whole system falls apart.

CORE PRINCIPLES WE HEARD

- A shared civic narrative can unite people across differences
- Trust is built through delivery, not messaging alone
- Culture & public space are core civic infrastructure
- Equity must be felt in every neighborhood
- Big vision only works if the basics are working

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING

“Seattle is widely seen as a city that cares, for people, place, & the future, but its story is often reactive & fragmented. People want the City to lead with values & honesty.”

“Arts, culture, parks, & public spaces are essential to safety, health, economic vitality, & connection. They are one of the most visible ways the City shows its values.”

“Downtown must be more than a retail core or event zone; it should be a real neighborhood that works for residents, workers, & visitors at all hours.”

“People want more than consultation—they want action. Trust grows when the City delivers on basics & invites meaningful participation.”

“When Seattle shows up with honesty, coordination, & care, we can dream bigger together.”



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A SHARED NORTH STAR

Seattle adopts a consistent civic narrative of belonging, stewardship, & opportunity, acknowledging inequities & embedding storytelling across infrastructure, parks, transit, & cultural spaces.

Some early wins: launch a citywide campaign, develop a narrative toolkit, hold multi-sector summits, & build a shared digital platform.

CULTURE & PUBLIC REALM AS CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Seattle treats arts, culture, parks, & public spaces as essential infrastructure, cultivating participation through integrated programming & partnerships.

Some early wins: pilot arts activations, install civic markers, & introduce permanent public art.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT

Seattle prioritizes everyday improvements, cleanliness, safety, & services to build civic trust & accelerate neighborhood outcomes.

Some early wins: public realm pilots, community service days, & a “Visible Wins” impact report.

DOWNTOWN AS A LIVED NEIGHBORHOOD

Seattle reframes downtown around mixed-use development, equitable investments, anti-displacement protections, & long-term community benefit.

Some early wins: mixed-use pilots, the Equitable Downtown Investment Plan, & neighborhood commercial improvements.

TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY, & CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Seattle institutionalizes co-governance, increases transparency, rebuilds engagement infrastructure, & expands pathways for civic participation.

Some early wins: public performance dashboard, neighborhood civic labs, & formal community co-leadership.

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To view the full recommendations & early wins. Scan the QR code here:





Standing Up for Our Values

Safety, Dignity, & Collective Protection: A Community-Informed Policy Direction on Standing Up for Our Values

RESPONSE TO HATE & TARGETED HARM

PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS

COMMUNITY LED SAFETY

ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT & LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

WHY THIS MATTERS

Seattle’s values are tested most in moments of fear, crisis, & targeted harm. Across conversations, people were clear: safety cannot be conditional, delayed, or symbolic. Immigrant, refugee, Black, Muslim, & LGBTQ+ communities are facing escalating threats from vigilantes, hate crimes, & federal enforcement. The City must respond quickly, clearly, & in partnership with those most impacted.

CORE PRINCIPLES WE HEARD

- Rapid response saves lives & prevents displacement
- Community organizations are the frontline of protection
- Safety must include dignity, trust, & cultural competency
- Immigrant & LGBTQ+ safety issues are deeply interconnected
- The City must back its values with action, not just statements

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING

“When threats occur, delays cause harm. The City needs clear, immediate response systems, especially following attacks like those on Somali daycare centers.”

“Current police responses lack cultural competency & clarity, especially around protests, harassment, & immigration enforcement.”

“Communities are afraid of coordinated enforcement actions. Together with community partners & other local governments, the City must prepare, draw clear lines, & proactively protect its residents.”

“The City cannot do everything & shouldn’t try to replace community defense systems that already work.”

“Seattle’s values are real only if people feel protected when it matters most.”



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RESPONSE TO HATE & TARGETED HARM

Seattle establishes an interdepartmental Rapid Response Protocol for hate crimes & harassment with clear timelines & trauma-informed reporting.

Some early wins: launching a reporting portal, deploying specialized training, & reporting quarterly metrics.

PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS

Seattle prohibits City resources for federal immigration enforcement, audits, surveillance & task force participation, & ensures visible civil rights safeguards.

Some early wins: administrative rules banning ICE use, SPD audits, scenario planning, & legal support for impacted individuals.

COMMUNITY LED SAFETY

Seattle shifts funding to hyper-local organizations, institutionalizes community safety roles, & expands in-language rights resources.

Some early wins: release Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs funds, fund rapid rights/de-escalation trainings, & designate Safe Zones.

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT & LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

Seattle integrates protections into a unified framework with trauma-informed responses & coordinated pipelines for family stabilization.

Some early wins: establish Office for Trans & Queer Affairs, emergency stabilization funds, citywide safety plan, & expand regional coordination.

ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

Seattle embeds community representation into oversight, publicly tracks safety metrics, & ensures proportional resource allocation.

Some early wins: launch safety dashboard, hold quarterly briefings, convene oversight meetings, & conduct equity funding reviews.

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To view the full recommendations & early wins. Scan the QR code here:





Public Safety, Parks, & Community Wellbeing

Safety, Trust, & Shared Responsibility: A Community-Informed Policy Direction on Public Safety, Parks, & Community Wellbeing



WHY THIS MATTERS

Public safety is not experienced as a single system. It is felt in parks, neighborhoods, schools, & moments of crisis. Across conversations, people were clear: safety in Seattle feels fragmented, inconsistent, & too often disconnected from lived reality. Communities want safety systems that work together, respond with care, & prioritize prevention & dignity over churn & reaction.

CORE PRINCIPLES WE HEARD

- Safety requires coordination, not silos
- Trust is built through consistency, clarity, & presence
- Prevention & sustained care matter as much as emergency response
- Community knowledge is a form of expertise
- Public spaces need intentional management, not neglect or over-enforcement

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING

“Understaffing, turnover, & unclear priorities have left SPD unable to consistently deliver core services, especially for survivors of violence & marginalized communities.”

“Crisis response systems feel fragmented, difficult to access, & overly focused on short-term response rather than resolution & care.”

“Lack of coordination across City departments & between City & County creates duplication, inefficiency, & instability for both providers & residents.”

“Small, practical interventions, trash, restrooms, lighting, maintenance, can dramatically improve safety, but the City has failed to implement widely supported solutions.”

“Public safety works when systems work together & when communities see themselves reflected in how safety is delivered.”



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STRENGTHEN PUBLIC SAFETY INFRASTRUCTURE

Seattle rebuilds investigative staffing, prioritizes visible policing for community trust, & aligns recruitment with diversity goals.

Some early wins: restore the SPD Protection Order team, publish ICE protocols, reestablish liaison briefings, & increase patrols focused on de-escalation.

INTEGRATE ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE & SYSTEM COORDINATION

Seattle expands CARE authority, integrates SPD, CSOs, Health One, LEAD, courts & Fire, & convenes a Public Safety Stakeholders Forum.

Some early wins: issue dispatch guidance, activate SPD-LEAD data, convene public safety forum, & expand late-night CARE coverage.

CRIME PREVENTION & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

Seattle resets the Community Violence Intervention framework, integrating domestic violence, youth violence, gun violence, & suicide prevention with survivor & community input.

Some early wins: implement pilot safety programs, scale evidence-based interventions, & allocate emergency funds to address gun violence.

SURVIVOR CENTERED JUSTICE & PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURE

Seattle implements Sexual Assault Task Force recommendations, HB 2015 training, & evidence-based domestic violence interventions, ensuring rapid protection order service.

Some early wins: convene briefings, restore staffing, fund citywide training, & audit service timelines.

PUBLIC SPACES MANAGEMENT, PARKS & NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

Seattle manages parks, nightlife, & business corridors as civic assets with sanitation, activation, & enforcement, partnering with Business Improvement Areas & community models.

Some early wins: improve cleanliness, expand restrooms, & replicate best practices citywide.

HOUSING SAFETY, SHELTER OPERATIONS & HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM REFORM

Seattle reviews safety of Permanent Supportive Housing, sets standards, reforms Coordinated Entry, & evaluates the King County Homelessness Authority for efficiency.

Some early wins: initiate PSH safety plan, expand shelter support, & launch pre-FIFA unsheltered housing push.



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Student & Youth Advisors

Belonging, Opportunity, & Voice: A Community-Informed Policy Direction on issues facing students & young people.

EDUCATION, CAREER & COLLEGE
READINESS

CIVIC POWER & CO-GOVERNANCE

SAFETY & TRUST

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

AFFORDABILITY & HOUSING

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

WHY THIS MATTERS

Young people in Seattle are paying close attention to government, global events, & whether the City shows up for them. Across conversations, young people expressed a deep desire to participate & a frustration with systems that feel inaccessible, under-resourced, or symbolic.

Young people want to feel safe, informed, & supported as they navigate school, work, housing, & civic life. They are clear: participation requires more than invitations, it requires transportation, compensation, trust, & relevance.

CORE PRINCIPLES WE HEARD

- Young people want real access, not performative engagement
- Safety includes freedom from surveillance, fear, & displacement
- Education must prepare young people for real-world decisions
- Transportation is foundational to opportunity
- Community-based organizations are trusted gateways to youth engagement

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING

“Young people feel unprepared to navigate civic systems, higher education costs, & post-graduation pathways. Financial uncertainty & lack of guidance are driving anxiety & disengagement.”

“Elected officials feel distant & unreachable. Opportunities to engage are poorly timed, poorly advertised, & rarely youth centered.”

Surveillance expansion makes young people, especially those from immigrant & marginalized communities, feel targeted, not protected.”

“Transportation is often the deciding factor in whether youth participate at all. One unsafe or unreliable experience can permanently disengage a young person.”

“Seattle succeeds when young people feel informed, safe, & genuinely included in shaping their city.”



Scan for the full transition recommendations!



EDUCATION, CAREER, & COLLEGE READINESS

Seattle treats civic & financial literacy, post-high school navigation, & non-college pathways as core to economic mobility.

Some early wins: expand pre-apprenticeships, & launch a youth job portal.

CIVIC POWER & CO-GOVERNANCE

Seattle transitions youth engagement to co-governance with decision-making influence in youth-centered spaces.

Some early wins: fund youth-led listening sessions, pilot co-governance, host assemblies, & upgrade digital platforms.

SAFETY & TRUST

Seattle prioritizes non-police safety models, CARE teams, & transit safety, while removing surveillance inequities.

Some early wins: publish youth rights guidance, expand school-based mental health, host youth forums, & review or remove surveillance tools.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

Seattle ensures reliable, safe, & accessible transit for youth.

Some early wins: survey students, increase service, & pilot expanded free transit.

AFFORDABILITY & HOUSING

Seattle provides youth housing navigation, renter education, & enforcement support while reducing displacement & expanding youth employment.

Some early wins: release guides, launch affordability database, fund stipends, & increase workplace rights outreach.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Seattle fully funds school-based mental health, invests in peer support & arts programming, & applies trauma-informed practices citywide.

Some early wins: communicate clearly on enforcement, expand mental health funding, & pilot peer ambassador programs.



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