

Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan

Seattle City Hall  
600 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

July 14, 2020

Dear Mayor Durkan,

The undersigned organizations express our enthusiastic support for JumpStart Seattle! We urge you to quickly sign the legislation passed by the Council on Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup>.

As we all know, thousands of Seattle residents – disproportionately residents who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color – experience homelessness and suffer the strains of an affordable housing crisis that is most desperate for people who live on the most modest incomes. This was a crisis before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Now, while the pandemic and the associated economic downturn continue, the urgent need to secure safe, healthy, and affordable homes is more sharply in focus than ever.

JumpStart Seattle is what our community needs now in order to prevent a significant increase in homelessness, especially among renters of color, as well as to address the deep need that already existed in Seattle before the pandemic. The most recent Point in Time (PIT) count data for King County shows an increase of 5% and is generally understood to be an undercount. Only veterans and youth and young adults (two groups for whom there have been major, focused public investments in housing and supportive services), show a reduction. Despite real success in housing thousands of Seattle and King County residents who experience homelessness over the course of a year, our progress is limited because of ever-increasing numbers of people who become homeless, inadequate investments in housing that people with the lowest incomes can afford, and a drastic overall lack of affordable homes in our region. We need deeper and sustained investments in the solutions to homelessness in order to make progress, and we need progressive revenue to fund these solutions.

Collectively we face the imminent prospect of a wave of evictions and foreclosures that our city, county, state, and nation are not prepared for. The U.S. Census Bureau has documented that 139,328 renter households in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metropolitan area were unable to pay rent in June. These data also show a large discrepancy in Washington State between different racial groups and between income groups in terms of their ability to pay rent and in their confidence in whether they will be able to pay upcoming rent. Black and Latinx households are by far the most impacted: 42% of black renter households and 24% of Latinx households statewide reported they were unable to pay rent, compared to 8% of white renter households.

**Deeply affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing, is necessary and must continue to be a priority in the JumpStart spending plan.** Income inequality in Seattle is a central driver of our sky-high rents, and these significantly contribute to homelessness in our city. By prioritizing housing resources for people with the lowest incomes in Seattle – for a single person earning below \$23,250 or for a family of three earning below \$29,900 -- the investments from JumpStart will help address the crises of homelessness and lack of affordable homes. We are confident that Seattle City Councilmembers will hold this keystone priority as they finalize the spending plan for JumpStart.

**We deeply appreciate and support proposed spending plan elements** to invest in equitable community development; to assist Seattle's immigrant community members and support small local

businesses; to prioritize green new deal construction and rehabilitation; and to address community members' emergency needs due to COVID-19 this year and next.

**Please sign this excellent legislation quickly.** We hope to work with you to ensure that these significant new resources, together with others you and the Council have committed to, make maximum progress towards our common goals of a healthy and housed Seattle.

Signed:

**350 Seattle** - Amanda Sorell, Organizer  
**Alki United Church of Christ** - Cinda Stenger, Leader, Outreach/Social Justice Ministry  
**Asian Counseling and Referral Service** - Michael Byun, Executive Director  
**Bellwether Housing** - Susan Boyd, CEO  
**Bounceback Seattle** - Richard Ridout, Founder  
**Church Council of Greater Seattle** - Michael Ramos, Executive Director  
**Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence** - Merrill Cousin, Executive Director  
**Crisis Connections** - Aundrea Jackson, Director  
**Disability Rights Washington** - Mark Stroh, Executive Director  
**Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC)** - Daniel Malone, Executive Director  
**El Centro de la Raza** - Estela Ortega, Executive Director  
**Elizabeth Gregory Home** - Ruth Herold, Executive Director  
**Enterprise Community Partners** - M.A. Leonard, Vice President & Market Leader  
**Faith Action Network** - Elise DeGooyer & Paul Benz, Co-Directors  
**Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County** - Patience Malaba, Director of Government Relations and Policy  
**InterIm CDA** - Pradeepta Upadhyay, Executive Director  
**International Community Health Services** - Teresita Batayola, President and CEO  
**Lake City Partners Ending Homelessness** - Melanie Neufeld, Executive Director  
**LGBTQ Allyship** - Debbie Calrsen, Executive Director  
**Lifelong AIDS Alliance** - Scott Bertani, Director of Policy  
**LIHI** - Sharon Lee, Executive Director  
**Lotus Development Partners** - Michelle Morlan, Principal  
**Neighborhood House** - Janice Deguchi, Executive Director  
**OSL (OPERATION: Sack Lunch)** - Beverly Graham, Executive Director  
**Plymouth Housing** - Paul Lambros, CEO  
**Public Defender Association** - Lisa Daugaard, Director  
**Queen Anne Helpline** - Cara Lauer, Executive Director  
**REACH Program** - Chloe Gale, REACH Co-Director  
**Real Change** - Tim Harris, Founding Director  
**ROOTS Young Adult Shelter** - Jerred Clouse, Executive Director  
**Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness** - Alison Eisinger, Executive Director  
**Soar** - Paula Steinke, Director  
**Solid Ground** - Caitlen Daniels, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer  
**Statewide Poverty Action Network** - Marcy Bowers, Executive Director  
**Washington Low Income Housing Alliance** - Michele Thomas, Director of Policy and Advocacy  
**Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility** - Max Savishinsky, Executive Director  
**YouthCare** - Melinda Giovengo, CEO & President  
**YWCA Seattle|King|Snohomish** - Maria Chavez Wilcox, Chief Executive Officer