

**City of Seattle Charter Amendment Measure 000 to provide compassionate, accountable, effective, and responsible solutions to the crisis of homelessness; providing for actions, including mental health and substance use disorder treatment and services; establishing behavioral health field response capability; creating emergency and permanent housing; and ensuring that City parks, playgrounds, sports fields, public spaces and sidewalks and streets remain open and clear of encampments.**

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE**

The People of the City of Seattle, exercising their power to amend the City Charter by popular vote under Article XX, Section 2 of the City Charter, enact the following new article to the Charter of the City of Seattle.

***Section 1. A new Article IX is added to the City Charter as follows:***

**ARTICLE IX. PROVISION OF HOMELESS SERVICES**

**Section 1.**

Consistent with this Charter's preamble, it is necessary to protect and enhance the health, safety, environment and general welfare of all people and to support the economic vitality and sustainability of the City for the benefit of all of the people of Seattle.

**Section 2.**

First. The City shall fund and provide services to improve the lives of all residents of the City. It is the City's goal that no one should have to live outdoors in public spaces. The City shall coordinate and engage with the public, community-based organizations, non-profit service providers, philanthropic organizations, businesses, and collective bargaining representatives, to understand and address current and emerging human service needs. It is City policy to fully support, advance and invest in any regional governmental homelessness authorities. When the City works with other public and private entities to meet its obligations under this Charter Article IX it shall collaborate to ensure successful outcomes and support an innovative and effective regional service network. It is City policy to and the City shall work to end chronic homelessness and racial disparities in the homeless population by investing City funds in practices and strategies, including emergency and permanent housing that effectively engage, shelter and house those who live outdoors in public spaces; and, work to retain individuals in housing; both with particular focus on the chronically homeless and those with the greatest barriers and greatest community impact. It is City policy that the effectiveness of strategies and services designed to transition homeless individuals to housing be measured and reported, with specific attention to those who are chronically homeless and facing the greatest barriers to engagement, shelter and housing. It is City policy to and the City shall measure and report which City services, activities, and practices may contribute to people entering or experiencing homelessness. These reports to the public shall occur at least every three months and include clear and specific outcomes to be established by the City.

Second. The City in conjunction with King County and through any agreement with a governmental or non-governmental organization, shall help fund low-barrier, rapid-access, mental health and substance use disorder treatment and services ("behavioral health services") with particular focus on individuals who are chronically homeless and face the greatest barriers to engagement; and also shall help fund and deploy a behavioral health rapid-response field capability that is coordinated where appropriate with City and county non-law enforcement crisis response systems and programs. The City shall fund culturally distinct approaches to behavioral health services to individuals for whom those are effective. The City-funded behavioral health programs and services shall be in combination with access to emergency housing in enhanced shelters, tiny houses, hotel-motel rooms, other forms of non-congregate temporary housing ("emergency housing") or permanent housing for those living in shelters and outdoors in public spaces. For purposes of this Article IX, "permanent housing" is defined as housing that complies with applicable life, safety and health standards for indoor accommodations and includes occupants' rights as tenants.

Third. As emergency and permanent housing are available, the City shall ensure that City parks, playgrounds, sports fields, public spaces and sidewalks and streets ("public spaces") remain open and clear of encampments. The City also may require individuals to shift their belongings and any structures to ensure accessibility and to accommodate use of public spaces. The City's policy is to and the City shall prioritize matching willing individuals to emergency housing based on their needs and situation. The City shall assess and consider each unsheltered individual's needs in order to appropriately accommodate disabling conditions and family type in emergency housing. The City or its designee shall appropriately utilize pathways to permanent housing and prioritize individual or family needs in order to limit emergency housing stays to no longer than necessary.

Fourth. Within six months of the effective date of this Charter Amendment the City shall provide for 1,000 units (in addition to those already funded) of emergency or permanent housing with services including access to behavioral health services and necessary staffing to serve people with the highest barriers. Within one year of the adoption of this Charter Amendment the city shall provide another 1,000 units (in addition to those already funded) of emergency or permanent housing with services including access to behavioral health services and necessary staffing to serve people with the highest barriers.

Fifth. During a declared civil emergency related to homelessness, and to accelerate the production of emergency and permanent housing serving homeless individuals (“projects”) as required by this Article IX, it is City policy to and the City shall, to the full extent permitted by state law, (a) waive land use code and regulation requirements as necessary to urgently site projects, (b) waive all City project-related permitting fees for projects and, (c) process the application for project-related permits as first-in-line in order to expedite the permitting process. It also is City policy and the City shall refund to the projects all City imposed costs, fees, and the City's portion of the sales tax on all project expenditures, paid on or after the enactment of this Article IX and during a declared civil emergency related to homelessness.

Sixth. Services to individuals experiencing homelessness shall include identifying and addressing factors known to drive the overrepresentation of Black, Indigenous and People of Color among people experiencing chronic homelessness. Provision shall also be made to include culturally competent services and workforce standards to address safety, appropriate compensation, and working conditions that allow contractors to recruit, retain and stabilize a diverse, skilled and culturally competent workforce. Additionally, consistent with the City’s public safety obligations, programs shall be implemented to divert individuals from the criminal justice system whose law violations are connected to a lack of housing, income instability, or behavioral health issues.

Seventh. The actions herein required shall be executed consistent with any plan or actions established or implemented by a regional government authority, provided that a regional plan and activities may be employed by the City to satisfy this Article IX so long as the requirements of this Article IX are satisfied.

### **Section 3.**

There is hereby established in the City Treasury a Human Services Fund to support the human services and homeless programs and services of the City. There shall be placed in the Human Services Fund such moneys as may be budgeted annually for such programs including not less than 12 percent of the City’s annual general fund revenues; grants, gifts and bequests for human service purposes received from the general public, businesses and philanthropy; and such other moneys as may be provided by ordinance, without delaying or disrupting full restoration of general fund support for the Department of Parks and Recreation to facilitate repair and restoration of parks as required by the Interlocal Agreement authorized by City Ordinance 124468.

### **Section 4.**

The provisions of this Article IX are to be liberally construed to achieve its purposes. Nothing in this Article IX shall be construed to interfere with contracts existing at the time of this Article’s enactment, including contracts with regional governmental authorities. The terms and provisions of this Article IX are severable; if any are found invalid this shall not affect the validity of the remainder. This Article IX shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its enactment and shall supersede all preexisting ordinances and rules in conflict herewith.