

UNDERSTANDING THE MH/DD & VETERANS LEVY CHANGES

What changed, what the Executive is recommending, and what it means for Snohomish County services.

1

WHAT CHANGED?

In 2026, the state passed ESHB 2442, which changed requirements for Snohomish County’s Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities (MH/DD) Levy and Veterans Levy.

Previously, these levies were “nested” within the County’s General levy and grew at the same limited rate. Under the new law, the property owners must fund them at statutory minimum rates and can either keep them nested or separate them from the General levy.

2

WHAT CHOICES DOES THE COUNTY HAVE?

KEEP THE LEVIES NESTED

- MH/DD and Veterans receive the required levy funding
- The increase consumes capacity within the General levy
- Less General Fund capacity remains for other County services

VS.

SEPARATE THE LEVIES

- MH/DD and Veterans receive the required levy funding
- The dedicated levies sit outside the General levy
- Preserves approximately \$8.7 million in General levy capacity in 2027

The MH/DD and Veterans levies generate the same required revenue under either approach. The difference is what happens to General Fund capacity.

3

WHAT IS THE EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDING?

EXECUTIVE SOMERS IS RECOMMENDING	MH/DD LEVY	VETERANS LEVY	GENERAL FUND CAPACITY PRESERVED	ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD IMPACT
Separating the MH/DD and Veterans Levies.	\$6.0 M In 2027	\$2.7 M In 2027	\$8.7 M In 2027	MH/DD Levy: \$18.55 per year Veterans Levy: \$8.35 per year \$26.90 More Per Year in Property Taxes

4

WHAT DO THESE LEVIES SUPPPORT?

Mental Health & Community Supports

Student support advocates, housing vouchers, Chemical Dependency & Mental Health services including Law & Justice work

Developmental Disabilities

Employment and job support, school-to-work transitions, housing navigation, and other community-based supports

Veterans

Veterans housing, supportive services, assistance for veterans and their families

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WHY THIS MATTERS

Community members asked the County to protect essential services, particularly those supporting people with the greatest needs.

Separating the MH/DD and Veterans levies helps protect those dedicated services while preserving funding capacity for other critical County priorities.

WHAT DOES PRESERVING \$8.7 MILLION MEAN?

Separating the MH/DD and Veterans levies preserves approximately \$8.7 million per year in General Fund capacity in 2027 – at a time when the County is already making difficult choices to balance the budget.

If the levies remain nested, this \$8.7 million would no longer be available within the General levy for other County priorities.

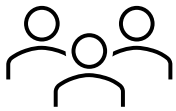
The General Fund supports services across County government, helping to provide essential services that keep our communities safe, healthy, and thriving.



Public Safety & Justice

Sheriff, corrections, courts, prosecuting attorney, public defense, and other law and justice services.

These services make up 76% of the General Fund spending and are essential to safe communities. Reductions would include slower response times, fewer prosecutions and less access to public defense.



Community & Essential Services

Human services, emergency management, elections, planning and development, and other core County functions.

General fund dollars help sustain a wide range of services, including preventative and community supports such as Family Resource Centers and Senior Centers that have limited other sources of support.



The Environment and Quality of Life

The County's parks system is key to the beauty and sustainability of the County. The County also is involved in long-term environmental protection and restoration efforts.

Parks upkeep, maintenance and improvement would be dramatically reduced with significant reductions. Fewer bathrooms and less upkeep of open spaces will lead to environmental and health hazards.



The People Who Deliver County Services

Fewer County employees mean fewer people to do the work of the County.

The recommended budget already includes significant staffing reductions. Additional reductions would slow down the services to constituents including cities and special purpose districts that rely on the County.

Developmental Disabilities Levy Overview



The Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities levy, RCW 71.20, provides local funds for services for county residents with developmental disabilities or mental and behavioral health conditions. Levy funding goes to Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT), supported employment services for youth and adults with developmental disabilities, and more. Levy funding is braided with other funding to sustain services and address emerging needs for children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities, and their families.



Services Provided

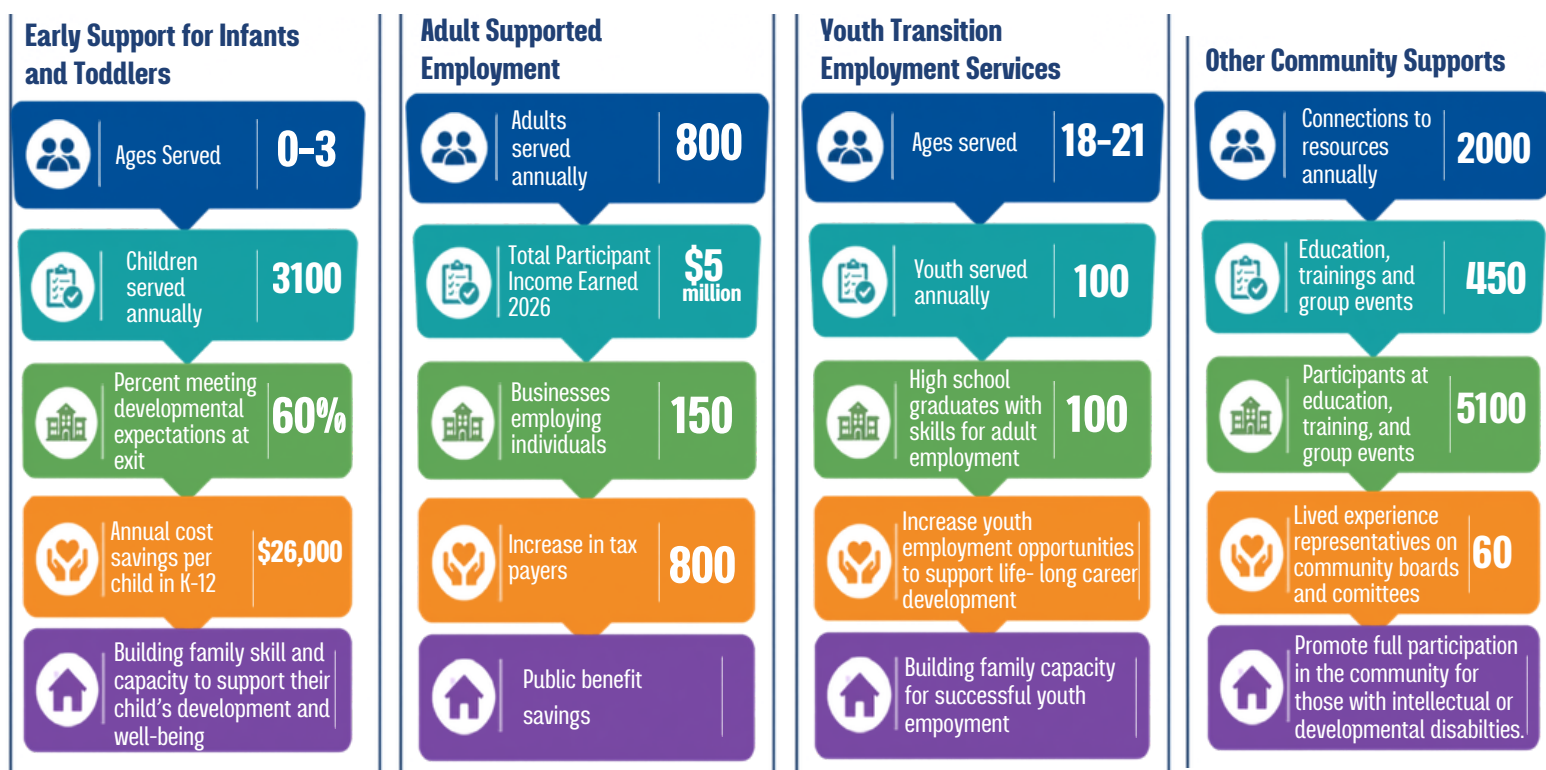
Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT)

Adult Supported Employment

Employment Transition Services for youth: Job Foundation & School to Work

Other Community Supports

Real Life Impacts & Program Data



What would increased levy dollars provide

Employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Eligibility and need are growing in our community for adult supported employment services, while state funding is stagnant. Levy funds will ensure eligible individuals are enrolled and served, and that local businesses receive technical assistance to keep employing these workers. Also, state contract funds support the first year of transition services, Job Foundations. A second year or School-to-Work is partially funded, but that is paused due to state budget constraints, so levy funds will support School-to-Work. They'll also provide services during a new "gap-year" of youth employment transition.

Early identification and comprehensive services for children with developmental delays

Our Early Support for Infant and Toddlers (ESIT) Program is the state-designated lead agency to direct countywide services for children birth to three with developmental disabilities. We anticipate a significant reduction in access to federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part-C funds and will rely on levy funds to continue vital supports. At least 30% of eligible children are not enrolled in ESIT services. Levy funds will be used to increase outreach for early identification and enrollment.

Snohomish County's **Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT)** program annually serves children, from birth to age 3 who are not meeting milestones in one or more developmental area or have a diagnosed condition with a risk of causing a developmental delay. Many children referred have complex medical needs requiring lifesaving support and coordinated care. ESIT provides individualized resource coordination, developmental therapies, and parent/caregiver coaching to support their child's development in daily activities at home and in the community.

Supported Employment Services help adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities obtain and continue employment at or above the state's minimum wage in the general workforce. Services are tailored to individual needs and include job assessment, preparation, and supports. Services include technical assistance to businesses to provide a supported, inclusive work environment for these individuals.

Youth Employment Transition Services provide support and guidance to students from 18 through 21 years of age with developmental disabilities as they prepare to transition from high school to the workplace. Transition services help students and their support team identify employment/career goals, assess for training and supports, and design a plan for securing a job after high school. The goal is to provide a solid foundation that increases the likelihood of stable employment throughout their adult life.

Snohomish County contracts with **community agencies** to support individuals with developmental disabilities so they can fully participate in their community by building networks of support, developing skills, accessing resources, and working collectively to address issues affecting their lives.

As an infant, **Samantha** received Early Support for Infants and Toddlers. Samantha attended her high school Front Door event hosted by Snohomish County and learned about transition services (ages 19-22) and supported employment (age 22+). At age 19, Samantha enrolled in transition services and completed Job Foundations and School-to-Work. She completed a person-centered plan, setting goals and a pathway for adult employment, supported living, and life activities. Samantha's first job was folding boxes for a small business in her community. She continues to be employed as an adult for 15 hours a week with advocacy from a supported employment provider.



Mental Health Levy Overview

The Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Levy (RCW 71.20) provides local funds for services that support county residents with developmental disabilities or mental and behavioral health conditions. Levy funding goes toward street outreach and care coordination through the Snohomish County Outreach Team, the Volunteers of America (VOA) Connect helpline, prevention and youth services, community-based behavioral health pilot projects, core staff support for the Behavioral Health & Veterans Division, and more. Levy funding is often braided with other funding sources like grants to provide robust, innovative, and flexible services.



Services Provided

Emergency housing, basic needs for unhoused people entering services

1-360-VOA-HELP

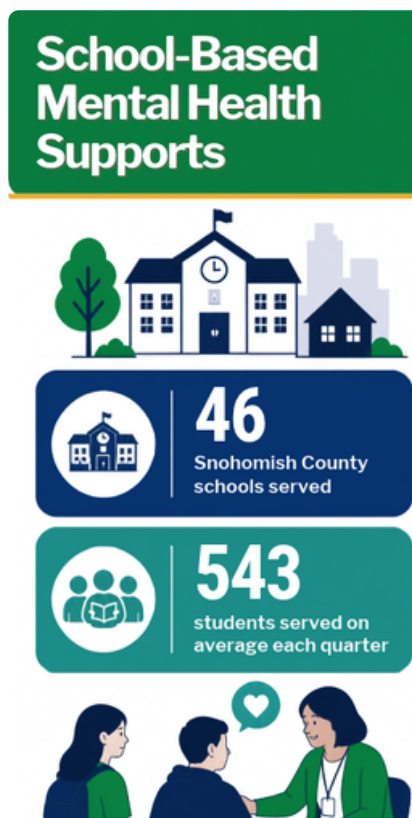
SCOUT Alumni Group

Strengthening Families Program 10-14

Substance use disorder education

Youth & adult behavioral health services

Real Life Impacts & Program Data



What would increased levy dollars provide

Continued support for programs facing budget reductions

Programs funded by the Chemical Dependency and Mental Health (CDMH) sales tax face significant cuts without use of the Mental Health Levy. County programs that would be impacted include the Snohomish County Outreach Team (SCOUT) and direct client supports such as housing assistance. Subcontracted services that would be impacted include student support advocates, behavioral health treatment services, prevention programs in schools and community, Carnegie Resource Center & Diversion Center programs, outreach to older adults, Nurse Family Partnership, and more.

Mitigate the impacts of federal actions on behavioral health access for county residents

H.R. 1 will result in individuals losing Medicaid coverage needed for behavioral health treatment services. Mental Health Levy dollars are crucial to help maintain access to care.

In August 2026, a **Snohomish County Outreach Team (SCOUT)** client received the keys to a new permanent supportive housing apartment, a home he will share with his teenage son. The milestone is especially meaningful given how far he has come. When he entered the SCOUT program in winter 2023, he was grieving the loss of a significant relationship, struggling with depression, and disconnected from his son. Though he completed substance use treatment, an anger outburst led to his exit from the Diversion Center. We were able to place him in clean and sober housing, where he engaged in services and began building healthier coping skills. By summer 2025, he had connected with a peer counselor, created a parenting plan, and reunited with his son. In early 2026, sudden changes in housing ownership forced him to move. Because his son was too old for Oxford housing, the SCOUT team placed them temporarily in a hotel while coordinating with permanent supported housing navigators. Despite the stress, he persisted and appealed a housing denial with strong letters of support, ultimately securing approval through Family Tree. Over the past 20 months, he has shown remarkable resilience, commitment to recovery, and dedication to rebuilding his family's future.

Community-based agencies provide **school-based mental health supports** to Snohomish County students across a variety of school districts. The various agencies have faced significant challenges with federal funding changes and budget limitations from both long-standing and new funders. These shifts reduced available resources and led to some students and their clinicians needing to make difficult decisions about whether or not mental health supports could continue. The school-based teams worked diligently to prevent disruptions in care. Through coordinated effort and careful planning, one community-based agency transitioned serves for more than 50 students to funding provided by the county through the mental health levy. The agency's adaptability and commitment, along with available resources through Snohomish County, allowed the program to remain a steady resource for students during a period of uncertainty.

Leroy (pictured) spent nearly three decades as a professional bull rider, traveling the rodeo circuit from the age of 13 until he was 41. Alongside that life, however, ran a long history of substance use and assault-related charges. By the time staff at the **Carnegie Resource Center and the Snohomish County Diversion Center (SCDC)** in Everett first met Leroy, he had been jailed 47 times in a three-year period for drug-related offenses and assault and battery. Leroy's story is a powerful reminder that compassion paired with accountability can transform lives. He now is clean and sober, and he works in clean and sober housing helping others in recovery. "There are good professionals out there who want to help, not judge. I have met many amazing professionals through Pioneer's SCDC and the Carnegie Resource Center; and through SCOUT, and the clean and sober housing organization where I manage a house."



Veterans' Relief Levy Overview

The Veterans' Relief Levy, called the Veterans' Assistance Fund (VAF) or "Vets Levy" locally, is funded by RCW 73.08. For nearly 30 years, Snohomish County Human Services has operated the Veterans Services Program out of our Behavioral Health & Veterans Division, helping meet the needs of veterans living in Snohomish County. Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) provide care coordination and referral to behavioral health and other resources, emergency vouchers for essentials like housing, food and utilities, outreach to incarcerated veterans, support with benefit claims to the Veterans Affairs (VA), and more. The levy supports program staffing and the Veterans Assistance Fund Advisory Board.



Services Provided

Emergency vouchers for housing & other needs

Employment services

Connection with housing resources

Advocacy & care coordination

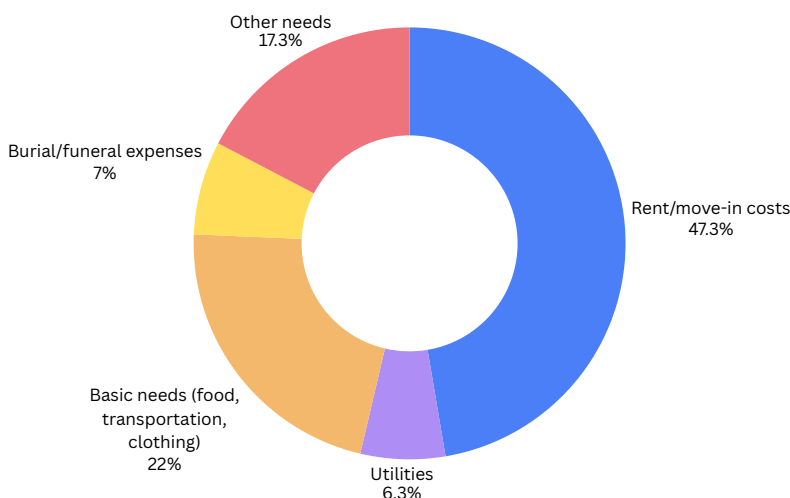
VA claims support

Specialized support for seniors & disabled veterans

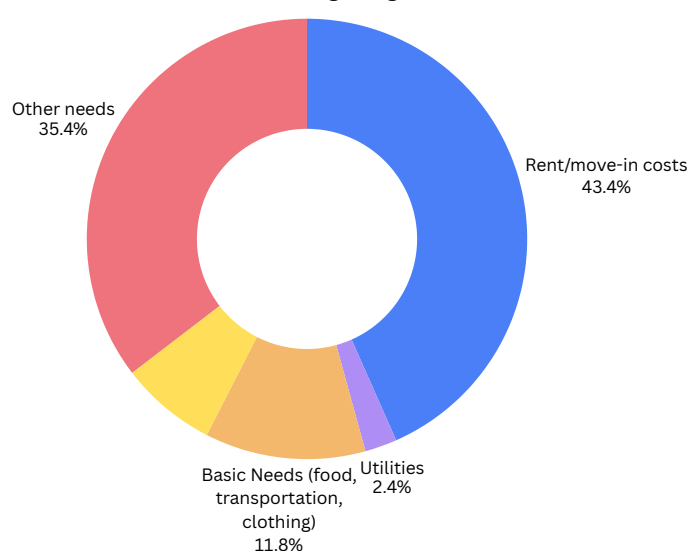
Real Life Impacts & Program Data

253 unique clients served in 2025, and 128 unique clients served through August 2026

2025 Veteran Services Direct Support
600 vouchers total



2026 Veterans Services Direct Support
300 vouchers through August 2026



What would increased levy dollars provide

Increased funding and frequency of vouchers for needs like food, clothing, transportation, and utilities

Provided approx. \$230,000 in direct supports via vouchers in 2025 and would aim to double that.

Increased funding for housing support, including to senior veterans

Ability to help at least 15 additional senior, disabled veterans with rental assistance and 25-50 more veteran households through a rental assistance model that builds self sufficiency.

Increased outreach to underserved veteran populations

More outreach in outlying and underserved areas. Reinstate monthly dental van and mobile services.

Increased ability to process VA claims. Our Veteran Support Officers are currently the only WDVA accredited VSOs in the county.

Processed 103 VA benefit claims in 2025. Additional funding will help increase the number of claims processed to support veterans, families, and the broader economic landscape.

For more than two decades, a veteran had been living in a remote area that was never meant for human habitation. It was a place he had come to know well, but not one that could support his safety or stability. When he was informed that he could no longer remain there, the Snohomish County Veterans Services team stepped in immediately. Working closely with Coordinated Entry, Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Team, they began building a path forward. Each partner played a vital role in creating a network of resources, advocacy, and trust. The veteran was able to move into a room for rent. It was his first safe, stable shelter in years. The team helped him stay connected to services and gradually strengthen his housing stability. Today, he is successfully and securely housed through HUD-VASH, marking a profound transition from decades of unsafe living conditions to a home where he can rebuild, rest, and thrive.

For years, a homeless veteran had been moving in and out of various programs, trying to find stability while living on just 10% service-connected income. With only \$170 each month to rely on, meeting basic needs was a constant struggle. When he reached out to our program seeking financial assistance, it was clear short-term help wouldn't be enough; he needed a path toward long-term stability. The team began by screening him for VA disability and support services. As we learned more about his history and exposures, it became evident he might qualify for additional disability benefits under the federal PACT Act. What followed was a coordinated, determined effort. Multiple agencies and offices worked together to track down old service and treatment records, piece together missing documentation, and build a strong VA claim on his behalf. After months of collaboration and persistence, his claim was submitted and ultimately approved. The veteran was awarded 100% VA disability, raising his monthly income from \$170 to \$3,900. This life-changing increase means he can finally move forward with the stability, dignity, and security he has long deserved.

A homeless veteran arrived at the Carnegie Resource Center with a severe wound, clearly in need of immediate medical care. Employees urged him to go to the emergency room. He refused, not due to fear of treatment but because he had his emotional support animal and no one to care for the dog while he got care for himself. The Veterans Services team, located right across the street, brought the dog to their office during the search for a temporary foster home. Knowing his companion was being cared for, the veteran accepted help and EMS transported him to the hospital. After his hospital stay, the veteran was eventually able to secure housing with the team's support. However, as his health continued to decline, he faced the heartbreaking realization that he could no longer care for his dog. To ensure the animal had a meaningful future, our team reached out to a local organization that trains and certifies service animals for disabled veterans. The dog was assessed and accepted into their program, beginning a new chapter as a certified service animal in training and bringing peace of mind to the veteran.

