



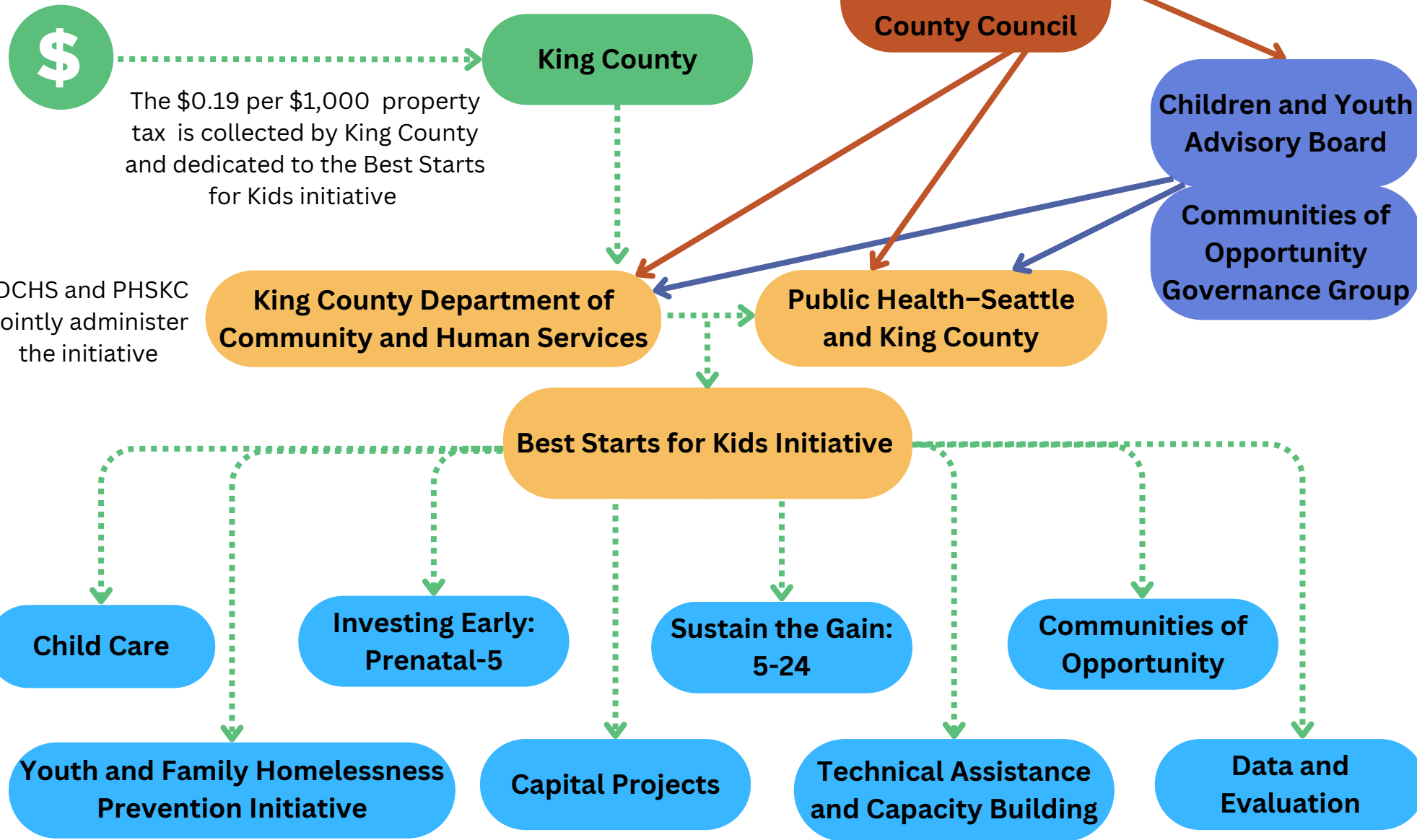
Governance, Administration, and Oversight Flowchart

A variety of key players participate in the governance, advising, administration, and oversight of Voter-Approved Children's Funds. These may all be separate entities, there may be entities that take on more than one of these roles, and they may be new or existing bodies within or outside of government. This document overviews the constellation of players and their roles in implementing the Best Starts for Kids initiative, established in 2015.

Then-King County Executive Dow Constantine championed the creation of the Best Starts for Kids initiative in 2015, seeking to improve health and equity outcomes and the distribution of health and human services funding. Voters first approved the Best Starts for Kids levy in 2015, investing \$400 million in funding through 2021 for programs to support families and children. In 2021 voters renewed the levy for another six years with a tax rate increase. The measure passed with 62% of the vote.

The levy is expected to generate about \$880 million between 2022 and 2027, supporting investment in comprehensive supports from prenatal development to adulthood. The renewal allows Best Starts to maintain their existing investment areas and expand to address other community needs, including child care and capital programs. In 2023, Best Starts for Kids reached over 221,000 children, families, and community members across the County.

Funding Flowchart



Key Players & their Roles

King County

- King County is responsible for collecting the voter-approved \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed value property tax and distributing the revenue to the two agencies who administer Best Starts.
- The County's Strategic Plan and the Youth Action Plan and their goals informed both the initial and current Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan. Similarly, the County's Health and Human Services Transformation Plan and Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan guided Best Starts' design, priorities, and current evaluation.

King County Executive & King County Council

- The King County Executive is responsible for appointing and County Council approving the 35 members on the Children and Youth Advisory Board.
- During the procurement process for new contracts, the Executive invites the Children and Youth Advisory Board to select members to sit on the selection panel for each contract as voting members. The Executive also invites Councilmembers or designated staff to participate in the selection panel as non-voting members.
 - Normally at least one or two Council Members and/or their staff end up sitting in on these selection panels.
 - No contract is awarded without the Executive notifying Council Members at least 24 hours in advance.
- County Council is also responsible for approving Best Starts' biennial budget as well as the Implementation Plan.
- Key outcomes and takeaways are shared in a required annual report that the Executive transmits to the Council.
 - While not a requirement, Best Starts also shares a variety of documents and plans with municipalities and a number of regional groups for their feedback and support.

Key Players & their Roles

Communities of Opportunity Governing Group

- The Communities of Opportunity (COO) Governance Group provides guidance on COO activities and advises on the COO elements in the Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan.

Children and Youth Advisory Board

- The Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) serves as an oversight and advisory body to the County Executive, County Council, Best Starts for Kids' Staff, and the County's implementation of the Youth Action Plan.
- CYAB makes recommendations and monitors the distribution of levy funding. CYAB is also responsible for developing the implementation plan that guides Best Starts' administration, priorities, and budget.
- The Board is made up of a wide variety of County stakeholders and residents with diverse perspectives.
 - Board members generally represent themselves and not the agency or position they hold. They are appointed by the County Executive and approved by County Council.

Key Players & their Roles

King County Department of Community and Human Services and Public Health–Seattle and King County

- King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and Public Health–Seattle and King County (PHSKC) Jointly administer Best Starts for Kids, an initiative to support every baby born and child raised in King County to be happy, healthy, safe, and thriving.
- DCHS holds the levy revenue and makes transfers to PHSKC based on the biennial budget.
- Rather than being its own self-contained department, Best Starts is embedded in both departments and utilizes their existing infrastructure. This results in Best Starts being integrated into the County's work.
 - Best Starts staff also work across multiple multiple different divisions within DCHS and PHSKC. Levy funding is transferred to these divisions to pay for the strategies they manage.
- Best Starts staff work closely with division directors and both departments to make budget recommendations.
- Other day-to-day operation responsibilities for staff include distributing funding and sitting on grant recommendation panels, creating evaluation plans, program monitoring and data collection, and community and partner engagement.
- Currently Best Starts spends approximately 8% of its budget on administrative costs.

Funding Allocations

Best Starts awards funding across eight different investments areas. County ordinance and the Implementation Plan contain spending requirements and allocations for each area.

Child Care

Best Starts partners with community-based organizations to run its Child Care Subsidy Program which helps cover the cost of child care for 2,000 children and their families. Best Starts also provides a wage boost for child care workers in King County to study the benefit of government investments in the workforce. The child care investment is a newer investment for Best Starts and was implemented after the 2021 levy renewal.

Communities of Opportunity

Communities of Opportunity is a public-private partnership jointly funded by Best Starts for Kids and the Seattle Foundation. The group seeks to invest in strategies that build community power which include place-based and cultural community partnerships, policy and systems changes, and a learning community.

Investing Early: Prenatal-5

This initiative encompasses Best Start' prenatal to five investments, which is the fund's largest investment area, with a goal of supporting pregnant and parenting families, young children 0-5, and their caregivers. Investing Early includes strategies that support maternal and child health services, development screenings, infant and early childhood mental health trainings, environmental supports to prevent lead poisoning, and home-based services. Best Starts served over 90,000 children and families with these services in 2023.

Funding Allocations

Capital Projects

Best Starts will invest up to \$50 million through 2027 for grants that support repairing, renovating, or constructing facilities that serve children and young people. These capital projects may include recreation, child care, or housing facilities for youth and families. By ordinance, grant funding for capital projects will be made available if levy revenues are projected to exceed \$822 million.

Sustain the Gain: 5-24

Sustain the Gain is Best Starts' second largest investment area. Its programs aim to continue the progress made in early childhood for children and young adults ages five to 24. This investment area supports school based health centers, mentoring and leadership programs, expanded learning opportunities, mental health and substance use screenings and intervention, education and employment services, and systems change work to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Best Starts provides free technical assistance to organizations to help remove barriers that may prevent them from applying for Best Starts funding as well as capacity building to Best Starts funded partners to build up their organizational infrastructure. In 2023, Best Starts provided more than 8,800 hours of technical assistance or capacity building support.

Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative

The Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative combines case management with financial assistance to help families maintain housing stability. Over 700 households were enrolled in the program in 2023, 94% of whom remained housed within one year of exit.

Funding Allocations

Evaluation

- Investments in evaluation fund trained staff, data systems, external evaluators, and data collection and reporting assistance for providers.
- Best Starts staff work one-on-one with partners to develop individualized evaluation plans. Evaluation starts with a results based accountability (RBA) framework that tracks the following three performance measures:
 1. How much did we do?
 2. How well did we do it?
 3. Is anyone better off?
- Each individual strategy in an investment area has a staff person assigned to collect data to answer those three questions. In addition to RBA, evaluation plans also include program-specific performance measures and data collection methods. The process centers equity and culturally-relevant measurement tools.
- Along with performance measurements, Best Starts also tracks population-level indicators and contracts with third-party organizations to conduct in-depth evaluation to learn more about specific research questions or develop new tools and supports.
- Local ordinance requires that the County Executive transmits an annual report with key outcomes and metrics to the County Council.
- Best Starts also maintains a public dashboard that shares the impacts of their investments. The dashboard includes both qualitative and quantitative data for each of the investment areas and strategies within them.