

LOCAL NEWS

King County, Seattle chart 'new path forward' on homelessness

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A homeless camp in Seattle's Ravenna Park. (KIRO 7)

King County Executive Dow Constantine and Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan outlined plans Wednesday to form a single, independent entity to combat homelessness.

This new entity will consolidate funding and policy-making for homelessness between King County and the City of Seattle.

"The homelessness and housing affordability crisis is our most pressing regional challenge," said Executive Constantine in a news release. "We have brought

extra resources and deployed new innovations to the fight, but we must go even further, and build a system that is equal to the tasks before us.”

This move came after the King County Auditor’s Office released a report earlier in 2018 stating that [“multiple experts found the governance structure of the homeless response system is too weak to drive change, \[while\] programmatic decisions remain siloed in the city, county, and other funders.”](#)

The new collaborative entity will be responsible for the following:

- Unifying preventative and emergency funding and services for shelters, outreach programs, and diversion.
- Coordinating housing solutions at every level, including permanent supportive, transitional, and rapid rehousing.
- Overseeing policy, contract management, performance management, and technical assistance
- Establishing metrics and milestones to better measure success and promote accountability
- Funding for “Continuum of Care” treatment that tracks patients over time

“With a worsening crisis, our region needs one unified system that has the governance, authority, and resources to deliver to people experiencing homelessness,” said Mayor Durkan.

A more detailed plan for implementation is currently in the works for the next few months, with King County citing “several potential models, each with its own legal requirements and parameters” as one of the limiting factors.

If this all sounds familiar, that’s because the original plan for this “One Table,” regional approach was first unveiled back in Dec. 2017.

The latest data on homelessness, [published in January 2018](#), claimed that Seattle and King County’s homeless population sits just over 12,000 people, a four percent increase over 2017. The portion of homeless people who are unsheltered also increased from 2017, from 47 percent to 52 percent in 2018.