CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
425-587-3000

MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager

Date: October 19, 2026

Subject: **Minimum Wage Evaluation Options**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council provides direction on the next steps to evaluate a local Kirkland minimum wage beyond the minimum wage established by the State of Washington.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- On May 19, 2026, Council received options for evaluating a Kirkland minimum wage in response to a Legislative Request Memorandum (LRM) approved by Council on April 21.
- The Council selected combining this issue with a previously approved competitiveness review. The consultant for both was tasked with a literature review of peer city experiences, including economic and social impacts, and to return to Council with the results and consideration of potential next steps.
- On October 6, 2026, Council directed the City Manager to bring community engagement and targeted study options for a minimum wage in Kirkland to the Council meeting on November 4, 2026, for Council review and discussion.
- Staff has developed four options for targeted data analysis and community engagement for Council consideration to evaluate a Kirkland minimum wage.

BACKGROUND:

At the April 21, 2026, Council meeting, Councilmembers Falcone and Tymczyszyn sponsored a Legislative Request Memo (LRM) requesting that staff bring back options to evaluate establishing a local minimum wage in Kirkland beyond that established by the State of Washington.[1] The options were to include a review of minimum wage ordinances from other local jurisdictions in King County, including the unincorporated area, and strategies for

[1] https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/City-Council/Council-Meeting-Minutes-and-Agendas/2026-Kirkland-City-Council-Meetings/April-21-2026-Kirkland-City-Council-Meeting/Agenda-April-21-2026-Kirkland-City-Council-Regular-Meeting

community and business outreach related to evaluating a Kirkland minimum wage. Staff returned with the LRM042126 proposal at the May 19, 2026 City Council meeting.[2]

The LRM outlined four options to evaluate the feasibility, policy options, and potential impacts of establishing a local minimum wage standard:

A. Take no local action. Timing: N/A
B. Advocate as a jurisdiction or in a coalition for the state to raise the state minimum wage, or to set different minimum wages in higher cost regions of the state such as King County.
C. Allocate budget to hire a consultant to conduct a literature review of peer city experiences, including economic and social impacts, and return findings to Council for consideration of potential next steps. Timing: 2-3 months.
D. Allocate budget to hire a consultant to conduct robust research that could include a literature review, baseline analysis of Kirkland's economic landscape, business outreach, outreach to peer cities, and development of a roadmap outlining potential next steps: Timing: 4-6 months.

The Council directed the City Manager to move forward with option C, while expressing interest in conducting worker engagement and business outreach as a later phase of this project. The scope of option C was intentionally designed as a focused first phase exploring a literature review of available census data, not a full minimum wage impact model. A potential future phase would include a more comprehensive analysis of Kirkland-specific minimum-wage workers. Council noted that the timing of option C was a time and cost efficiency of using the same consultant for the literature review and the economic competitiveness study. Staff executed a contract with ECOnorthwest in June 2026 to conduct the literature review of peer city experiences, in addition to the planned Economic Competitiveness Study.

At the October 6, 2026 Council meeting, staff and ECOnorthwest policy advisors presented the findings of option C, referred to as the Minimum Wage White Paper, which was provided as Attachment 1 of that memo.[3] The white paper provided the first-phase review of academic research, approaches by peer jurisdictions, and the demographic context of low-income[4] workers in Kirkland.[5] Staff presented two potential next steps for Council consideration: 1) conduct a Kirkland-specific analysis of the potential impacts of increasing the minimum wage and 2) conduct community and business engagement.

Council discussion of the proposed next steps identified key considerations for a Kirkland-specific data analysis and community and business engagement. The interests discussed included:

- Kirkland-specific data analysis:

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[2] https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2026/may-19-2026/10b1a_city-manager-reports.pdf

[3] https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2026/october-6-2026/9b_business.pdf

[4] In Kirkland, the median hourly wage is $48.81/hour and the 25th percentile wage is $25.18. Based on the available data, option C reviewed available census data and defined low-wage workers as those making under the 25th percentile wage. This wage encapsulates a variety of lower wage workers, not just those at the minimum wage.

[5] Based on the available data, option C reviewed demographic household data from the American Community Survey estimates for the Public Use Microdata Area containing Kirkland, which also includes part of Redmond. Therefore, this review reflects the combined Kirkland–Redmond area rather than Kirkland alone.

    - Number of minimum wage workers in Kirkland
    - Number of businesses who employ minimum wage workers (categorized by size, sector, and revenue)
    - Cost impacts to businesses, nonprofits, institutions, and the City of Kirkland as employers
- Minimum wage policy development
    - Enforcement options
    - Potential implementation strategies
        - Minimum wage by business size
        - Minimum wage by sector
        - Phased implementation
    - Regional approach
    - Impact assessment after implementation
- Business and community engagement:
    - Minimum-wage workers, the Kirkland Chamber of Commerce, small and large businesses, labor unions, nonprofits, social service providers, Lake Washington School District, Evergreen Health, and the City of Kirkland (as an employer) were identified as important parties for engagement

Other suggestions included:

- Advocate at the state level to increase the statewide minimum wage
- Outreach to neighboring jurisdictions such as Bothell, Redmond and Bellevue to gauge interest in a regional approach
- Incorporate exploring a Kirkland minimum wage into the Council work program for 2027-2028 to provide adequate time for thoughtful study and engagement

After a lengthy discussion of the issues and options, Council directed the City Manager to bring a range of options for community engagement and targeted data analysis for a minimum wage in Kirkland to the Council meeting on November 4, 2026, for Council review and discussion.

The Council also selected the King County minimum wage ordinance as a basis for community engagement. The ordinance set an initial minimum wage of $20.29 cents and then starting on Jan. 1, 2025, increases every year by the CPI-W index. The ordinance includes all unincorporated areas of King County, applies differently to different tiers of employers, and includes a phased approach to increasing the minimum wage over several years. The King County ordinance is provided as Attachment 1,

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Following the October 6 Council meeting, two relevant stakeholder meetings occurred. On Friday, October 23, the Chamber of Commerce hosted a “fireside chat” for local businesses and invited the City Manager and Deputy City Manager of External Affairs. Councilmember Jon Pascal also attended the fireside chat. The businesses in the meeting highlighted potential economic impacts and unintended consequences to implementing a minimum wage. Several participants expressed concern that Kirkland businesses could be placed at a competitive disadvantage if neighboring jurisdictions did not adopt a similar wage increase. They also requested a thoughtful and thorough approach to both local data analysis and community engagement. Another issue raised was that it is difficult for many businesses to participate in these conversations as they do not want to create conflict with employees or customers. They asked the City to consider creative and discrete outreach options to gather accurate input from

businesses while addressing these concerns. Many of the issues raised in the fireside chat were captured in an October 26 Chamber letter to the Council that is included as Attachment 2.

On October 26, the Deputy City Manager of External Affairs responded to a meeting request with representatives of the coalition supporting the minimum wage, including local Democratic organizations and community-based organizations. Attendees highlighted the high cost of living on the Eastside, the complex economic struggles of low-income workers, and the community benefits of a higher minimum wage. They requested action on a more accelerated timeframe. While they supported targeted community outreach, they did not think additional studies were necessary. Subsequently to that meeting, the King County Democrats passed a resolution supporting a local minimum wage that was sent to the City Council and is included as Attachment 3.

Staff has developed options for targeted data analysis and community engagement for Council consideration. In each option, staff is recommending that community outreach start in earnest in January of 2027 as most businesses and employees will be focused on sales and services during the critical holiday season in November and December, and most non-profits will be focused on closing their books. Elements from the options could also be combined for a hybrid-option by the Council.

Council options

1. Add this topic to the 2027 state legislative agenda and advocate as a jurisdiction or in a coalition for the state to raise the state minimum wage, or to set different minimum wages in higher cost regions of the state such as King County. Staff will gather input from stakeholders to inform the work of the Legislative Work Group and contract lobbyists.

2. Conduct community engagement based on the King County Ordinance
    a. Additional data analysis or collection would come from community and stakeholder feedback, rather than consultants or City staff. Staff will gather input and suggested changes from stakeholders based on the unincorporated King County minimum wage ordinance
    b. A minimum wage “TREK” would begin in January 2027 and by completed around the end of Q1 2027
    c. Results and potential ordinance options would be presented to Council for consideration after completion of the TREK.

3. Regional or Subregional engagement - 2027
    a. Staff will gather general input on a regional or subregional minimum wage from stakeholders.
    b. Staff will develop a plan to either
        i. Engage the King County Executive to convene a process by which all cities in King County conduct a regional discussion on adjustments to minimum wage, or
        ii. Engage neighboring jurisdictions such as Bothell, Redmond and Bellevue in a subregional discussion
    c. Work begins in January of 2027 and would likely take most of the calendar year

4. 2027-2028 City Work Program - Add a robust minimum wage evaluation and implementation strategy to Council's City Work Program
    a. Contract with a firm to analyze and/or collect specific data from the Kirkland business community to understand the potential impacts of an increased minimum wage
    b. Conduct an enhanced TREK engagement process including surveys and focus groups, as well as targeted outreach to businesses and stakeholders.
    c. Consider a subregional approach with neighboring cities
    d. Use the results to develop options for Council consideration.
    e. Intent to complete by end of 2027

The additional data analysis would be structured to answer the following questions:

- Which Kirkland businesses, occupations, and types of employers would be most affected?
- What potential trade-offs or unintended effects should policymakers consider?
- What are best-practice options for implementation, including phase-in and different rates by size of business?
- What are best practice options for enforcement?
- What additional data would be needed to evaluate impacts over time?
- Any additional information the Council would need to inform decision making.

Outreach methodology
All options would utilize the unincorporated King County minimum wage ordinance as a basis for outreach. In addition, all options include outreach to different size businesses, labor unions and low-wage workers, and nonprofit organizations. This would include identifying and/or interviewing businesses in Kirkland that are paying minimum wage. The City typically conducts a 6- or 9-month TREK. A condensed TREK could be developed for Option 1 to focus on specific stakeholders. Consolidating the timeline may make it more difficult to engage a diverse and wide-ranging audience. Most businesses' busiest time of the year is Quarter 4 (Q4) as organizations work to close their books and meet the holiday retail demand. Regardless of the time period, the City will work closely with the Kirkland Chamber and Kirkland Downtown Association to reach different businesses.

NEXT STEPS:

Next steps will depend on the option selected by Council. Staff can extend the contract with ECOnorthwest for data analysis for any of these options. Costs would range from $12,000 to $90,000 depending on the tasks selected. A budget and funding plan to support the option selected by Council would be presented to for approval at the December 8 Council meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – King County Minimum Wage Ordinance
Attachment 2 – Letter to Council from Kirkland Chamber of Commerce
Attachment 3 – Resolution Supporting Minimum Wage from King County Democrats

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1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

KING COUNTY

Signature Report

Ordinance 19762

Proposed No. 2023-0310.3

Sponsors Zahilay, Dembowski, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Barón and Mosqueda

AN ORDINANCE establishing an hourly minimum wage rate for employees of employers in unincorporated King County, employees of certain county contractors, and county employees; amending Ordinance 17909, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.18.010 and Ordinance 17909, Section 6, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.18.030, adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 2, adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 12, repealing Ordinance 17909, Section 5, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.18.020, Ordinance 17909, Section 7, and K.C.C. 3.18.040, Ordinance 17909, Section 8, and K.C.C. 3.18.050, Ordinance 17909, Section 9, and K.C.C. 3.18.060, Ordinance 17909, Section 10, and K.C.C. 3.18.070, Ordinance 17909, Section 11, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.18.080, and Ordinance 17909, Section 12, and K.C.C. 3.18.090, and establishing an effective date.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. **Findings:**

A. In 2016, state of Washington voters passed Initiative 1433 to increase the state's hourly minimum wage rate and have it annually adjusted for inflation. Initiative

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1433 also required state of Washington employers to provide paid sick leave to employees. The 2024 hourly minimum wage rate for Washington state is $16.28 per hour.

B. According to the 2023 National Low Income Housing Coalition's Out of Reach data, an employee making Washington's minimum wage would have to work 103 hours each week to afford a modest one-bedroom rental home at fair market rent in King County.

C. According to The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State, developed in partnership with the University of Washington's Center for Women's Welfare and the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, the state's minimum wage is insufficient to meet the basic needs of working families in King County. In 2023, for a dual-income household of two working adults and two school-aged children living in King County and earning the state's minimum wage, the family would fall short on average $36,442 to meet the basic needs of the household. In other words, both working adults would need to have a minimum wage of $24.50 per hour to meet the basic needs of the household.

D. In King County, falling short to meet the basic needs of the household disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, which are also known as BIPOC, communities. According to 2021 census data, in King County, 23 percent of households earn less than the state's minimum wage, however, for Black households this increases to 46 percent; for Indigenous households it is 42 percent; and for Latinx households it is 32 percent. Moreover, the median household income for King County is $110,586, which is 109 percent of the Self-Sufficiency Standard for a dual-income

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household of two working adults and two school-aged children, however, for Black households it is $57,437, which is 56 percent of the Self-Sufficiency Standard; and for Latinx households it is $74,357, which is 73 percent of the Self-Sufficiency Standard.

E. RCW 49.46.120, codified by Initiative 1433, declares that the state's minimum standards for wages, paid sick leave, and working conditions are supplementary to local law or ordinance which may be more favorable to employees and therefore the more favorable minimum standards shall be in full force and effect and enforced.

F. In 2013, before Initiative 1433 was adopted by the state of Washington, voters from the city of SeaTac approved local Proposition 1 that established an hourly minimum wage rate of $15.00 per hour and other benefits and rights for employees in the hospitality and transportation industries, including those that were employed in the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The city of SeaTac was one of the first local jurisdictions in the country to increase the hourly minimum wage rate. The city of SeaTac's 2024 hourly minimum wage rate is $19.71 per hour for employees in the hospitality and transportation industries.

G. In 2014, the city of Seattle enacted Ordinance 124490 to increase the hourly minimum wage rate and minimum compensation rates for employees performing work in the city. The city of Seattle's 2024 hourly minimum wage rate for employers with 501 or more employees is $19.97 per hour.

H. On May 19, 2014, the council adopted Motion 14131 to affirm that it is county policy that a living wage should be paid to county employees and to the employees of persons, businesses, organizations, and other entities that receive procurement contracts, tax exemptions or credits, or other financial benefits from the

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county. Subsequently, on October 6, 2014, the county enacted Ordinance 17909 to require that a living wage be paid to county employees and to the employees of certain county contractors. To avoid conflicts for county employees who work in the city of Seattle and reduce the administrative burden on county contractors, the ordinance followed the city of Seattle's minimum wage ordinance by setting variable living wage rates based on the size, which is the number of employees, of the contractor, and whether health benefits were provided to employees by the contractor. The county's 2024 hourly living wage rate for county employees and contractors with 501 or more employees is $19.97 per hour.

I. In 2022, voters from the city of Tukwila, approved local Initiative Measure 1 that established a minimum wage equal to the minimum wage rate in the city of SeaTac for employees performing work in the city. However, the city of Tukwila's 2024 minimum wage rate is $20.29 per hour, due to the varied approach on calculating the annual inflation rate. Currently, the city of Tukwila has the highest minimum wage rate in the country according to the University of California, Berkley Labor Center.

J. According to the department of local service's 2022 Business Survey, an online survey for the unincorporated King County business community, sixty-seven percent of the respondents supported an increase in the hourly minimum wage rate, with many respondents saying they already paid employees above the hourly minimum wage rate or that the owner was the only employee and therefore the business would not be affected by an hourly minimum wage rate increase.

K. Some employers, particularly small businesses and nonprofit organizations, may have initial difficulty accommodating the increased costs due to the increased hourly

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minimum wage rate and a gradual phase-in approach may be beneficial.

L. K.C.C. 2.10.210.B. defines the county's fourteen determinants of equity as the social, economic, geographic, political, and physical environment conditions in which people in our county are born, grow, live, work, and age that lead to the creation of a fair and just society. Access to the determinants of equity is necessary to have equity for all people and inequities are created when barriers exist that prevent individuals and communities from accessing these conditions and reaching their full potential. Access to jobs that have the ability to make sufficient income for the purchase of basic necessities to support themselves and their families is one of the fourteen county determinants. The council finds that it is necessary for the county to enact policies to ensure the well-being of all residents by ensuring their access to the determinants of equity.

SECTION 2. Sections 3 through 6 of this ordinance should constitute a new chapter in K.C.C. Title 2.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 3. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

A. "Contract" means a mutually binding legal relationship or any modification thereof obligating the county to pay a contractor one hundred thousand dollars or more to provide professional services, technical services, or services, as defined in K.C.C 2.93.030 to, or at the direction of, the county. "Contract" does not include: a contract between a contract-awarding authority and another government or public entity; a contract that the county enters into as the administrator of grants received from a third party; a contract for public works; an architectural or engineering contract; or a collective bargaining agreement.

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B. "Contract-awarding authority" means the county officer, department, commission, employee, or board authorized to enter into or to administer contracts on behalf of the county.

C. "Contractor" means any person that enters into a contract with the county, or negotiates the extension of an existing contract with the county, after October 27, 2014, or that is a subcontractor performing services under such a contract.

D. "Employ" means to engage, suffer, or permit to work.

E. "Employee" means any individual employed by an employer, whether on a full-time, part-time, temporary, or seasonal basis, including temporary workers, contracted workers, contingent workers, and persons made available to work through a temporary services, staffing, or employment agency or similar entity.

F. "Employer" includes any individual, partnership, association, corporation, business trust, or any entity, person or group of persons, or a successor thereof, that employs another person and includes any such an entity or person acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee. More than one entity may be the "employer" if employment by one employer is not completely disassociated from employment by the other employer if the economic reality of the relationship between the entities and the employee or employees is that of employer and employee. The economic reality of the relationship is to be determined by the circumstances of the whole activity, not a mechanical weighing of relevant factors.

G. "Hourly minimum wage" means the minimum wage due to an employee under this chapter for each hour worked during a pay period.

H. "Person" means one or more individuals, partnerships, associations,

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organizations, corporations, cooperatives, legal representatives, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy, receivers, or groups or persons, limited liability companies, sole proprietorships, joint adventures, estates, trusts, or other entities, groups, or combinations acting as units, and the individuals constituting the groups or units.

I. "Wage" means compensation due to an employee by reason of employment, payable in legal tender of the United States or checks on banks convertible into cash on demand at full face value.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 4.

A. A contractor shall pay their employees an hourly minimum wage rate of not less than twenty dollars and twenty-nine cents per hour or the hourly minimum wage rate established by federal or state law, whichever is greater. Beginning January 1, 2025, the hourly minimum wage rate shall increase annually on a percentage basis to reflect the annual rate of inflation and calculated to the nearest cent on January 1 of each year thereafter. For purposes of this section, "the annual rate of inflation" means one hundred percent of the annual average growth rate of the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton Area Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers, CPI-W, or a successor index, for the twelve month period ending in August, but the percentage increase shall not be less than zero.

B. An employee is covered by this chapter for each hour the employee is performing a measurable amount of work under a contract with the county.

C. For the purposes of this chapter, temporary employment agency employees who perform, for an employer, a measurable amount of work under a contract with the county, shall be paid no less than the hourly minimum wage rate required to be paid to

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employees as specified in subsection A. of this section.

D. A contract-awarding authority shall not execute a contract with a contractor unless the contract includes provisions requiring the contractor to comply with the hourly minimum wage rate as specified in subsection A. of this section and containing appropriate remedies for the breach of the contracts as prescribed in section 5 of this ordinance.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 5.

The executive shall:

A. Adopt public and administrative rules in accordance with this chapter establishing standards and procedures for effectively carrying out this chapter;

B. Determine when and how any notice and opportunity to cure a violation of this law should be afforded;

C. Determine and impose appropriate sanctions or remedies, or both, and procedures for administrative review, for violation of this chapter by contractors, including but not limited to:

1. Disqualification of the contractor from bidding on or being awarded a county contract for up to two years;

2. Remedies allowable by contract including, but not limited to, liquidated damages and termination of the contract;

3. Remedial action after a finding of noncompliance, as specified by rule; and

4. Other appropriate civil remedies and sanctions allowable by law; and

D. Administer other requirements specified by this chapter or that are necessary to implement the purposes of this chapter.

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SECTION 6. Ordinance 17909, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.18.010 are hereby amended to read as follows:

A. ((~~"Actuarial value" means the percentage of total average costs for covered benefits that a health benefits package will cover.~~

~~B. "Bonuses" means non-discretionary payments in addition to hourly, salary, commission or piece-rate payments paid under an agreement between an employer and employee.~~

~~C. "Commissions" means a sum of money paid to an employee upon completion of a task, usually selling a certain amount of goods or services.~~

~~D. "Compensation" means wages together with the money paid by an employer towards an individual employee's health benefits plan.~~

~~E. "Contract" means a mutually binding legal relationship or any modification thereof obligating the county to pay a contractor one hundred thousand dollars or more to provide professional services, technical services or services, as defined in K.C.C 2.93.030 to, or at the direction of, the county. "Contract" does not include: a contract between a contract-awarding authority and another government or public entity; a contract that the county enters into as the administrator of grants received from a third party; a contract for public works; an architectural or engineering contract; or a collective bargaining agreement.~~

~~F. "Contract-awarding authority" means the county officer, department, commission, employee or board authorized to enter into or to administer contracts on behalf of the county.~~

~~G. "Contractor" means any person that enters into a contract with the county, or~~

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~~negotiates the extension of an existing contract with the county, after October 27, 2014, or that is a subcontractor performing services under such a contract.~~

~~H. "Division" means the finance and business operations division of the department of executive services.~~

~~I. "Director" means the manager of the finance and business operations division of the department of executive services, or the manager's designee. J.~~)) "Employ" means to engage, suffer, or permit to work.

B. "Employee" means any individual employed by an employer, whether on a full-time, part-time, temporary or seasonal basis, including temporary workers, contracted workers, contingent workers, and persons made available to work through a temporary services, staffing, or employment agency or similar entity.

((~~K. "Employer" includes King County and any individual, partnership, association, corporation, business trust or person or group of persons acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee.~~

~~L. "Health benefits plan" means a silver or higher level essential health benefits package, as defined in 42 U.S.C. Sec. 18022, or an equivalent plan that is designed to provide benefits that are actuarially equivalent to seventy percent of the full actuarial value of the benefits provided under the plan, whichever is greater.~~

~~M. "Hourly minimum compensation" means the minimum compensation due to an employee under this chapter for each hour worked during a pay period.~~

~~N.~~)) C. "Hourly minimum wage" means the minimum wage due to an employee under this chapter for each hour worked during a pay period.

((~~O.~~)) D. "Person" means ((~~any~~)) one or more individuals, partnerships,

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associations, organizations, corporations, cooperatives, legal representatives, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy, receivers, or groups or persons, limited liability ((~~company~~)) companies, sole proprietorships, ((~~association,~~)) joint adventures, estates, trusts, or other ((~~entity~~)) entities, groups, or combinations acting as ((~~a~~)) units, and the individuals constituting the groups or units.

((~~P. "Piece-rate" means a price paid per unit of work.~~

~~Q. "Rate of inflation" means one hundred percent of the annual average growth rate of the bi-monthly Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton Area Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers, termed CPI-W, for the twelve month period ending in August, provided that the percentage increase shall not be less than zero.~~

~~R. "Schedule 1 employer" means an employer that employs more than five hundred employees in the United States, regardless of where those employees are employed in the United States.~~

~~S. "Schedule 2 employer" means an employer that employs five hundred or fewer employees in the United States, regardless of where those employees are employed in the United States.~~

~~T. "Subcontractor" means any person, not an employee, that enters into a contract with a contractor or subcontractor, and that employs employees for that purpose, to assist the contractor or subcontractor in performing a contract with the county.~~))

((~~U.~~)) E. "Wage" means compensation due to an employee by reason of employment, payable in legal tender of the United States or checks on banks convertible into cash on demand at full face value ((~~, subject to such deductions, charges or allowances as may be permitted by rules of the director. "Wages" include commissions,~~

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~~piece-rate compensation and bonuses, all of which shall be counted as wages in the work-week in which they were earned. An employer payment toward a health benefits plan does not constitute a "wage."~~)).

SECTION 7. Ordinance 17909, Section 6, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.18.030 are hereby amended to read as follows:

The county shall pay its employees ((~~at a rate no less than the~~)) an hourly minimum wage ((~~for Schedule 1 employers, except for short-term temporary employees who are employed in social service programs designed to help youth gain basic work training skills~~)) rate of not less than twenty dollars and twenty-nine cents per hour or the hourly minimum wage rate established by federal or state law, whichever is greater. Beginning January 1, 2025, the hourly minimum wage rate shall increase annually on a percentage basis to reflect the annual rate of inflation and calculated to the nearest cent on January 1 of each year thereafter. For purposes of this section, "the annual rate of inflation" means one hundred percent of the annual average growth rate of the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton Area Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers, CPI-W, or a successor index, for the twelve month period ending in August, but the percentage increase shall not be less than zero. An employee is covered by this chapter for each hour the employee is performing a measurable amount of work as a county employee.

SECTION 8. The following are hereby repealed:

A. Ordinance 17909, Section 5, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.18.020;

B. Ordinance 17909, Section 7, and K.C.C. 3.18.040;

C. Ordinance 17909, Section 8, and K.C.C. 3.18.050;

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D. Ordinance 17909, Section 9, and K.C.C. 3.18.060;

E. Ordinance 17909, Section 10, and K.C.C. 3.18.070;

F. Ordinance 17909, Section 11, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.18.080; and

G. Ordinance 17909, Section 12, and K.C.C. 3.18.090.

SECTION 9. Sections 10 through 15 of this ordinance should constitute a new chapter in K.C.C. Title 12.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 10. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

A. "Department" means the department of local services or designee.

B. "Director" means the director of the department of local services or designee.

C. "Employ" means to engage, suffer, or permit to work.

D. "Employee" means any individual employed by an employer, whether on a full-time, part-time, temporary, or seasonal basis, including temporary workers, contracted workers, contingent workers, and persons made available to work through a temporary services, staffing, or employment agency or similar entity.

E. "Employer" means any individual, partnership, association, corporation, business trust, or any entity, person, group of persons, or a successor thereof, that employs another person and includes any such entity or person acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee. More than one entity may be the "employer" if employment by one employer is not completely disassociated from employment by the other employer if the economic reality of the relationship between the entities and the employee or employees is that of employer and employee. The economic reality of the relationship is to be determined by the circumstances of the

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whole activity, not a mechanical weighing of relevant factors.

F. "Franchise" means an agreement, express or implied, oral or written, by which:

1. A person is granted the right to engage in the business of offering, selling, or distributing goods or services under a marketing plan prescribed or suggested in substantial part by the grantor or its affiliate;

2. The operation of the business is substantially associated with a trademark, service mark, trade name, advertising, or other commercial symbol; designating, owned by, or licensed by the grantor or its affiliate; and

3. The person pays, agrees to pay, or is required to pay, directly or indirectly, a franchise fee. "Franchise fee" is meant to be construed broadly to include any instance in which the grantor or its affiliate derives income or profit from a person who enters into a franchise agreement with the grantor.

G. "Franchisee" means a person to whom a franchise is offered or granted.

H. "Franchisor" means a person who grants a franchise to another person.

I. "Person" includes one or more individuals, partnerships, associations, organizations, corporations, cooperatives, legal representatives, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy, receivers, or groups of persons, limited liability companies, sole proprietorships, joint adventures, estates, trusts, or other entities, groups, or combinations acting as units, and the individuals constituting the groups or units.

J. "Service charge" means a separately designated amount collected by employer from a customer that is for services provided by employees, or is described in such a way that a customer might reasonably believe that the amounts are for such services. "Service

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charge" includes but is not limited to a charge designated on receipts as a "service charge," "gratuity," "delivery charge," or "porterage charge."

K. "Tip" means a verifiable sum to be presented by a customer as a gift or gratuity in recognition of some service performed for the customer by the employee receiving the tip.

L. "Unincorporated King County" means those areas outside any city or town and under King County's jurisdiction.

M. "Wage" means compensation due to an employee by reason of employment, payable in legal tender of the United States or checks on banks convertible into cash on demand at full face value.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 11.

A. All employers in unincorporated King County shall pay their employees an hourly minimum wage rate of not less than twenty dollars and twenty-nine cents per hour or the hourly minimum wage rate established by federal or state law, whichever is greater. Beginning January 1, 2025, the hourly minimum wage rate shall increase annually on a percentage basis to reflect the annual rate of inflation and calculated to the nearest cent on January 1 of each year thereafter. For purposes of this section, "the annual rate of inflation" means one hundred percent of the annual average growth rate of the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton Area Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers, CPI-W, or a successor index, for the twelve month period ending in August, but the percentage increase shall not be less than zero. Tips, gratuities, and service charges paid to an employee shall be in addition to, and not count towards, the hourly minimum wage rate.

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B. All employers in unincorporated King County shall pay to its employees the following:

1. All tips, and gratuities; and

2. All service charges except those that, under RCW 49.46.160, are itemized as not being payable to the employee or employees servicing the customer.

C. By October 1 of each year, the director shall make available to the public on the county's website, the hourly minimum wage rate determined in accordance with this section.

D.1. The following are exceptions to subsection A. of this section:

a. Beginning January 1, 2025, employers that employ fifteen employees or fewer and have an annual gross revenue less than two million dollars shall pay their employees an hourly minimum wage rate as established in subsection A. of this section minus three dollars. The three-dollar reduction shall decrease annually by fifty cents on January 1 of each year thereafter until the reduction is zero;

b. Beginning January 1, 2025, employers that employ fifteen employees or fewer and have an annual gross revenue of two million dollars or greater shall pay their employees an hourly minimum wage rate as established in subsection A. of this section minus two dollars per hour. The two-dollar reduction shall decrease annually by one dollar on January 1 of each year thereafter until the reduction is zero; and

c. Beginning January 1, 2025, employers that employ more than fifteen employees but fewer than five hundred employees shall pay their employees an hourly minimum wage rate as established in subsection A. of this section minus two dollars per hour. The two-dollar reduction shall decrease annually by one dollar on January 1 of

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each year thereafter until the reduction is zero.

2. For the purposes of this subsection D. of this section, the following shall apply:

a. The employers that are subject to the exceptions in this subsection D. of this section shall not include franchisees associated with a franchisor or a network of franchises with franchisees that employ five hundred employees or more in aggregate, regardless of the geographic location of the franchises;

b. "Gross revenue" means the total revenue generated by the employer regardless of geographic location; and

c. The number of employees shall be calculated by determining the average number of employees employed by the employer during the last twelve months regardless of the location of employment of each employee.

E. All employers in unincorporated King County shall maintain adequate records to provide proof of compliance and either have it available upon request by the department or have it available for a proceeding involving an aggrieved employee bringing a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction against an employer for violating this chapter as described in section 14 of this ordinance, or both. Adequate records shall include, but not be limited to:

1. The number of employees employed by the employer during the previous year;

2. The number of employees paid the minimum wage as required by subsection A. of this section during the previous year;

3. Wages paid by the employer to all employees during the previous year;

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4. The number of work hours of each employee during the previous year;

5. Wages paid to each employee during the previous year; and

6. The amount of any deductions from the wages paid to each employee during the previous year.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 12.

A. Beginning January 1, 2026, the manager of the office of performance, strategy, and budget, or its designee, shall annually convene a workgroup to: evaluate whether the current hourly minimum wage rate as established by this chapter is sufficient to meet the basic needs of working households in King County; and analyze the current hourly minimum wage rate's impact to the region's economy. The workgroup's evaluation and analysis shall include, but not be limited to, the following considerations:

1. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State, developed in partnership with the University of Washington's Center for Women's Welfare and the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County;

2. Impacts to the county labor market including, but not limited to, employment rates, small business labor costs, and ability to attract new businesses to the region;

3. Impacts on the number of county residents that receive the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, the Washington State Working Families Tax Credit, and any other government benefits that are provided to low- and middle-income households; and

4. Disproportionate impacts to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities, if any.

B. Workgroup membership shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. The manager of the office of performance, strategy, and budget, or designee;

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2. The county's chief economist, or designee;

3. The manager of the finance and business operations division, or designee;

4. The director of the department of local services, or designee;

5. The director of the department of human resources, or designee; and

6. The chair of the budget and fiscal management committee, or its successor, or designee.

C. The workgroup shall seek input from the community on its evaluation and analysis work as described in subsection A. of this section. The community shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Economists and wage experts from accredited colleges and universities in the state of Washington;

2. Representatives from the King County Coalition of Unions;

3. Employers that contract with the county or have showed interest in contracting with the county; and

4. Organizations that represent employees and employers in unincorporated King County.

D. On behalf of the workgroup, the executive shall transmit a report of its findings and a recommendation, if any, to modify the hourly minimum wage rate established by this chapter. The executive shall electronically file the report and any proposed ordinance that would amend this chapter and any other chapters related to the hourly minimum wage rate of county employees and county contractors to implement the hourly minimum wage rate as recommended by the workgroup no later than June 30 of each year with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an

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electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the transportation, economy, and environment committee, or its successor. The executive shall electronically distribute the report to all government entities in the county and to relevant state and federal agencies, including, but not limited to, the Washington state Department of Labor and Industries, or its successor.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 13.

A. An employer shall not interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of, or the attempt to exercise, any right protected under this chapter by an employee. Also, an employer shall not take any adverse action against an employee or to discriminate against an employee because the employee has exercised in good faith the rights under this chapter. The rights shall include, but are not limited to, the right to:

1. File a complaint with any entity or agency about an employer's alleged violation of this chapter;

2. Inform the person's employer, union, or similar organization, the person's legal counsel, or any other person about an alleged violation of this chapter;

3. Cooperate in any investigation of alleged violations of this chapter;

4. Testify in a proceeding related to violations of this chapter; and

5. Inform other employees of the rights protected under this chapter.

B. For the purposes of this section, "adverse action against an employee" includes, but is not be limited to actions:

1. Relating to an employee's employment including pay, work hours, responsibilities, or other material change in the terms and conditions of employment;

2. Relating to an employee's immigration or citizenship status; and

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3. Dissuading an employee from exercising any right afforded by this chapter.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 14.

A. An aggrieved employee may bring a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction against an employer for violating this chapter and, upon prevailing, may be awarded reasonable attorneys' fees and costs and such legal or equitable relief as is appropriate to remedy, which shall include, but not be limited to, the payment of any unpaid wages plus interest, as specified in subsection D. of this section, due to the employee and liquidated damages, which shall include, but not be limited to, up to twice the unpaid wages. An aggrieved employee shall be entitled to liquidated damages without a finding that the violation of this chapter was willful and an aggrieved employee may recover both liquidated damages and prejudgment interest. If the court finds that an employer's violation of this chapter was willful then a penalty shall be payable to any aggrieved employee of up to five thousand dollars.

B. Before filing a civil action against an employer for violating section 11 of this ordinance, an aggrieved employee or the employee's representative shall give notice by certified U.S. mail with return receipt requested or a comparable method to the employer demanding that the employer pay the hourly minimum wage rate as required by section 11 of this ordinance and provide payment of any unpaid wages plus interest, as specified in subsection D. of this section, to the aggrieved employee. An employer‘s refusal to accept or read the letter is not a failure to send the letter. If the employer fails to pay the unpaid wages plus interest within fourteen days of the return receipt date of the notice, then the aggrieved employee may file a civil action as specified in subsection A. of this section.

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C. For the purposes of this section, an aggrieved employee means an employee who claims to have been injured by an employer's violation of this chapter.

D. For the purposes of this section, interest shall be twelve percent per year or the maximum rate permitted under RCW 19.52.020, whichever is higher, and accrue from the date the unpaid wages were first due.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 15.

A. The director is authorized to enforce and implement this chapter.

B. The director may adopt rules and procedures, in accordance with K.C.C. chapter 2.98, to implement this chapter and ensure compliance of this chapter. If the director adopts appropriate rules and procedures, before giving public notice of the rules and procedures as required by K.C.C. chapter 2.98, the director shall seek feedback of the rules and procedures from organizations that represent employees and employers in unincorporated King County.

C.1. If the executive determines that the enforcement and implementation of this chapter by the county is cost prohibitive due to the budgetary constraints of the county's general fund, the executive is requested to explore other enforcement and implementation methods. As part of this effort, the executive shall also explore methods to support aggrieved employees who may be reluctant to bring a civil action.

2. If the executive determines a cost effective approach to implementing and enforcing this chapter, other than what is required by subsections A. and B. of this section, then the executive shall transmit a letter notifying to the council of the executive's plans for implementation and enforcement. The executive shall electronically file the letter with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and

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provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the transportation, economy, and environment committee, or its successor.

SECTION 16.

A. The executive shall transmit a report providing recommendations to strengthen the county's commitment to sustainable farm-to-plate pipeline, advance equity, and support the agricultural sector in unincorporated King County as the agricultural sector complies with the hourly minimum wage rate as required by this ordinance. The executive shall consult with the community to inform the report. The community shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Representatives from King County farming organizations which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a. King County agriculture commission;

b. SnoValley Tilth;

c. Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance;

d. Sammamish Valley Alliance; and

e. Snoqualmie Valley Farmers Cooperative;

2. Small-farm owners and small-farm employees in the following Agricultural Production Districts in King County:

a. Sammamish River;

b. Snoqualmie River;

c. Lower Green River;

d. Upper Green River; and

e. Enumclaw Plateau;

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3. Representatives from the King Conversation District; and

4. The chair of the local services and land use committee, or its successor, or designee.

B. The recommendations to address the impacts shall consider, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Capital programs to acquire land, access farm equipment, and develop housing for farm workers such as:

a. connecting farmers with affordable farmland to lower acquisition costs and build farmland equity through ownership; for example, the Agrarian Trust and more specifically the Vermont Agrarian Commons;

b. establishing a farm equipment access program to provide affordable leasing of farm equipment purchased by the county; and

c. developing housing facilities using county resources to provide workforce, congregate, and pallet housing for farm workers in proximity to their place of work;

2. Transportation programs to provide mobility for farm workers such as:

a. providing vouchers that can be used for local and regional transportation providers operating in areas with access to agricultural jobs;

b. establishing shuttles, similar to the Metro transit department's Trailhead Direct; and

c. subsidies for easier access to the Metro transit department's Vanpool and Vanshare programs, similar to the Metro transit department services provided to Snoqualamie Casino employees; and

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3. Other programs to support the agricultural sector in unincorporated King County such as:

a. establishing health care programs for farm workers;

b. providing fee waivers for farmers market booths;

c. supporting farm worker recruitment and retention;

d. supporting the retention of existing farm owners;

e. developing internship and apprenticeship programs for the youth, underrepresented communities in the agricultural sector, and historically underserved communities in the agricultural sector;

f. providing grants to food banks to purchase surplus food from local farms;

g. expanding the county's Local Food Initiative; and

h. developing a multimedia, multichannel public awareness campaign on the necessity of supporting county farmers and their products and educating the public on the quality and cost of producing farm products.

C. The executive shall electronically file the report and any proposed ordinance to implement the recommendations identified in the report no later than June 30, 2025, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the transportation, economy, and environment committee, or its successor.

SECTION 17.

A. The executive shall transmit a report evaluating the impacts of the hourly minimum wage rate as required by this ordinance for unincorporated King County. The executive shall make an effort to evaluate the impacts by various demographics such as

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income, race, gender, and industry sector for both employees and employers to determine any disproportionate impacts. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Evaluation of whether the hourly minimum wage rate is achieving the goal of increasing employees' wages to meet the basic needs of the household, in particular the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities whose household income are disproportionately lower;

2. Evaluation of the impact of the hourly minimum wage rate on employees such as reduction in either work hours or other benefits provided by the employer, or both;

3. Evaluation of the impact of the hourly minimum wage on employers, in particular small businesses, which shall include, but not be limited to, revenue, cost, profit, business longevity, and decisions related to divestments and investments;

4. Impacts to the region's economy, which shall include, but not be limited to, employment rate, median household income, taxable sales, inflation, industry diversification, and ability to attract new businesses; and

5. Impacts due to the inconsistent hourly minimum wage rates across the county.

B. The executive shall conduct activities to ensure the collection of any data that will be necessary to inform the report but are not readily available or accessible. Data collection activities shall be conducted as earliest as feasible to provide the best data to inform the report.

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C. The report shall also be informed by the findings compiled by the workgroup as established in section 12 of this ordinance.

D. The executive may contract with an external organization to conduct the evaluation and produce the report.

E. The executive shall electronically file the report no later than June 30, 2028, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the transportation, economy, and environment committee, or its successor.

SECTION 18. This ordinance takes effect January 1, 2025.

SECTION 19. If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person

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604 or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the application of the

605 provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

Ordinance 19762 was introduced on 9/12/2023 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 5/14/2024, by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Mosqueda, Perry, Upthegrove and Zahilay
No: 2 - Dunn and von Reichbauer

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DocuSigned by:
E76CE01F07B14EF...

Dave Upthegrove, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:
8DE1BB375AD3422...

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this _____ day of 5/28/2024, _____.

DocuSigned by:
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Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None

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Certificate Of Completion

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You may contact us to let us know of your changes as to how we may contact you electronically, to request paper copies of certain information from us, and to withdraw your prior consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically as follows:
To contact us by email send messages to: cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov

To advise King County-Department of 02 of your new email address

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- You can access and read this Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure; and
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- Until or unless you notify King County-Department of 02 as described above, you consent to receive exclusively through electronic means all notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you by King County-Department of 02 during the course of your relationship with King County-Department of 02.

October 26, 2026

To: Mayor and Members of the Kirkland City Council
From: The Greater Kirkland Chamber of Commerce
Re: Request for a Kirkland Specific Minimum Wage Engagement Analysis

Mayor and Members of the Kirkland City Council,

On behalf of the Greater Kirkland Chamber Board of Directors, our more than 500 members and our Executive Director, we respectfully urge the Council to slow down and prioritize meaningful Kirkland-specific engagement and outreach with our local business community to ensure that the voices and experiences of those most affected are heard and considered before proceeding.

Our message is straightforward: a decision with complex economic implications for Kirkland deserves meaningful engagement with the businesses and organizations most directly affected by a city ordinance of this nature. The Chamber requests outreach be based on measurable local data, transparent assumptions, and objective economic modeling. The materials presented to City Council on October 6th specifically indicate that the work was not a wage analysis. While this information may provide useful background, it does not replace examining how a local minimum wage increase would affect Kirkland's distinct and unique business environment.

We recognize the importance of wages that support employees and families. We also recognize that local businesses are essential to Kirkland's economic vitality. They provide jobs, support community organizations, invest in our neighborhoods and contribute to the tax base that helps fund essential city services. Responsible policymaking requires understanding of how proposed changes could affect employees, employers, consumers and the broader community. Given the complex and interconnected factors involved, a thorough examination of the potential economic consequences is essential to informed decision making.

At a minimum, the Kirkland Chamber requests that the following four measures be examined as part of community outreach:

7¡ The.Number.and.Percentages.of.Workers.Who.Would.Be.Affected.with.Impacts.on.Larger.Employers.Wage.Compression

- Engagement.needs.to.include.larger.employers?including.Kirkland's.manufacturing.businesses.and.other. organizations.that.employ.workers.across.multiple.wage.levels¡
- A.minimum.wage.increase.can.create.wage.compression.prompting.employers.to.consider.compensation.adjustment. for.employees.who.already.earn.above.the.new.minimum¡
- Before.considering.a.local.minimum.wage.ordinance?the.City.should.establish.the.number.of.workers.employed.in. Kirkland.who.currently.earn.the.minimum.wage.or.would.be.directly.affected.by.the.proposed.wage.level.and.the.total. percentage.of.Kirkland's.total.workforce.represented.by.these.workers¡.
- The.number.of.additional.employees.who.could.be.affected.by.wage.compression?including.workers.earning.above. the.proposed.minimum.whose.compensation.might.need.to.be.adjusted¡

8¡ Kirkland"s.Regional.and.Local.Competitiveness

To.stay.competitive.with.Bellevue?Redmond?Bothell?Kenmore?Woodinville?Factoria?Sammamish?Issaquah?Mercer.Island?
and.New.Castle?a.comprehensive.wage.analysis.should.evaluate.how.a.local.minimum.wage.requirement.could.affect.
Kirkland"s.ability.to.retain.existing.businesses?attract.new.employers?encourage.business.expansion.and.compete.with.
neighboring.communities¡.Ultimately strong healthy businesses provide higher wages and good benefits.

9¡ Impacts.on.Lodging?Service.and.Hospitality

Engagement.with.our.local.hotels.and.restaurants?daycares?and.trade.service¡.Kirkland.is.working.to.attract.additional.hotels.
and.expand.its.service.sector¡.Before.adopting.a.policy.that.could.affect.operating.costs?the.City.needs.to.understand.the.
potential.implications.for.the.existing.hospitality.industry?prospective.hotel.development?hiring.staffing.levels.and.future.
investment¡.

Kirkland"s.downtown.business.includes.retailers?restaurants.and.other.employers.whose.revenues.fluctuate.with.tourism?
weather.and.seasonal.customer.activity¡.Many.of.these.businesses.must.maintain.a.baseline.level.of.staffing.even.during.slower.
periods.when.customer.traffic.and.revenues.decline¡.A.meaningful.analysis.must.examine.their.ability.to.absorb.increased.
labor.costs.throughout.the.year?not.simply.during.peak.business.periods¡

We.request.that.the.City.of.Kirkland.engage.directly.with.businesses.most.affected.by.seasonal.fluctuations?off_season.
operating.conditions?staffing.requirements.and.with.particular.emphasis.on.the.potential.impact.on.business.hours?hiring?
employment.levels.and.long_term.business.viability¡
.

0¡ Impact.on.Nonprofits.and.Social.Services

We.encourage.the.City.of.Kirkland.to.engage.directly.with.our.nonprofit.organizations?social.service.providers.and.workforce.
development.programs.serving.the.Kirkland.community¡.

These.organizations.provide.essential.community.services?support.vulnerable.populations.and.help.individuals.develop.the.
skills.and.experience.needed.to.enter.or.reenter.the.workforce¡.Organizations.such.as.Goodwill.Industries.provide.workforce.
training.and.employment.opportunities.that.are.an.important.part.of.our.local.economic.ecosystem¡

We.encourage.the.City.to.recognize.the.distinct.needs.of.these.organizations.by.engaging.with.them.to.better.understand..their.
funding.structures?staffing.requirements.and.operating.models¡.It.should.examine.whether.increased.labor.costs.could.reduce.
the.number.of.people.served¡

The Kirkland Chamber of Commerce represents more than 500 local businesses, the majority of which are small- and mid-sized employers. Our responsibility is to support, educate and advocate for our local business community while helping preserve the economic vitality and character that makes Kirkland such a fabulous and special place.

We welcome the opportunity to work as a partner with the City Council and staff to ensure that this process is thorough, transparent and grounded in reliable data.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We respectfully urge the Council to slow down, commission the necessary Kirkland specific engagement and ensure that the voices and economic realities of our local business community are represented before proceeding.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Straub
Executive Director
Greater Kirkland Chamber of Commerce

Alicia Quaco
Board President
Greater Kirkland Chamber of Commerce

Raising the Minimum Wage in King County Cities

Whereas workers across King County—including those employed in restaurants, hotels, retail, healthcare, child care, janitorial services, landscaping, and other essential occupations—help sustain our communities but too often earn wages insufficient to meet the region's high cost of living; and

Whereas housing, transportation, food, healthcare, energy, child care, and other necessities are quickly becoming more expensive across King County, making it increasingly difficult for workers to afford to live in the communities where they work[1]; evictions in King County are rising[2]; and food insecurity in King County is increasing[3]; and

Whereas recent federal policy changes, including reductions in federal funding and eligibility for programs such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), threaten to place additional financial pressure on lower-income households, making adequate wages and economic security increasingly important[4]; and

Whereas King County cities should not leave workers' economic security dependent on whether their workplace happens to fall within a jurisdiction that has adopted a higher wage standard, and King County has already established a higher minimum wage in its unincorporated areas, reaching $20.82 per hour in 2026 for large employers, while Seattle, Tukwila, Burien, Renton, SeaTac, Everett, and Bellingham have also adopted comparable higher local wage standards[5]; and

Whereas communities with higher minimum wages experience increased earnings, reduced income and racial wage inequality, improved housing affordability, and improved health outcomes for workers and their children, reduced employee turnover and training costs, improved worker productivity, and additional purchasing power in those communities[6];

Therefore, be it resolved that the King County Democratic Central Committee calls upon the mayors and city councilmembers of King County cities to adopt local minimum wage ordinances

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[1] Jessica Fu, "Living in Seattle in 'Survival Mode' as Inflation Remains High," *Seattle Times*, 14 July 2026, www.seattletimes.com/business/living-in-seattle-in-survival-mode-as-inflation-remains-high/.
[2] "Washington," *Eviction Research Network*, accessed 22 October 2026, www.evictionresearch.net/washington/.
[3] "Washington Households Continue to Face Food Insecurity Amid Rising Costs and Uncertain Federal Support, WAFOOD6 Survey Finds," *Washington State Department of Agriculture*, 22 July 2026, agr.wa.gov/about-wsda/news-and-media-relations/news-releases?article=47189.
[4] Amy Sundberg, "Seattle, King County Brace for Impact of Coming Federal Funding Earthquake," *The Urbanist*, 28 July 2025, www.theurbanist.org/seattle-king-county-brace-for-impact-of-coming-federal-funding-earthquake/.
[5] "Local Minimum Wage Rates," Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, accessed 22 October 2026, www.lni.wa.gov/workers-rights/wages/minimum-wage/local-minimum-wage-rates.
[6] "Minimum Wage Research," *Institute for Research on Labor and Employment*, accessed 22 October 2026, irle.berkeley.edu/cwed/minimum-wage-research/.

that meaningfully raise wages above the state minimum and move toward a wage benchmark reflecting the region's cost of living, in line with the 2026 Washington State Democrats Platform[7]; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the King County Democratic Central Committee shall make substantive action toward a higher local minimum wage a point of inquiry and emphasis in its endorsement process for candidates seeking election as mayors or city councilmembers in King County cities; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be transmitted to the mayors and city councilmembers of cities within King County which have not yet raised their minimum wage above the state standard, with a request for responses regarding their intentions and timelines for considering local minimum wage legislation, as well as to the Democratic district organizations with members in the King County Democratic Central Committee.

Adopted October 27, 2026.

[7] "Our 2026 Platform," *Washington State Democratic Party*, 21 June 2026, www.wadems.org/issues/.