



Anything is Possible! Motto of President Obama's administration

*"What would it take to actually meet basic human needs,
including eliminating institutional racism, in King County by the Year 2020?"*

This was the rallying cry of a group of human service providers across Seattle and King County in the fall of 1998. As members of the Seattle Human Services Coalition, they were part of a multi-racial, multi-cultural group of over 172 human service agencies and programs and other advocates working throughout the Seattle/King County area. Members help residents to meet their basic human needs around issues as varied as homelessness, hunger, child care, domestic violence, aging, literacy, disabilities, sexual assault, community health care, employment, racial equity, and the development of children and youth.

In partnership with the Minority Executive Directors Coalition, we built a campaign, the 2020 Vision Campaign, to create the shared vision of the community that we are all working together to create and to help us focus on longer-term solutions. By the end of the initial three-year campaign over a thousand people had participated in some portion of the process from human service providers and program participants to government and private funders, church and neighborhood groups, youth and elders, including many different racial and cultural communities.

What is happening with human service need and delivery today? Human service providers have worked diligently for many years with the hope that, one day, all King County residents would have access to the resources essential for human survival and advancement. Members of SHSC successfully fought proposed cuts in funding and even secured millions of dollars in additional resources for urgently needed services. Members also created the Identifying Institutional Racism (IDIR) Folio to help human service organizations identify and eliminate the institutional racism within their programs.

At the same time, once again, we face a year in which many needs are not met. Already in 2009, emergency food programs report increases in the numbers of families and individuals unable to afford to purchase food as well as pay for housing and other survival expenses. The 2009 One Night Count documents an increase in the numbers of people in King County without homes. And our communities continue to see sidewalk memorial shrines dedicated to youth who have died violently. We elected a person of color to lead us as President of the United States, and while this is a significant milestone, it is only a part of the elimination of racism in this country, not the culmination of it. Wherever we turn, we see valued members of our community facing conditions that challenge our humanity and dim our hope.

It is time now to answer the call to "turn ordeal into opportunity". It is time to respond to the "fierce urgency of now". It is time to move forward together toward the 2020 Vision. It is time to answer the **Call to Caring**. The vision we share in common for the year 2020 as well as the principles critical to creating forward movement are summarized on the following page.

For more information contact the Seattle Human Services Coalition at 4759 15th Av NE #308, Seattle WA, 98105, 206/325-7105, shsc@shscoalition.org, www.shscoalition.org.

2009 SHSC Co-Chairs: Steve Daschle and Patricia Hayden

SHSC 2009-10 City Budget Task Force Chair: Mark Okazaki

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The Vision

We choose to build, nurture and sustain a community where all human beings have access to the basic necessities and resources for human survival and advancement. The 2020 Vision Campaign is designed to promote the creation of a society in which everyone has equal access to adequate resources by the year 2020. We intend to foster the creation of a network of sustainable human services, accessible to all, that also works to eliminate the need for emergency, crisis services. An essential part of this effort will be to dismantle and **eliminate institutional racism**, which is defined by 2020 Vision as the systemic inclusion of racist practices and policies, which withhold power from and/or bar access to resources or advancement due to race.

We believe that it is an **essential human right** for every person to have access to the basic necessities and resources for human survival and advancement. These necessities and resources include:

- safe and affordable housing;
- adequate nutritious food;
- access to quality health care;
- a livable wage job to support self and family;
- affordable and available community activities;
- universal, quality education;
- safe, affordable childcare that is culturally competent, conveniently located and meets the needs of working parents; and
- sustainable environmental, economic and social balance.

We believe that access to the means to meet these basic human needs should not be restricted or denied due to race, color, national origin, age, income, veteran status, education level, gender, physical or mental disability, religious beliefs or practice, sexual orientation, or by language, cultural practices or institutional racism.

We believe that our community has adequate resources to sustain the basic human needs of each of its residents. But barriers have been established, institutionalized, and propagated to keep this from occurring. **We see the need for transformation.**

Tenets for Change

What will it take to meet basic human needs, including eliminating institutional racism, in King County by the Year 2020? **We believe adoption of the following principles is critical to forward movement:**

- The meeting of human needs is a basic human right.
- Every human being is valuable, and it is essential for our society to prioritize meeting basic human needs for all. Each human being has a gift to give no matter what their current state.
- Racism diminishes us all. Eliminating policies that perpetuate racism moves us closer to our goal.
- Collaborative partnerships between funders, government, educators, human service providers, media, police, the criminal justice system, and the community-at large will ensure that the means are in place to meet basic human needs in a humane and holistic manner.
- Human services operated, staffed and funded in a way that allows for services to be offered in a manner that is humane, holistic, emphasizing physical and cultural accessibility are most effective.
- Employees have a right to earn adequate income to meet their basic human needs.
- Quality education, childcare, and essential services accessible to children of all ages will increase later success.
- Public finance reform is essential to equitably paying for the public services and works needed to build and maintain healthy communities.
- On-going assessment and evaluation of base beliefs and practices by every individual in our society will ensure that we continue to make needed changes to allow access to crucial resources.