

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

City of Seattle

and

King County Assessments Department

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) sets forth the terms of agreement between the City of Seattle (“City”) and the King County Assessments Department (“Assessor”) for the purpose of increasing the number of households enrolled in both the City’s Utility Discount Program and the Property Tax Exemption/Referral Program for Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons, which is administered by the Assessor.

Background

According to the Pew Research Center, one in five U.S. residents is expected to be aged 65 years or over by mid-century. Although many cities and communities are increasingly engaging in age-friendly policies and programs, the older population continues to face problems of ageism that impact their quality of life.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicates that disparities in income level, poverty, access to medical care, and other factors impacting quality of life persist among many older adults, increasingly adults of color.

On July 27, 2016, in recognition of the City’s commitment to becoming more age friendly, the World Health Organization and AARP designated the City a member of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, which includes over 300 members representing 33 countries. Housing is a core characteristic of an Age-Friendly City.

The City’s Utility Discount Program, which has more than 31,900 enrollees, provides critical utility assistance to low-income families, including over 8,900 senior households.

The Washington State Property Tax Exemption/Referral Program for Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons provides critical tax relief for more than 6,500 Seattle households.

However, despite the significant benefits provided by these programs, they remain underutilized – only 1,500 Seattle households are enrolled in both.

Purpose

The City and Assessor will work collaboratively with the shared intent to double the number of households enrolled in both the Utility Discount Program and Washington State Property Tax Exemption/Referral Program for Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons (from 1,500 to 3,000 enrollees) by March of 2018.

The above goal will be accomplished by:

- Convening an intergovernmental work group that will include representatives from the Mayor's Office, Human Services Department, Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and Assessor.
- Establishing a data-sharing agreement between the City and Assessor,
- Leveraging enrollment data of the City and Assessor to cross-promote programs,
- Refining both program's application processes with an emphasis on accessibility and customer experience, including examining autoenrollment,
- Working with community partners, such as AARP, to promote both programs to unenrolled senior households in Seattle and King County.

Reporting

In September 2017, the intergovernmental work group will provide a written update on its progress to Mayor Ed Murray and Assessor John Wilson.

In March 2018, the intergovernmental work group will provide a final report on its progress to Mayor Ed Murray, Assessor John Wilson, and the Seattle City Council.

Duration

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from the City or Assessor. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by City of Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Assessor John Wilson and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by either party or by mutual consent.

Signed March 22, 2017:

Mayor Edward B. Murray

King County Assessor John Wilson