



SEATTLE HUMAN SERVICES COALITION

“An Assertive and Unified Voice Helping People Shape Public Policy to Meet Basic Human Needs in Seattle and King County, Washington.”

To our communities across Seattle and King County:

Human services are just as essential to a thriving community as firefighters and construction workers, but they're paid less than half what other essential workers are paid. As leaders of human services agencies, we see our staff teach, counsel, connect, and build strong helping relationships with everyone in our communities. From parenting programs and youth development, crisis intervention services, and supports to age in place -- human service workers provide critical human infrastructure. They help build strong communities from cradle to grave.

Human services workers are struggling to stay in their field of expertise. Many must re-live their own trauma and all exert emotional labor, while navigating our most vulnerable, trauma-impacted community members through unjust systems. In any other field, their mastery of hard and soft skills would command a top salary. In the current reality, many of our staff have experienced homelessness and food insecurity, despite holding advanced degrees and speaking multiple languages.

It doesn't take a research study to understand that human service workers are undervalued -- simply talk to anyone that works in our field. Look at any number of wage surveys showing an average annual salary of \$37k/yr. for human service workers in King County, and ask yourself how you would support yourself and your family doing this work?

So why did the Seattle Human Services Coalition (SHSC) instigate this report? To highlight the wage penalty human services workers endure because our professions are predominantly held by women and people of color. To educate policy makers and the public about this problem. To quantify in dollars the theft in wages care workers face due to centuries of racist and misogynistic attitudes towards care work.

This report is the beginning of a conversation that is long overdue. We invite policy makers, funders, and community members to join us in fighting for the support needed to ensure everyone in our community has an opportunity to survive and thrive.

SHSC Raising Wages for Changing Lives Campaign Co-Chairs

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