



Department of Community and Human Services

Funding Opportunity

2026 Human Services Bus Ticket Program

Release Date	October 22, 2025
Due Date	September 1, 2026 by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time
Lead	HS.BusTicketProgram@kingcounty.gov

Submitting an Application

Agencies serving people experiencing homelessness and/or low-income households are welcome to apply for the 2026 Human Services Bus Ticket Program. Applications can be submitted via Microsoft Forms in the link below. Access to tickets will be awarded to all eligible applicants in accordance with the attached instructions, requirements, and specifications. All approved agencies will enter into a Letter of Agreement (LOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) that will begin on or after January 1, 2026 and end on December 31, 2026.

Application Timeline

Applications will be accepted beginning on October 22, 2025, and continue to be accepted until all available funding is dispersed, or until September 1, 2026, whatever comes first.

Applications submitted **before November 30, 2025**, will be reviewed in early December 2025. Approved Agencies will receive an award notice in December 2025.

After December 1, 2025, applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis each month through September 1, 2026. Applications submitted by the first of the month will be reviewed and if approved, the Agency will be routed an LOA with a start date of the 15th of that month. Applications submitted by the 15th of the month will be reviewed and if approved, the Agency will be routed a LOA with a start date of the first of the following month.

This approval schedule will continue until all available funding is dispersed, or until the application close date of September 1, 2026, whichever comes first.

Submit Application through Microsoft Forms at:
<https://forms.office.com/g/REn5whkGxx?origin=lprLink>

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	4
A.	King County Metro Bus Ticket Allocations	4
B.	Equity and Social Justice	Error! Bookmark not defined.
II.	Overview	4
III.	Program Requirements	5
A.	Program Management	5
B.	Ticket Options	6
C.	Reporting Requirements	6
D.	Income Verification	7
IV.	Applicant Eligibility	7
V.	Process	8
A.	Application Process	8
B.	Timeline	8
C.	Questions About the Application and Technical Assistance	9
D.	Communication	9
VI.	Selection Process	9
A.	Selection Process	9
B.	Funding Allocation and Contract Negotiations	10
VII.	Glossary of Terms	10
VIII.	Application and Contract Terms	10
A.	Application Terms	11
1.	Revisions to the Application	11
2.	Cost to Propose	11
3.	DCHS Right to be Own Reference	11
4.	No Obligation to Contract	11
5.	Rejection of Proposal	11
6.	Acceptance Period	11
7.	Best and Final Offer (BAFO)	11
8.	Award	11
9.	Protest	11
10.	Waiver of Administrative Irregularities	11
B.	Contract Terms	12
1.	King County Letter of Agreement	12

2.	Equity and Social Justice	12
3.	Data Collection and Reporting.....	12
4.	Public Records Act.....	12
5.	Accounts and Records	13
6.	Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity	13
7.	Americans with Disabilities Act.....	14

I. Introduction

The King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) is pleased to release this application for the 2026 Human Services Bus Ticket Program (HSBTP) with allocations from DCHS and King County Metro (Metro).

A. King County Metro Bus Ticket Allocations

Through a noncompetitive application process, the King County Department of Community and Human Services and King County Metro are making available access to discounted bus tickets up to \$444,440 in allocation value (up to \$4,444,400 in face value) for the HSBTP.

B. Equity, Racial, and Social Justice

For many in our region, King County is a great place to live, learn, work and play. Yet we have deep and persistent inequities - especially by race and place - that in many cases are getting worse and threaten our collective prosperity. Equity, Racial, and Social Justice (ERSJ) is an integrated part of the County's work and foundational to the work of DCHS. Our goal is to ensure that all people, regardless of who they are and where they live, have the opportunity to thrive, with full and equal access to opportunities, power, and resources.

DCHS seeks to support community-led and community-informed organizations that are reflective of and embedded in the communities they serve across all aspects of their leadership and service. We further seek to support organizations that recognize and address the disparities that exist in our communities, both across DCHS and by specific program area.

Applicants may be asked to demonstrate an understanding and a commitment to the principles of equity and social justice as shown through their staffing and their board, services tailored to community need, and commitment to social justice and continuous improvement. One aspect of this work includes understanding – at both a program and system level – structural and institutional racism as it plays out for individuals served through DCHS-funded services, and the disparate impacts on individuals' collective experiences and outcomes compared to the population as a whole.

More information about King County's ERSJ work is available at:

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/elected/executive/equity-social-justice>

II. Overview

The Metropolitan King County Council established the HSBTP in 1993 to provide transportation for people experiencing homelessness and/or people with low income. King County Code (KCC) 4A.700.210 established annual funding for the Program. The HSBTP makes ticket books (for bus/transit tickets) available to agencies serving people experiencing homelessness and/or people with low income, with the agency paying a portion of the transit ticket value at the time of purchase and Metro subsidizing the remaining cost of the transit ticket. Participating agencies pay approximately 10 percent of the ticket value at the time of purchase and Metro subsidizes the remaining 90 percent. The purpose of the HSBTP is to improve transportation access for people experiencing homelessness and/or people with low income.

DCHS administers this application process in collaboration with Metro for all applicant agencies. Applying for access to ticket books (ticket allocation) through this application process does not guarantee an award. DCHS reserves the right to proportionally distribute ticket allocations to

agencies to ensure regional distribution of tickets. The goal is to allocate tickets to as many eligible programs as possible. The HSBTP is intended to improve access to programs and services for people experiencing homelessness and/or people with low income, but it does not cover all transportation needs.

Any LOA resulting from this application process is tentatively scheduled to begin on or around January 1, 2026 and to end on December 31, 2026. Ticket allocations must be utilized for ticket purchases by December 31, 2026. Amendments extending or shortening the period of performance, if any, will be at the sole discretion of DCHS.

NOTE: Agencies awarded an allocation through the HSBTP can only purchase paper tickets and not the ORCA LIFT cards designed for the adult low-income fare. Beginning March 1, 2015, Metro Implemented a low-income fare ORCA LIFT card for adult riders with incomes at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. This is a separate resource for low-income residents in our region. [Click here for more information about the ORCA LIFT card.](#)

III. Program Requirements

If an agency receives an award through this application process, an agency must enter into a Letter of Agreement (LOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DCHS before being able to purchase bus/transit ticket books from Metro. Agencies may then purchase tickets for use between the start date of their LOA and December 31, 2026. **Agencies should apply ONLY if they intend to distribute the bus/transit tickets to eligible individuals by December 31, 2026.**

A. Program Management

Agencies that receive ticket allocations must be able to comply with the following policies and procedures requirements. To ensure tracking and accountability for the HSBTP, agencies are required to submit program policies and procedures as part of the application submission. Policies and procedures must be approved by DCHS before an agency is awarded and able to purchase tickets from Metro. Agencies must follow their approved policies for administering the bus/transit ticket books to eligible clients and should expect to be monitored by King County DCHS staff. Policies must include the following key eight elements:

1. A clear process for how bus tickets are stored in a locked room and/or container;
2. Guidance on who has access to the tickets;
3. Guidance on how tickets are prioritized for use;
4. The number and types of tickets distributed to individuals at any given time;
5. A clear process for how tickets are logged and tracked;
6. How income and homeless status are verified;
7. How the agency monitors multiple programs or sites that are distributing tickets; and
8. A prompt process for reporting to DCHS within three days of discovering any loss or theft of tickets. The Loss or Theft Reporting Form can be found on the Program webpage at <https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/depts/community-human-services/housing/services/homeless-housing/bus-ticket-program>.

B. Ticket Options

Awarded agencies must place orders for tickets and purchase them directly through Metro. Metro offers different types of human services bus and light rail ticket books available for purchase. Current ticket prices are listed on the HSBTP Order Form that can be found at the HSBTP Program webpage.

1. King County Metro (only) ticket books – **tickets increased from \$2.75 to \$3.00 on September 1, 2025.** Any \$3.00 tickets bought starting 9/1/2025 have **no expiration**.
 - New \$3.00 adult tickets will not have an exact fare price listed on them and will say “adult fare” on the ticket.
 - **Metro will be honoring the \$2.75 tickets as full fare until June 1, 2026.** Riders will **not** have to pay the difference until 6/1/2026. It’s fine to continue to distribute any remaining \$2.75 tickets until June 1, 2026.
2. Senior and/or Disabled RFP Tickets – **no expiration.**
3. Combination King County Metro / Sound Transit (ST) Link all-day pass. **Always expires at end of the current calendar year.** Metro’s discount is higher than 90% for these combo fare media, and therefore the deduction from the allocation is higher, to reflect that difference.
4. ST Link all-day pass (only) - **always expires at end of the current calendar year.** These ST Link all-day ticket books are not charged against an agency’s allocation.

Noted Ticket Use Restrictions

- ST Link tickets are valid on Link light rail only; they are not valid on the Sounder Commuter Rail, ST Express buses, Metro buses.
- Metro tickets are not valid on local Community Transit (CT) or CT Swift Blue line.
- Before distribution, a ST Link all-day pass must be validated. To validate the pass, use a permanent pen to enter the date that the ticket will be used. The ticket will be valid for that single day only. Sound Transit is not responsible for lost, stolen, or incorrectly validated passes.

Other Considerations

- A fare inspector or operator may ask to see the ticket as proof of payment.
- Failure to adhere to conditions may result in the discontinuance of the sale of ticket books to an agency.
- No exchanges, refunds or replacements are allowed.

C. Reporting Requirements

If an agency receives an HSBTP allocation award, the agency must submit a summary level Semi-annual Usage Log by program twice during the award period. Usage log(s) submitted to King County DCHS must be completed on the specified form and contain aggregate program data (with no client identifying information). Usage log(s) that are incorrectly completed or missing information will need to be resubmitted. Usage Logs are submitted to King County DCHS twice a year and in accordance with the following schedule:

1. Usage Logs for January 1 - June 30, submitted no later than July 31.

2. Usage Logs for July 1 - December 31, submitted no later than January 31 of the following calendar year.

Please note agencies that do not submit Usage Logs for all programs and/or submit incomplete Usage Log(s) may have their allocation balance at Metro and ability to purchase tickets suspended until issues are resolved.

At the program level, King County DCHS expects awarded agencies to collect additional information in the form of Client-level Usage Logs, which must be stored on-site with the tickets. This information will not be submitted on the Semi-annual Usage Log(s); however, it must be made available at the request of King County DCHS. At a minimum, the following information is required on Client-level Usage Logs:

- Program name
- Ticket issue date
- Number of tickets distributed
- Name of staff issuing the ticket(s) and staff initials
- Reason for travel
- Client name and initials verifying receipt of the ticket(s)

Agencies should expect that DCHS staff will monitor the above Client-level Usage Log information and the rate at which agencies purchase bus/transit tickets against the allocation awarded to them. The Client-level Usage Log template can be found at the HSBTP Program webpage.

D. Income Verification

Agencies need to verify clients' income to determine eligibility for this program. Income verification is sufficient if it was completed for a particular client within the past two years as of January 1, 2026. No income verification is required for self-declared homeless clients or those receiving Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) services or Medicaid, since they are assumed to meet the program's definition of low income. Income can be verified using several options:

1. Verbal disclosure from client on their income level.
2. Client initials on site-based Client-level Usage Log verifying that they have low income according to this program's definitions.
3. Client showing an agency staff person their Medicaid card. HSBTP has the same income eligibility as Medicaid.
4. Other methods of income verification (i.e., tax forms, pay stubs, benefits receipts, etc.).

No additional screening criteria should be required for clients besides income verification and homelessness.

IV. Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for the Human Services Bus Ticket Program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- A. Be a nonprofit agency (501c3), public housing authority, local government, or federally recognized tribe;

- B. Be an agency serving people experiencing homelessness and/or people with low income (see definitions below);
- C. Be able to disperse tickets to support people experiencing homelessness and/or people with low income to access housing, health care, employment, and related services critical to personal and residential stability;
- D. Have turned in completed January - June 2025 usage log(s) if they were awarded during program year 2025; and
- E. Be able to demonstrate the ability to purchase and disperse the tickets to eligible clients prior to December 31, 2026.
- F. For agencies awarded in previous years, the agency must be in full compliance with program policies and procedures. An Agency with any repeated past program violations will disqualify them from receiving an award.

V. Process

A. Application Process

Applicants may only submit one application for the HSBTP. However, Applicants may list more than one program that will benefit from the HSBTP in the application form. Complete applications will include the following:

1. Completion of all Questions and Confirmations
2. Policies and Procedures document upload

B. Timeline

The following timeline represents the tentative schedule of the entire application process, from solicitation to program implementation. The dates listed here are subject to change. Applicants are responsible for monitoring our website for any changes prior to the submittal deadline.

Application Form Opens	October 22, 2025
Optional Applicant Information Session Microsoft Teams Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 280 736 811 194 7 Passcode: 2hH9uS33 Dial in by phone +1 425-653-6586,,942717224# Phone conference ID: 942 717 224#	October 29, 2025, 3:00PM – 4:00PM
Anticipated Program Start Date	January 1, 2026
Application Form Closes	September 1, 2026 or when all available funding is dispersed, whichever comes first.

Applications submitted **before November 30, 2025**, will be reviewed in early December 2025. Approved Agencies will receive an LOA in December 2025 for a term of January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

After December 1, 2025, applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis each month through September 1, 2026. Applications submitted by the first of the month will be reviewed and if approved, the Agency will be routed an LOA with a start date of the 15th of that month. Applications submitted by the 15th of the month will be reviewed and if approved, the Agency will be routed a LOA with a start date of the first of the following month.

This approval schedule will continue until all available funding is dispersed, or until the application close date of September 1, 2026, whichever comes first.

C. Questions About the Application and Technical Assistance

King County DCHS staff will offer technical assistance for this application submitted via HS.BusTicketProgram@kingcounty.gov. Applicants are encouraged to complete their application early to have access to bus tickets for the full term of the program. ***If Applicants experience technical difficulties applying, please email HS.BusTicketProgram@kingcounty.gov.***

D. Communication

The HSBTP Lead is the sole point of contact for this application process. All communication regarding the subject matter of this opportunity between the Applicants and DCHS upon release of this application must be through the below HSBTP Lead.

Jake Janesch

HS.BusTicketProgram@kingcounty.gov

Communication with other DCHS staff will be considered unofficial and non-binding on DCHS. Applicants are to rely on written statements issued by the HSBTP Lead. DCHS will be bound only to DCHS-written answers to questions. Questions will be documented and answered in written form. Applicants are responsible for checking for any posted changes on the website prior to applying.

Unless otherwise requested, letters and other transmittals pertaining to this program will be issued to the e-mail address noted in the application. If other personnel should be contacted via e-mail in the evaluation of this application, or to be notified of evaluation results, please complete the information in the area provided in the application.

VI. Selection Process

King County DCHS staff will review all complete applications throughout the application open period. The HSBTP Lead will review all applications to ensure that the application contains all required information. Only applications that meet the threshold requirements will be evaluated by DCHS for an LOA. Any Applicant who does not meet the stated qualifications or any application that does not contain all required information may be rejected.

A. Selection Process

All eligible applicants will receive an LOA awarding bus tickets for the program term until all funds are dispersed or the application form closes, whichever comes first. King County

department and division directors reserve the right to allocate awards based upon equity and geographic considerations to ensure services are responsive to funding priorities and community need. DCHS reserves the right to make such selections based on the best interests of King County, and as a result, may not award the full amount requested in the application.

To serve the best interests of King County, DCHS reserves the right to be its own reference with any potential Applicants as deemed necessary in its sole discretion. This may result in disqualification of any potential Applicants.

B. Funding Allocation and Contract Negotiations

Allocation award recommendations are subject to final approval by DCHS staff. Once applications are reviewed, agencies will be notified if they are awarded. Awarded agencies will receive an LOA or MOU before being able to purchase tickets. Declined agencies will receive a declination letter notifying them of their application status.

DCHS anticipates that requested allocations may exceed the total dollar amount of allocation value available. If this occurs, the County reserves the right to enter discussions with Applicants to assess whether proposed services and activities can be scaled to match the allocation amount offered by the County. If the request is not scalable, or the Applicants reject the allocation amount offered by the County, the County reserves the right to withdraw the allocation offer to the Applicants.

VII. Glossary of Terms

A list of general procurement and contract definitions can be found here: [Contract Glossary](#). Definitions specific to this application are as follows.

Definition of Agency: A nonprofit organization (501c3), public housing authority, local government, or federally recognized tribe.

Definition of Homeless: The definition can be found at the King County Department of Community and Human Services website: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dchs/human-social-services/funding-opportunities-dchs/how-to-contract-dchs/housing-requirements>

Definition of Low Income: For single adults or families, low income is defined as having income at or below 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), as detailed below:

Family Size	Maximum Income
1	\$21,597
2	\$29,187
3	\$36,777
4	\$44,367
5	\$51,957
6	\$59,547
7	\$67,137
8	\$74,727

VIII. Application and Contract Terms

A. Application Terms

1. Revisions to the Application

If DCHS determines in its sole discretion that it is necessary to revise any part of this application process, an addendum will be posted on the application page. For this purpose, the published questions and answers and any other pertinent information will also be provided as an addendum to these guidelines and added to the application page. DCHS also reserves the right to cancel or to reissue the application process as a whole or in part, prior to execution of any LOAs.

2. Cost to Propose

DCHS will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Applicants in preparation of an application submitted in response to this application process.

3. DCHS Right to be Own Reference

To serve the best interests of King County, DCHS reserves the right to be its own reference with any potential Applicants as deemed necessary in its sole discretion. This may result in a lower score or disqualification of any potential Applicants.

4. No Obligation to Contract

This application does not obligate DCHS to enter into any agreement for services specified herein.

5. Rejection of Proposal

DCHS reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all applications received without penalty and not to issue any contract as a result of this application process.

6. Acceptance Period

Applicants must provide one hundred twenty (120) calendar days DCHS to accept their application from the due date for receipt of application.

7. Best and Final Offer (BAFO)

DCHS reserves the right to use a BAFO before awarding any agreement to further assist in determining the successful Applicants. Terms of the BAFO will be communicated by the HSBTP Lead.

8. Award

DCHS intends to award one or more contracts to potential Applicants. The HSBTP Lead will notify all Applicants in writing of the acceptance or rejection of their application. Written notification will be sent via email to the email address(es) submitted in the application.

9. Protest

King County has a process in place for receiving protests/appeals based upon the application process or awards. The protest/appeal procedures are available at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/finance-business-operations/procurement/for-business/do-business/protest.aspx>.

10. Waiver of Administrative Irregularities

King County reserves the right to waive minor administrative irregularities or informalities in a Proposal.

B. Contract Terms

1. King County Letter of Agreement

Organizations awarded through this procurement process will enter into an LOA or MOU with King County DCHS. Awarded Agencies will be required to meet baseline requirements, including nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity, record keeping, and more. The contents of an applicant's submitted application shall become contractual obligations if an agreement ensues.

An agreement between the selected Applicants and King County shall include the contract instrument, the original application guidelines as issued by King County, the submitted application, and any other documents mutually agreed upon. The agreement must include, and be consistent with, the specifications and provisions stated in these guidelines.

2. Equity and Social Justice

To effectively operate and provide services within a culturally responsive framework, an organization shall intentionally consider equity and integrate it into its values and principles, decisions, and policies. King County expects awarded organizations to incorporate a racial equity lens in their service delivery models and administration to challenge systemic and structural inequality, reduce prejudice and racism, and advance equity.

3. Data Collection and Reporting

All community grants from DCHS come with the expectation of some data collection and reporting by the funded organization. DCHS is committed to only collecting data and information that is necessary for routine monitoring of program performance and meeting the Department's reporting obligations.

The primary purpose of performance measurement is to use data to understand which activities are effective and why, and support shared and transparent responsibility for your program's implementation and impact. It also enables King County to meet our reporting requirements to the King County Council and other partners and make data-informed decisions.

Given what is currently known about this program, Agencies awarded through this application process will likely be contractually required to report information about service participants to King County on a biannual basis, as outlined in Section III.C., Reporting Requirements.

King County is available to provide capacity building either directly or through our partners to support funded organizations to meet these requirements. As programs grow and evolve within the award period, King County staff will be available to make any necessary adjustments to data collection and reporting requirements in collaboration with the awarded organization.

4. Public Records Act

- a. Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) requires public organizations in Washington to promptly make public records available for inspection and copying unless they fall within the specified exemptions contained in the Act or are otherwise privileged.

- b. All submitted applications and application materials become public information and may be reviewed by anyone requesting to do so at the conclusion of the application, negotiation, and award process. This process is concluded when a signed agreement is completed between the County and the selected Applicants.
- c. Applications submitted under this application process shall be considered public documents and with limited exceptions, Applications that are recommended for awards will be available for inspection and copying by the public.

If an Applicant considers any portion of his/her/their application to be protected under the law, the Applicant shall clearly identify on the page(s) affected such words as "CONFIDENTIAL," "PROPRIETARY" or "BUSINESS SECRET." The Applicant shall also use the descriptions above in the following table to identify the effected page number(s) and location(s) of any material to be considered as confidential.

If a request is made for disclosure of such portion, the County will review the material to determine whether it may be eligible for exemption from disclosure under the law. If the material is not exempt from public disclosure law, or if the County is unable to decide of such an exemption, the County will notify the Applicant of the request and allow the Applicant ten (10) days to take whatever action it deems necessary to protect its interests. If the Applicant fails or neglects to take such action within said period, the County will release the portion of the Proposal deemed subject to disclosure.

By submitting a proposal, the Applicant assents to the procedure outlined in this paragraph and shall have no claim against the County on account of actions taken under such procedure. Please notify the County of your needs by contacting the HSBTP Lead and reference the information table below:

Type of Exemption	Beginning Page / Location	Ending Page / Location

5. Accounts and Records

Agencies shall maintain the following for a period of six years after termination of any agreement resulting from this application process: accounts and records, including personnel, property, financial, programmatic records, and other such records the County may deem necessary to ensure proper accounting and compliance with the agreement.

6. Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity

Awarded Agencies shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding discrimination, including those set forth in this Section.

During performance of the agreement, the awarded Agency shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of the employee's or applicant's sex, race, color, marital status, national origin, religious affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age except by minimum age and retirement provisions, unless based upon a bona fide occupational qualification. The Agency will make equal employment opportunity efforts to ensure that applicants and employees are treated equitably, without regard to their sex, race, color, marital status, national origin, religious affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age except by minimum age and retirement provisions, status as a family caregiver, military status or status as a veteran who was honorably discharged or who was discharged solely as a result of the person's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. The Agency shall additionally read and comply with all additional

requirements set forth at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/contracts/requirements.aspx>.

7. Americans with Disabilities Act

DCHS complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Applicants may contact the HSBTP Lead to receive materials for this application in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, audio tape, or computer disc.