



Seattle City Council

2012 BUDGET PROCESS

MEDC'S Remarks presented by Dorry Elias-Garcia

MEDC members wish to express our appreciation to the Seattle City Council for demonstrating your willingness to listen to what the residents and others have to say about the City's 2012 budget;

Secondly, MEDC members wish to recognize the Council for your past leadership to ensure that the health, human services and housing needs of Seattle's most vulnerable residents were prioritized even amidst very difficult economic times in our City. – MEDC members “thank you” for putting **“PEOPLE FIRST”**.

MEDC has been working in partnership with SHSC's Seattle Budget Task Force to develop the 2012 **“BUDGET TO REBUILD OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE”** , priority funding recommendations.

For the record, MEDC wholeheartedly supports all of the recommendations contained in that budget package and I am here tonight on MEDC's behalf to ask the City Council to adopt them as a part of your 2012 City Budget.

Also, we call your attention to a line item in the Mayor's budget, “ORGANIZING” which he budgeted \$120,000 for work with communities of color including immigrants and refugees. **Proposing this investment in community organizing for this target population demonstrates that Mayor McGinn is serious about strengthening the leadership and capacity of people of color to care for themselves and one another and improving race and social justice in our City**

We are also asking Council to RESTORE funding in the amount of \$45, 000 allocated to the Office for Civil Rights as championed by Councilmember Bruce Harrell in the previous year, to continue the important work that has been started with this funding targeted for strengthening the purpose and identifying tangible goals for the Race and Social Justice Initiative's Community Roundtable Advisory Board of which MEDC is a member.

I'm sure you are aware that there are far too many families and individuals who are still struggling from this ongoing recession. With increased needs, human service providers are being asked to "do more with less" as they lay off staff and eliminate programs and services due to shrinking resources

Preserving the city's investments in human services in yet another year where we face budget shortfalls demonstrates to MEDC that the Mayor must have a pretty realistic grasp of just how bad families are struggling. Then, when he responded positively to MEDC and SHSC's challenge to Proposing this investment in community organizing in communities of color and/or with immigrants and refugees demonstrates that Mayor McGinn is serious about building strong communities in difficult times and improving race and social justice issues.

In closing, MEDC recognizes that we are fortunate to have an elected body on the City Council who understands and values supporting health, human services and housing as demonstrated by your actions. We are grateful for your position. Thank YOU!

As you move forward in this budget process, MEDC expects you to use the City's race and social justice tool kit as your guide to prevent budget decisions that will seek to increase racial disparities in the City and to ensure your decisions are grounded in the very principles you as a Council agreed to uphold when you unanimously voted to support the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative.

MEDC members appeal to you to preserve the city's investment in human services in your 2012 budget. The fact is, it's times such as these that City Council members need to stand united and stand firm in your commitment to "put people first"!

THANK YOU.