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Local group presents Seattle officials with funding package for addressing homelessness, hunger, and poverty in Seattle

Seattle, WA - September 12, 2006 - As Mayor Nickels develops his budget recommendations, local groups have already developed their priorities for making the best use of City funds: broaden prosperity by investing in people first.

A broad coalition of human services providers and advocates has looked closely at the City's budget projections and urgent community needs that remain unmet and presented their recommendations to the Mayor and City Councilmembers. "Because of a growing economy, the City of Seattle will have a budget surplus in 2007. The City must take this opportunity to broaden prosperity by investing in people first when they adopt the 2007-2008 budget," said Seattle Human Services Coalition member Mark Okazaki.

The group's recommendations include:

- * \$4 million in 2007 and an additional \$1 million in 2008 to implement the countywide Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. Earlier this year, 1,946 people were found surviving outdoors on the streets of Seattle and other areas in King County.

- * \$1.2 million in both 2007 and 2008 for forty new shelter beds for victims of domestic violence, a victims' advocate/housing specialist in shelters, and additional services for families fleeing domestic abuse. Currently in King County, 13 out of 14 callers requesting shelter from domestic abuse are turned away due to lack of space.

- * \$349,000 for community health clinics serving an ever-growing number of people who lack access to affordable healthcare. Currently 15 percent of adults in King County and 4% of children lack health insurance - the highest levels since data were first tracked in 1991.

The recommendations total approximately \$13 million in 2007 and \$10.4 million in 2008 in new investments that are necessary to meet the basic needs of Seattle residents. The adopted 2006 General Fund budget is \$768.8 million and the Human Services Department budget is \$39 million.

Members of the Seattle Human Services Coalition made their recommendations to Mayor Nickels in June, and are working with City Councilmembers to build

support for the comprehensive package. Co-chair of the Coalition, Steve Daschle described the group's hopefulness that the Mayor will take leadership on this issue by ensuring the people come first in the budget. "The Mayor has stepped up for protecting the environment, growing our downtown, and finding transportation solutions. Now we need him to step up and make Seattle a place where everyone can meet their basic needs."

Coalition members will be available for comments on the Mayor's proposed budget when it is released on September 25th and are hosting a community forum on the budget October 2nd from 5:30 to 8:30 PM. For more information or for a full set of recommendations, please contact SHSC Executive Director, Julia Sterkovsky at 206-325-7105.

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