

# Youth & Family Services Levy Discussion

2021 City Council Mid-Year Planning Session  
AB 5865 | April 27, 2021



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## Agenda



**Why Are We Here?**



**YFS Long-Term Funding Timeline**



**YFS Services and Programs**



**Levy Programmatic  
Elements**



**Base Proposal  
Menu of Options**



**Next Steps**

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## Why Are We Here?

- Issue:** Stable, long-term funding is needed for the Youth & Family Services Department.
- Possible Solution:** Single year levy lift option for consideration on the November ballot.
- Today's Goal:** Identify programmatic elements of a potential YFS levy.
- Next Steps:** A follow-up discussion with the City Council in June on the pros and cons of a levy, the timing, the levy length, the detailed finances, and the "go" or "no go" decision.



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## YFS Long-Term Funding Timeline

- March 16, 2020** Mercer Island Thrift Shop closes due to COVID-19 pandemic, eliminating revenues and funding for Youth & Family Services.
- April 2020** Youth & Family Services and Thrift Shop staff are laid off and furloughed due to the closure of the Thrift Shop.
- May 5, 2020** City Council establishes the YFS Working Group, comprised of representatives from the MIYFS Foundation Board, the City Council, and staff, to evaluate short-term and long-term funding options to stabilize the YFS Department.



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## YFS Long-Term Funding Timeline

- November 2, 2020** Presentation to the City Council regarding ballot measures.
- December 8, 2020** YFS Working Group reviewed four levy scenarios for long-term funding; no recommendation was made by the Working Group. The working group concluded their work January 2021.
- February 2, 2021** Council reviewed the same four levy scenarios and directed the City Manager to research and provide additional information regarding the following:
- Single year levy lift option for consideration on the November ballot
  - Modeling related to levy term



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## YFS Services and Programs

Family  
Assistance

Food  
Pantry

Community-  
Based  
Counseling

School-Based  
Counseling

Senior  
Services

Healthy Youth  
Initiative

Mercer Island  
Thrift Shop



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## Family Assistance Program

The Family Assistance Program serves Mercer Island residents who are experiencing financial hardship. Staff work with individuals and families to create short- and long-term plans for financial stability, provide one-time emergency financial assistance, and identify additional resources and benefits for which residents may be eligible.

- One-time rent and utilities assistance
- Finding emergency and temporary childcare
- Connecting to state programs
- Applying for benefits such as Social Security and Unemployment
- Accessing low-cost health insurance or medical care
- Applying for Mercer Island Preschool scholarships
- Getting financial support during the Holiday Season



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## Food Pantry

Food Pantry services are available to all Mercer Island individuals and families facing food insecurity.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Food Pantry has shifted operations to offer only grocery store gift cards on Wednesdays from 10 am – 3 pm at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center.

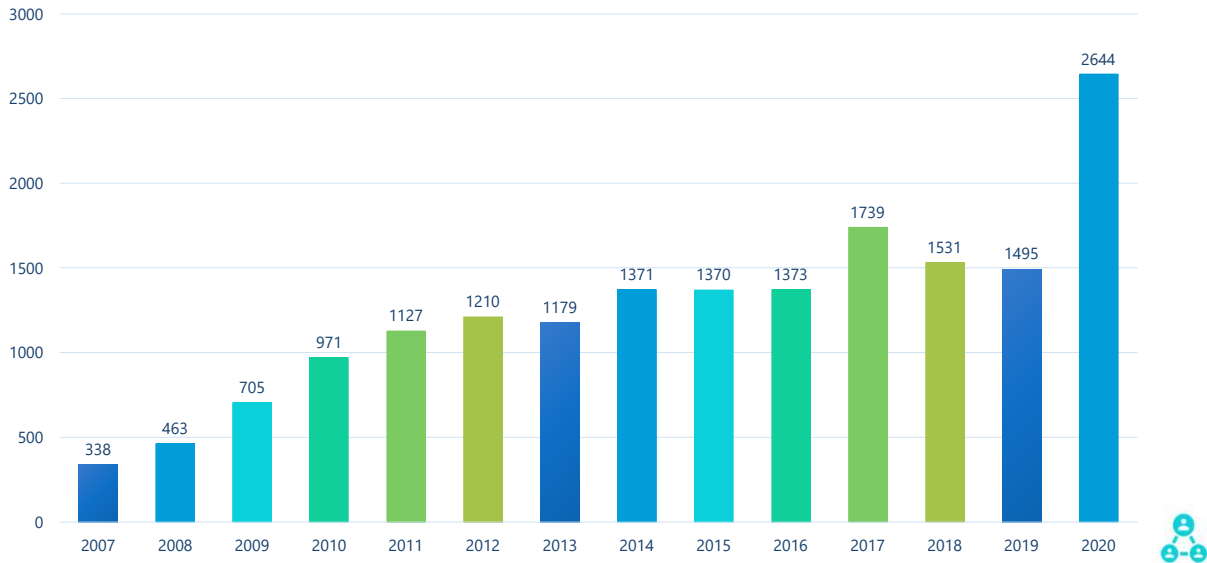
In 2020, the Food Pantry was utilized 2,644 times by Mercer Island residents, a 77% increase from 2019.



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## Food Pantry

Total Number of Uses Per Year



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## Community-Based Counseling Program

The mental health professionals in the Community-Based Counseling Program provide individual, couple, and family counseling for Mercer Island residents with behavioral health challenges.

Counseling staff work with residents across the lifespan to deal with a wide range of issues including:

- Child development, teens, transitions to adulthood
- Family conflict, parenting skills,
- Relationship issues, divorce, co-parenting
- Abuse, neglect, trauma
- Depression, anxiety
- Social-emotional skills for coping with the Pandemic
- Grief and loss



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## School-Based Counseling Program

The MIYFS licensed mental health counselors in the School-Based Counseling Program are integral to the learning environment in each public school on the Island.

Counselors work collaboratively with students, families and school staff to support the social and emotional needs of students in every school, helping them build a strong foundation for their future, and act as a safety net for those in a mental health crisis.

Programming and services are tailored to the specific school level (elementary through high school).



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## School-Based Counseling Program

### Elementary Schools

MIYFS counselors provide classroom and group work along with confidential individual counseling to help young students establish the building blocks for their social and emotional well-being and readiness to learn.

Counselors provide a wide range of services to the four elementary schools in the Mercer Island School District including:

- Teaching mindfulness
- Stress management
- Friendship skills
- Treating depression and/or anxiety
- Social-emotional classroom education (Kelso's Choice, Second Step Bullying Prevention, etc.)
- Lunch friendship groups
- Divorce and grief/loss groups



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## School-Based Counseling Program

### Islander Middle School

A MIYFS Counselor and Counseling Intern are located at Islander Middle School to provide individual and group counseling, parent/teacher consultations and student support groups to develop the skills to manage the social-emotional challenges of middle school.

Counselors work with students on:

- Building their resilience, including stress management
- Expressing anger
- Depression, anxiety, eating disorders and suicidal ideation

Counselors provide support for and administer:

- Student support groups:
  - Divorce
  - Grief/loss
  - Friendship
- Student programs:
  - WEB Program (*Where Everybody Belongs*)
  - Sources of Strength
  - SOS Outreach Program
  - Dialectical Behavioral Therapy in Schools
- Classroom curriculum delivery:
  - Second Step Bullying Prevention
  - Suicide Prevention



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## School-Based Counseling Program

### Mercer Island High School

The Resource and Referral (R & R) Place at the Mercer Island High School houses both MIYFS counselors and serves as a low-barrier opportunity for teens to access support and guidance around the many issues and concerns facing adolescents today.

A full-time MIYFS Counselor is on site to provide a range of services, including individual counseling, facilitating youth leadership development programs and teaching emotional self-care.

A full-time Alcohol and Drug Intervention Specialist is also onsite offering substance use prevention, intervention and referral to treatment and recovery supports.



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## Senior Services

Senior Services supports the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of Mercer Island residents ages 60 years and older and their families.

Client-centered care is strength-based, supports independence and facilitates access to aging services including health care, supportive housing, and navigating end of life issues.

### Services for Older Adults

- Individualized care plans, health and safety needs
- Mental health and cognitive assessments
- Resources and referrals on aging, grief and loss, and end of life issues.

### Consultation with Adult Children

- Resources, referral and information on aging and supportive placement
- Dementia education and resources
- Facilitate family meetings to help problem solve and make decisions related to aging



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## Healthy Youth Initiative

The Mercer Island Healthy Youth Initiative (HYI), formerly *Mercer Island Communities that Care*, grew out of the recognition that most Mercer Island youth are healthy and thriving, and yet significant improvements can still be made to improve trends in overall youth well-being.

- Tailored for risks associated with affluent communities including alcohol and other drug use and mental health related to achievement pressures.
- Funded by a 5-year federal grant, the Healthy Youth Initiative expands previous prevention efforts to include mental health promotion, family support services and youth engagement.
- HYI members include local experts, Island residents, community and regional partners dedicated to positively impacting the lives of youth in our community.

<https://www.mihealthyyouth.com/healthy-youth-initiative>



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## Mercer Island Thrift Shop

The Mercer Island Thrift Shop (MITS) is a revenue-generating program of the Mercer Island Youth & Family Services Department (MIYFS). In 1975, MITS began as a volunteer public/private partnership raising funds to support the programs of Youth & Family Services.

In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MITS was closed. Over the past year, MITS has been able to slowly reopen with online merchandise sales, in-store sales on Sundays, and donation acceptance on Saturdays. Staff are working on a "Restart Plan" that will allow additional sales and donation acceptance days and to reboot the strong culture of volunteerism supported by experienced staff who love what they do.

In 2019, the Thrift Shop netted over \$1,000,000 to support MIYFS department services for Island residents.

<https://www.mercerislandthrift.org/>



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## YFS Levy Programmatic Elements



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## Levy Base Proposal (Part 1)

### Long term funding for **MIYFS School Based Counseling Program**

- **Include:** Salaries, benefits, trainings, and licensing for 7 employees:
  - *1 counselor at Northwood, Island Park, West Mercer, and Lakeridge elementary schools*
  - *1 counselor at Islander Middle School*
  - *1 counselor at Mercer Island High School*
  - *1 substance use prevention/intervention professional at Mercer Island High School*
- **Annual Cost:** \$685,000 (2021)
- **Benefits:** Securing long-term funding for this program ensures that youth mental health needs are met through ability to access mental health professionals in every public school on Mercer Island.



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## Levy Base Proposal (Part 2)

### **Clinical supervision** of MIYFS School Based Counseling Program

- **Include:** Salaries and benefits for 0.45 FTE management staff
- **Annual Cost:** \$50,000 (2021)
- **Benefits:** Clinical ethics and best practices stipulate clinical supervision as part of all formal therapeutic care. Including funding for the clinical supervision for school-based counselors captures the full cost of the administration of the program.



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# Levy Options Menu

<b>1. Restore</b>	Programs Assistant to full-time
<b>2. Restore</b>	Second Counselor at Islander Middle School
<b>3. Expand</b>	Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) position to full-time
<b>4. Restore</b>	Geriatric Specialist to full-time
<b>5. Restore</b>	Part-time Community-Based Counselor
<b>6. Stabilize</b>	Funding for Healthy Youth Initiative starting in 2025.



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## 1. Restore Programs Assistant

In May 2020, the YFS Administrative Assistant position was eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In September 2020, a 0.5 FTE YFS Programs Assistant position was reinstated.

- **Restore:** 0.5 FTE Programs Assistant
- **Annual Cost:** \$40,000 (2021 salary and benefits)
- **Benefit:** Restoring the capacity of this position will allow YFS staff to meet the administrative and program support needs of our Emergency Assistance, Community-Based Counseling, and Senior Support programs, all of which are facing increased need and reduced resources.



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## 2. Restore 2<sup>nd</sup> IMS Counselor

In 2000, a second counselor was added to Islander Middle School as the school population was growing. In 2017, the position was eliminated due to lack of funding.

- **Restore:** Second Island Middle School Counselor position (0.83 FTE)
- **Annual Cost:** \$100,000 (2021 salary and benefits)
- **Benefit:** Current Islander Middle School enrollment exceeds the capacity of one YFS Counselor; restoring and increasing capacity will align with enrollment figures and allow school-based team to better meet the demand of increased mental health needs for this age group.



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## 3. Expand MIH Case Manager

### Background

Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) programs are designed to address the needs of low-acuity 9-1-1 callers and vulnerable community members by developing programs and systems that connect individuals accessing the Emergency Medical System (EMS) to a wide array of health and social services.

There is approximately \$110,000 available for the Mercer Island MIH Program for each year from 2020-2025; \$60,000 of which would be salary and benefits for the YFS MIH Intensive Case Manager.



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### 3. Expand MIH Case Manager

Staff will be presenting the City's MIH program to the City Council in the summer. An expansion of the position to administer the program is proposed.

- **Expand:** 0.5 FTE MIH Intensive Case Manager
- **Cost:** \$60,000 (salary and benefits)
- **Benefit:** Intensive case management and outreach capacity will allow MIYFS to provide outreach to high-needs, multi-systems clients.



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### 4. Restore Geriatric Specialist

The Geriatric Specialist position was reduced by 50% as part of the 2019 budget reductions. Case management services to the most vulnerable senior citizens has been prioritized after the reduction. The proposed increase brings back senior mental health and aligns with demand.

- **Restore:** Geriatric Specialist position to 1.0 FTE (from 0.5 FTE)
- **Annual Cost:** \$60,000 (2021 salary and benefits)
- **Benefit:** Increased mental health support, including grief/loss groups, and outreach and collaboration with first responders and MIH program



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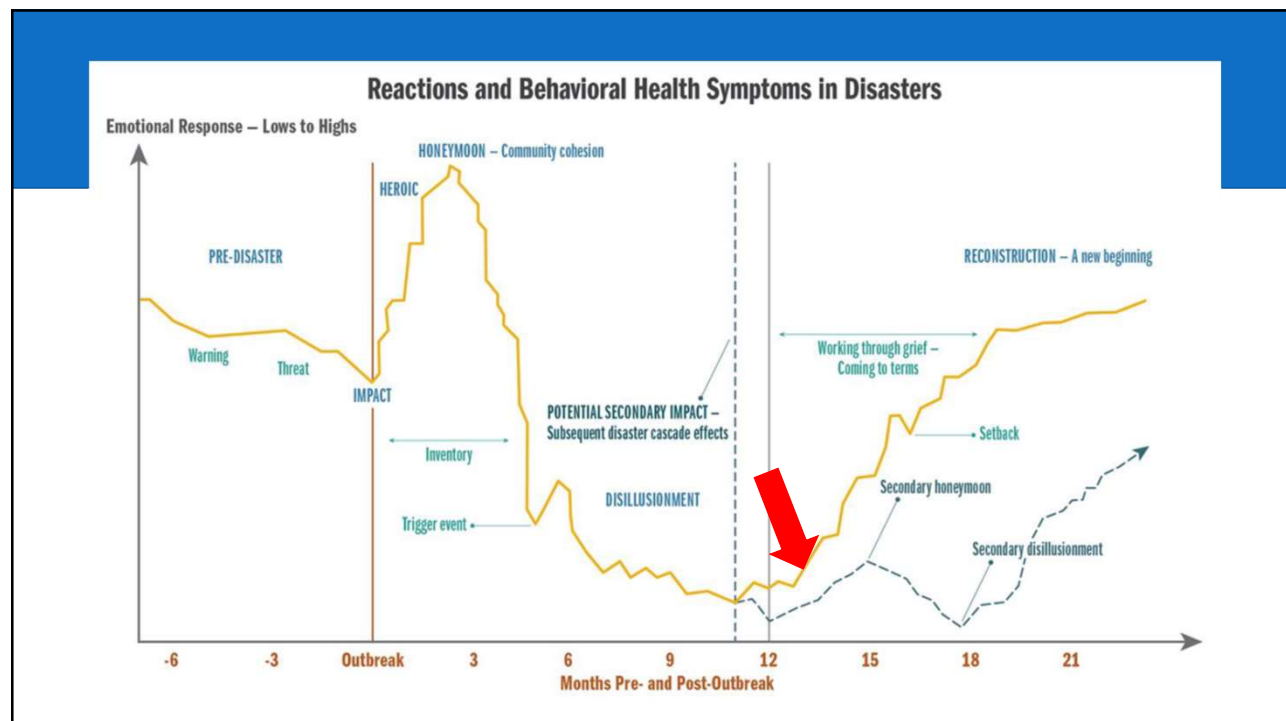
## 5. Restore Community-Based Counselor

In 2020, the community-based counseling program was reduced from 1.9 FTE to 1.1 FTE due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Restore:** 0.5 FTE Community-Based Counselor
- **Annual Cost:** \$60,000 (2021 salary, benefits, training & licensing)
- **Benefit:** Community-based counselors support school-based counselors and Emergency Assistance and Senior programs to provide more intensive and longer-term treatments for complex family issues, depression, anxiety, suicide ideation and current pandemic related behavioral health issues.



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## 6. Stabilize The HYI After 2024

The Healthy Youth Initiative (HYI) is a federal grant funded program (2020-2024) with a mission to *successfully launch every Mercer Island youth into adulthood with a foundation of physical and mental health, well-prepared to cope with the academic, social, and emotional challenges of adulthood.*

- **Stabilize:** Funding is needed in 2025 to continue HYI
- **Annual Cost:** \$175,000 (2021 1.0 FTE salary and benefits + operating budget)
- **Benefit:** Initiatives to prevent substance use and promote mental health across entire continuum of care (promotion-prevention-intervention-treatment-recovery) into the YFS department, giving young people opportunities for wellness and increasing population level well-being in young people and thereby decreasing future intervention and treatment costs.



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## Estimated Costs

ACTION	OPTION	COST
<b>STABILIZE</b> Base Proposal	School-Based Counseling Program	\$685,000
<b>STABILIZE</b> Base + Supervision	Supervision for School-Based Counseling Program	\$50,000
<b>RESTORE</b>	Programs Assistant to Full-Time (0.5 FTE)	\$40,000
<b>RESTORE</b>	Second Middle School Counselor (0.83 FTE)	\$100,000
<b>EXPAND</b>	MIH Case Manager Position (0.5 FTE)	\$60,000
<b>RESTORE</b>	Geriatric Specialist to Full-Time (0.5 FTE)	\$60,000
<b>RESTORE</b>	Community-Based Counselor Position (0.5 FTE)	\$60,000
<b>STABILIZE</b>	Healthy Youth Initiative (2025 & Beyond)	\$175,000



*Costs are 2021 figures*

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## Next Steps

**Today:** Staff is seeking the City Council's feedback on which programmatic elements to include in a potential YFS levy.

**June 2020:** Staff will return to the City Council for a follow-up discussion on:

- Pros and cons of a levy
- Timing of a ballot measure
- Levy length
- Detailed finances and modeling based on selected programmatic elements
- A "go" or "no go" decision on the levy.

