



Pierce County  
WASHINGTON



# 2024-2025 BIENNIAL BUDGET

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



a place people are  
proud to call  
**home**

MISSION:  
**BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES**

VALUES:  
**INTEGRITY | PARTNERSHIP | RESPECT  
INNOVATION | ACCOUNTABILITY**

# EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

To the residents of Pierce County,

To help inform the biennial budget I am proposing to the Council, we surveyed County residents to learn more about their priorities, concerns, needs and thoughts. Several hundred people responded to the survey and the results would likely not surprise you.

The top concern of County residents was public safety, as our region and our nation have witnessed an alarming rise in lawlessness. This is exacerbated by court backlogs stemming from the pandemic. This has been our top priority and we will continue to invest to ensure our communities are safe. We've allocated several million in ARPA funds to move cases more quickly through the courts. Recruiting, retaining, equipping, and training our Sheriff's deputies will remain a high priority in the new biennium. Our efforts are showing results, but we can't let up now. We still have work to do to get to full staffing.

At the same time, we will be making significant investments in Human Services to improve the lives of County residents. The department will realize a substantial increase in resources due to additional funding from state and federal grants as well as new taxes levied by the County Council. It is critical that we wisely use the funds provided by our residents to address the challenges we see daily – homelessness, untreated mental illness, and youth violence. The level and severity of violence by some youth in our community is deeply concerning. We will continue to invest in programs to hold youth accountable and ideally get them back on the right track. I am especially excited about the expansion of the outdoor learning program that has shown positive results. Time in nature, away from the streets, is proving to be a great tonic for some of our youngest and most troubled residents.

The second priority that our residents identified was roads and transportation. In the 2024-25 budget proposal you will see the Safe Routes to School initiative as well as a variety of active transportation improvements, including 25 miles of sidewalks, 364 crosswalks and six miles of dedicated bike lanes. We continue to work on our critical infrastructure connections, like completing SR-167 and the Canyon Road Connector, as well as our ferry system.

Our residents chose jobs and the economy as another top priority. To that end, we continue to support the investment of new employers - and even better, the expansion of existing businesses. We want more and better jobs for our residents, and this budget includes resources to partner for workforce development, internships, and career expansion. We are continuing the award-winning and successful small business accelerator program for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, as well as veterans and women. This ARPA-funded program has already helped to create and grow hundreds of small businesses around the County - expanding opportunity and jobs!

Finally, we will continue to invest in cleaning up our community, including illegal encampments and other blighted properties. Furthermore, we are investing in more capacity to clean up litter and remove graffiti. We all want to be proud of this place we call home.

As I leave office at the end of 2024, this is the last biennial budget I will develop and implement. The pages that follow detail the initiatives and projects we have funded to respond to the concerns and priorities of our residents, as well as the areas I have focused on over the last seven years. You will see that we reallocated scarce General Fund money into public safety and criminal justice functions to address our County's significant challenges. At the same time, we maintained our customary fiscal discipline, including projecting our financial condition out six years. This led to some difficult but necessary decisions to maintain the County's fund balance.

Thank you for the honor of serving the people of Pierce County.

Sincerely,



**Bruce F. Dammeier**  
Pierce County Executive



# SAFE AND JUST COMMUNITIES

*People have confidence they are safe and will be treated fairly.*

Working to provide **Safe and Just Communities** is a challenging effort in a time of increasing lawlessness and constrained resources. However, our work to recruit and retain Sheriff's and Corrections deputies continues to show signs of success as we add to the cadre of sworn officers.

Attracting and retaining those in law enforcement has required a substantial investment in wages and bonuses. Those investments impact the County's budget long term but are critically important to strengthening the pool of candidates considered for employment as well as keeping professional, highly trained individuals on the force.

An increased emphasis on cleaning up nuisance properties, encampments and drug houses will be augmented with a new **community restoration and cleanup initiative** that provides a tangible way for residents to act on their appreciation for their neighborhoods. Taking pride in where one lives is tied to our vision to foster places people are proud to call home.

A new ARPA-funded **Small Business Safety and Security** grant program will provide ways for business owners to increase confidence and trust in a safe environment for their employees and customers.

Creating a just community prompts a new proposal to develop a **Civilian Review Board** that can give residents confidence that everyone is treated fairly when involved with the justice system. The new board would include members of the community with legal and social justice expertise.



In the 2024-25 Biennium, we will continue raising awareness of the scourge of violence directed to **Missing and Murdered Indigenous People**.

The Pacific Northwest continues to outpace other parts of the country in human trafficking and violence toward Native Americans and other indigenous people. Funds are dedicated to help people recognize the warning signs and providing support and resources for those impacted by this abuse.



In the next biennium, the County will advance its **Justice Center** initiative by moving administrative functions out of the County-City Building and into a recently purchased existing downtown Tacoma building. The move provides a more convenient experience for customers and frees up space to remodel the County-City Building into a fully realized Justice Center.

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$4.5M**

Community Restoration and Cleanup Initiative

**\$3.0M**

Small Business Safety and Security Grant Program

**\$975K**

Civilian Review Board

**\$22.7**

Justice Center and Administrative Building Initiative



# HEALTHY & HAPPY PEOPLE

*Residents live long, fulfilling lives.*

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$38.4M**

Behavioral Health Services and Programs

**\$8.0M**

Opioid Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Services

**\$16.8M**

Capital Improvements to the Regional Trail System

**\$6.5M**

Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness

**\$17.0M**

Pierce County Village

**\$50.2M**

Capital Improvements to Parks and Facilities

To the extent Pierce County effectively supports the wellbeing of our communities, we help foster **Healthy and Happy People**. Funds directed to this objective will ideally lead County residents to long, fulfilling lives.

Several initiatives are planned to support a healthier region, including **expanded access to behavioral health services, with an emphasis on homeless populations and youth mental health**. These services are made possible through the funds raised by the 1/10 of 1% tax implemented by the County Council.

The County will receive nearly \$50 million from the landmark opioid legal settlement in Washington state. Those funds will be focused on drug treatment and recovery programs for residents.

The launch of the **Blue Zones** transformation project in the Parkland-Spanaway area will guide residents toward practical lifestyle changes that can lead to longevity and health. This is a partnership with healthcare providers and the community as a whole.

Enhancements to the **regional trail system** will also encourage the kind of natural movement and exercise that will enhance residents' wellbeing and

overall health. New trails are planned for several areas within the County, including the expansion of the Pipeline Trail and enhancements along the popular Foothills Trail.

The implementation of the **Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness** brings a coordinated regional approach to getting more people into safe, stable housing. The integrated system includes real-time inventory of available shelter beds, accessible behavioral health, and vocation services, as well as prevention and stabilization programs to help people keep their housing.



The construction of a **shared housing village** in the Parkland-Spanaway area will allow more than 200 people to live in a secure, dignified community with employment, healthcare, and stability. The village will be operated by the Tacoma Rescue Mission and funded by a combination of local, state, and federal money as well as private philanthropy. It is modeled after the highly successful Community First! Village in Austin, Texas.



# CLEAN, SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

*Current and future generations enjoy clean air, clean water, and a healthy natural world.*

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$2.5M**

EV Charging Infrastructure

**\$20.8M**

Fish Habitat and Barrier Removal Projects

**\$8.0M**

Conservation Futures Open Space Preservation

**\$1.2M**

Washington Clean Building Standard Improvements



We are working to ensure current and future generations enjoy clean air, clean water, and a healthy natural world. Initiatives supporting a **Clean, Sustainable Environment** include implementing the Sustainability 2030 Plan. The Plan includes building more **EV charging stations**, reducing greenhouse gases, and assessing the equity impacts of environmental policies.

**Replacing lighting and control systems** throughout the County-City Building is planned for the 2024-25 biennium. Making these renovations, as well as replacing the building's HVAC system, will bring the 64-year-old building into early compliance with the Washington Clean Building Standard.



Another key initiative funded in the biennial budget is improving local waterways by removing both **fish passage barriers and the Chambers Creek Dam**. Restoring these biologically and culturally important areas are shared priorities with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and the Nisqually Indian Tribe.

Coordinating and advancing efforts to preserve open spaces and farmland is funded in the proposed budget, ensuring the County's rural character is protected for future generations.



# ATTAINABLE HOUSING


*Everyone has access to a safe and affordable place to live.*

Creating **Attainable Housing** helps everyone have access to a safe and affordable place to live. To move this objective forward, the County will promote housing and policy changes as a member of the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners. Those proposals include **expanding SEPA exemption thresholds** for housing, **piloting an expedited review path for residential building permits**, and expanding the **multi-family tax exemption**.

In addition, **reducing the processing time** for residential housing construction permits is in the workplan for the Planning and Public Works department in the upcoming two years.



2023 AVERAGE  
**54 DAYS**  
to Approve  
Residential Permits



**3,825**  
People  
housed  
in 2022

Enhancements to existing neighborhoods are also included in the budget. Plans call for piloting a street light program to provide greater safety and security in low-income sections of the County.



## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$13.7M**

Affordable Housing Projects  
Supported by ARPA

**\$47.1M**

Increase Capacity of Affordable  
Housing Units

**\$11.5M**

Eviction Prevention and  
Housing Stability Services

**\$800K**

Comprehensive Plan Periodic  
Update and Implementation

**\$303K**

South Sound Housing  
Affordability Partners



# JOBS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*People start and grow businesses and are employed here.*

To create a vibrant community, our **Jobs and Entrepreneurship** initiatives focus on ways to help people start and grow businesses here in Pierce County. A key highlight of this effort is the continuation of the **ARPA-funded small business accelerator**. This successful program has already prompted hundreds of Black, Indigenous, and other entrepreneurs of color in our community to start and grow their businesses.

The Pierce County **Community Navigator** program is a partnership of Pierce County's Economic Development Department and seven community organizations to reach underserved small business owners in the County, particularly those owned by BIPOC, women, veterans, and people in rural communities. The Navigator outreach team meets with businesses in the communities they serve and assists them with access to business resources.

Identifying projects that merit the **Executive Priority designation** allows high-value projects to move as quickly as possible through the permitting process. Projects earning this designation are typically ones that generate career-wage jobs, either through the expansion of existing businesses or the location of new businesses in Pierce County.

<b>20.7K</b> Employers in Pierce County	<b>302K</b> Covered employment	<b>3.4%</b> Unemployment rate
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*Photo: Brown Dog Coffee, Business Accelerator Graduate*

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$6.3M**

Pierce County Business Accelerator Program

**\$1.2M**

Pierce County Community Navigator Program



# RELIABLE & ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE

People have confidence in and access to high-quality infrastructure throughout the County.

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$10.3M**

Broadband Expansion Supported by ARPA

**\$6.9M**

Municipal Sewer Projects Supported by ARPA

**\$635K**

Establish New Water Utility District

**\$1.3M**

Vision Zero Action Plan and Active Transportation Plan

The ability to move people and goods safely and predictably through our region is key to fostering a thriving entrepreneurial climate in Pierce County. Investing in and maintaining **Reliable and Accessible Infrastructure** includes leveraging state and federal grants to preserve local access roads, advance regional freight mobility, improve sewer operations, and bring broadband access to underserved areas.

**95%**  
County roads in good or fair condition

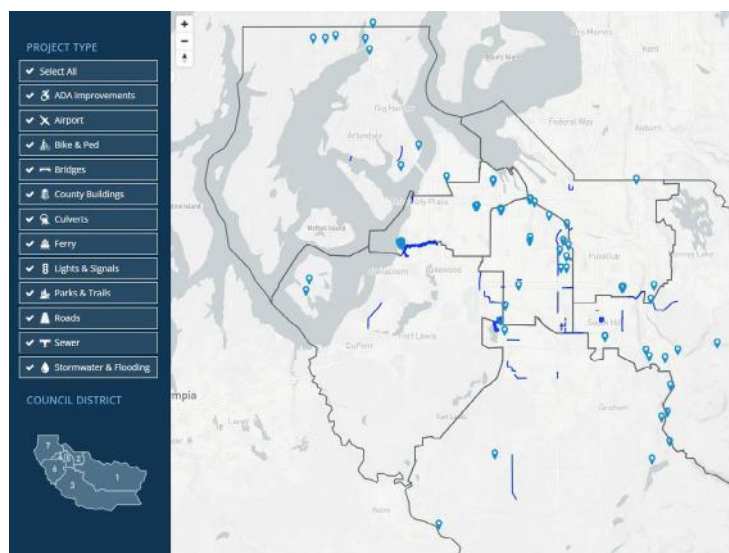
**31**  
New wastewater connections in 2022

**\$4.86**  
Per year per resident for snow and ice response

Reliable access to clean water is funded in the biennial budget through the creation of a **new water utility district**.

Resources have been added to the Planning and Public Works budget to implement a **Vision Zero Action Plan** to eliminate traffic fatalities and reduce serious injuries. Creating safer roads allows everyone to travel with confidence and security.

In a related effort, an **active transportation plan** will increase safe bike and pedestrian infrastructure, providing safe, healthy alternatives for commuting and recreating across the County.



Visit [piercecountywa.gov/openproject](http://piercecountywa.gov/openproject) to learn about capital projects in your community.





# SKILLED WORKFORCE

*Businesses have access to skilled and trained employees.*



A strong pipeline of talented and trained employees is the foundation of a **Skilled Workforce** that attracts business and provides greater opportunities for residents.

Funds from the proposed biennial budget will move important work-based projects forward, including collaborating with regional medical systems and research universities to **enhance the local medical workforce**. Bolstering the number of nurses and other healthcare providers in our region is critically important as the County continues to grow.

The County will also partner with aerospace manufacturers, maritime industry and building trades to meet their local workforce needs. People skilled in the trades are sorely needed to fill **career-wage jobs** and to keep key industries growing and prospering.

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$800K**

Young Adult Internship and Employment Opportunities

**\$208K**

Aerospace and Other Key Industry Recruitment

**325**

Number of New Jobs From Executive Priority Projects



# REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TRIBAL PARTNERSHIP

*Pierce County positively influences others in the region.*

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$417K**

Cultural Resource Protection Program

**\$1.0M**

State Route 167 Gateway Project

**\$14.6M**

Water Quality Projects

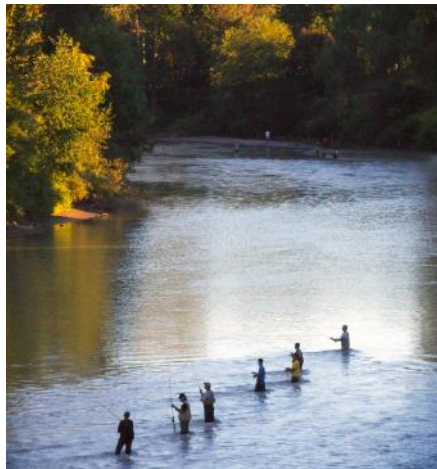
**\$150K**

South Sound Military and Communities Partnership

At Pierce County we recognize the opportunity we have as a convener. We are honored to be able to provide **Regional Leadership** to our colleagues working in local government. We want to be a positive and collaborative partner as we strive to solve issues that affect all of us. Demonstrating leadership at the **Puget Sound Regional Council** is one way we work to move our shared goals forward.



In addition, the County has opportunities to expand the level of coordination we have with military communities across the state, and especially with the leadership of Joint Base Lewis-McChord.



We highly value the **Tribal Partnerships** we maintain with the four sovereign Tribal nations in Pierce County. These government-to-government collaborations permit us to work cooperatively on key shared interests such as **fish passage and water quality**. Funds in the biennial budget are also earmarked for expanding protection of cultural resources to acknowledge and honor the history of the lands where we live.

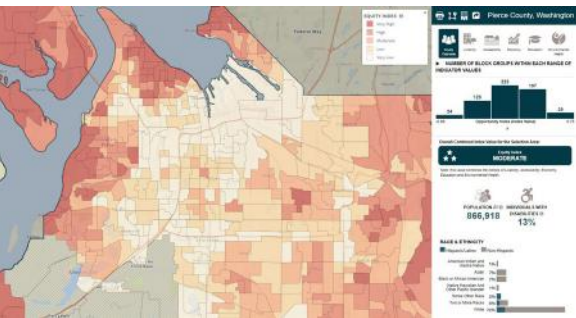




# ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS AND CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES

We owe our residents – those who fund our work – **Accountability for Results** and a clear window into our operations and actions.

The County’s online dashboard, **Open Pierce County**, offers unmatched access to data and reporting through modules such as Open Checkbook (expenditure and vendor tracking) and Open Project (status reports for building, construction, and other major projects).



New tools to assess the equity of all County proposals and actions are being rolled out and funded

by the biennial budget. It is vitally important that projects, initiatives, and funds are managed and invested in ways that benefit all County residents. The Equity Index has been used as an indicator of access and fairness for the first time in the development of the 2024-25 budget and will be upgraded over the next two years.

By increasing our attention on **Customer-focused Services** we will achieve our goal to deliver high-quality services while responsibly stewarding County resources. Some of the projects we plan for 2024-25 include **expanding access to those who do not speak English** as their first language. Expanding ways to reach residents in ways that are accessible and meaningful to them ensures a county government that works for and serves everyone.

Several key projects to improve the services we provide to residents are funded in the biennial budget. The projects include leveraging technology to **improve customer services and transparency**, including upgrades to how customers can use services online.

Funds are also allocated to capture and benefit from the “voice” of our customers. Hearing feedback directly from those who use our services will allow us to improve and enhance the quality of what we do. The new budget provides funding to expand customer **feedback and engagement opportunities**.

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

**\$200K**

Technology to Guide Customers Through Permit Application Process

**\$696K**

Countywide Language Access Program

**\$300K**

Position to Support Sewer Billing System Enhancements



# TALENTED AND DIVERSE EMPLOYEES

*Our employees are productive, innovative, and reflect the communities we serve.*

## EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

### \$2.7M

Hiring Incentives for Sheriff's and Corrections Deputies



We are working toward a goal where our employees are productive, innovative and reflect the communities we serve. To continue to build a team of **Talented and Diverse Employees**, we are enhancing our **Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)**. ERGs are affinity groups of like-minded people who opt to gather on their own time to support and encourage one another. The ERGs are organized around similar life experiences, hobbies, or a variety of identities.

As we work to maintain a more inclusive work environment, the program to support individuals with abilities across a full spectrum will be enhanced. Known as **Supported Employment**, opportunities to perform meaningful work are available for those in our community with a variety of skills and capabilities.

The County's three-tiered **comprehensive leadership development program** has created a large cadre of current and future leaders. Over the next two years, their ranks will grow as the program is further promoted and supported.

Attracting and keeping a talented, innovative, and committed workforce relies upon employees paid a competitive wage with comprehensive benefits. The Human Resources Department will continue its work to **ensure market-rate compensation** across County government.



**10.4%**  
Veterans employed by Pierce County



**24.9%**  
Employees of color



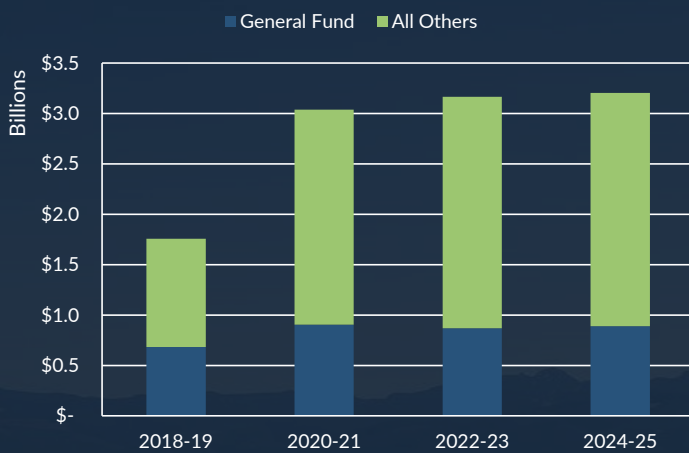
**3,690**  
Total county workforce



**48.6%**  
Female employees

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Pierce County 2024-25 Biennial Budget is \$3.2 billion, a 1.2% increase from 2022-23. The 2024-25 biennial budget for the General Fund is \$889.6 million, a 2.4% increase from 2022-23. The General Fund has declined as a percentage of the total budget from 38.8% in 2018-19 to 27.8% in 2024-25. This is primarily due to the receipt of the federal funds provided to the County beginning in 2020 to respond to COVID-19. The 2024-25 biennial budget is balanced and provides for adequate fund balances in future years.



General Fund	\$889.6M
Special Revenue Funds	\$1.09B
Debt Service Funds	\$35.1M
Capital Projects Funds	\$324.4M
Enterprise Funds	\$461.3M
Internal Service Funds	\$293.0M
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept.	\$110.6M

## TOTAL REVENUE



Property Tax	\$479.9M
Sales Tax	\$449.0M
Other Taxes	\$40.6M
Charges for Service	\$684.2M
Fines and Forfeitures	\$4.4M
Licenses and Permits	\$62.1M
Intergovernmental	\$500.8M
Transfers In	\$384.7M
Miscellaneous	\$154.0M
Use of Fund Balance	\$444.4M

## TOTAL EXPENSES



Salaries and Benefits	\$1.13B
Supplies and Services	\$1.16B
Debt Service	\$62.5M
Capital Expenditures	\$388.0M
Intergovernmental	\$92.9M
Transfers Out	\$366.8M

# PIERCE COUNTY PROFILE

Estimated population

## 946K

Pierce County is home to an estimated 946,300 people, the second largest county in Washington.

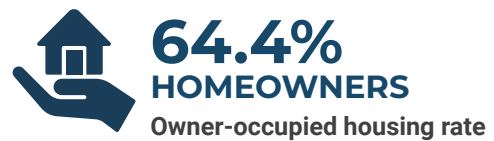
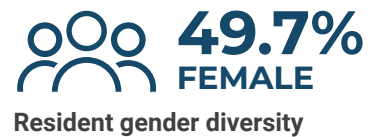
Approximately **52.9%** of Pierce County residents live in cities and towns.



In the last decade the median age has increased 5.1%.



Median household income in Pierce County.



Median home price  
**\$561K**

**95%**  
of County roads in good or fair condition

Employment Total

## 402K

440,476 residents are employed.

Unemployment Rate

## 3.4%

2023



View interactive profile data at  
[www.piercecountywa.gov/profile](http://www.piercecountywa.gov/profile)





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WASHINGTON