



## MEMO

**TO:** City & County Park Directors

**FROM:** King County Play Equity Coalition

**RE:** Planning for Re-Opening & Summer Physical Activity Programming

## BACKGROUND

The King County Play Equity Coalition is a 65-member organization focused on regional inequities in youth access to physical activity through sport and outdoor recreation. We acknowledge the unprecedented strain that COVID-19 has placed on local and regional park agencies as they seek to meet constituents' needs and support public health, well-being, and safety and appreciate all that you are doing to keep our community safe.

As a phased re-opening of facilities and youth-serving summer programs begins to take shape, we are concerned about a) the need for an equity-focused approach to service provision and b) the ability of stressed and under-resourced non-profits and providers to navigate the demands of re-starting. Recognizing the pre-existing inequities in youth access to physical activity, we ask that parks directors consider the following recommendations to address these challenges.

## REQUEST

**Coordination between municipal park agencies in the opening of facilities and health and safety protocols governing the openings.**

Many non-profit outdoor recreation and sports providers offer programming across the county; navigating variable municipal rules governing facility rentals and training staff on new protocols pose additional avoidable challenges. *We ask parks agencies to streamline re-opening timelines and apply regulations related to youth physical activity across cities to support organizations serving multiple cities. We recognize much of this work is already taking place, and offer our support in this continued effort.*

**Collaboration between park agencies, school districts, and non-profits in the provision of facilities for programming.**

Families need childcare and children need safe places to play more than ever. Even though schools are typically closed in the summer, *we ask parks directors to promote coordination with OSPI*

*and/or local school districts so summer program providers can easily and affordably use school fields and/or indoor facilities to provide physical activity programming for youth.*

**Openness to leverage municipal resources in innovative ways, to first meet the needs of those youth and families most impacted by the crisis.**

As you know limited facilities, fields, staff, and resources exist for youth physical activity programming. Working together, we can create programs and plans that prioritizing resources for low-income and/or highly-affected neighborhoods and communities. *We ask parks directors to allocate resources related to youth physical activity programming that consider and prioritize those programs, neighborhoods, and communities with the fewest resources, as determined by metrics such as household income or other socioeconomic measures. This could include prioritizing field reservations for residents over non-residents or no cost programming over revenue-generating programming, or engaging community-serving organizations to understand ways of working together to meet needs.*

**Recognition that running programming with reduced staff and fewer resources plus new safety and hygiene protocols will be challenging to municipal and non-profit providers alike.**

Organizations with depleted resources will need time to train and hire staff to follow new guidelines. *We ask parks directors to plan for this by allowing ample time for programs to ramp-up and providing training explicitly in guidelines that govern reopening and restarting youth physical activity programming.*

**Inclusion of outdoor recreation and youth sports providers in planning and decision-making of procedures related to summer programming re-start.**

We recommend routine engagement with nonprofit providers and school districts.

## **SUPPORT**

**The King County Play Equity Coalition is prepared to:**

- Engage member organizations representing diverse communities in ongoing dialogue and share these findings as requested with parks directors and other key stakeholders
- Engage member organizations to support parks directors in creating programming guidelines and enabling creative opportunities for youth engagement in physical activity, outdoor recreation, and/or organized sport.
- Empower and facilitate responsible programming in accordance with all local, regional, and federal government guidelines.
- Support regional programs with training and resources to prepare for revised programming.

- Share curated information about the latest programming recommendations from physical activity, sport, and outdoor recreation organizations.

We are prepared to offer further support as requested and look forward to building ongoing relationships as we all enter into this unprecedented time, while keeping youth and family safety and well-being as a top priority.

Thank you,

**King County Play Equity Coalition**

**Bookie Gates**

*Baseball Beyond Borders*

**Ka'ohe Wong**

*School's Out Washington*

**Gena Woodke**

*City of Renton: Recreation and Neighborhoods*

**Kyle Boyd**

*NHL Seattle*

**Julie McCleery**

*University of Washington Center for Leadership in Athletics*