

## **4CULTURE NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **State legislature acts to save arts and heritage programs in King County**

On Wednesday, May 25th at 9:30 p.m., on the final night of the special session, the Washington State Legislature passed [ESSB 5834](#), a bill that allocates public funding for local arts and heritage communities and ensures a future for the programs of 4Culture, King County's cultural services agency.

For twenty-plus years, 4Culture has provided support for the visual and performing arts, public art, heritage programs, historic preservation and cultural development of the region. Since 1992, the agency has managed a portion of existing lodging taxes for cultural programs in the County.

“This is a big day for 4Culture and the thousands of citizens and visitors that benefit from our services in every corner of King County,” states Jim Kelly, Executive Director. “This took seven years and could not have happened without our prime legislative sponsors and champions Senator Ed Murray, Senator Scott White, Representative Ross Hunter and House Speaker Frank Chopp. 5834 had strong bipartisan support. We also have to thank King County Executive Dow Constantine who recognized the importance of this program and made this one of the County's legislative priorities this session.”

The original legislation for 4Culture assured the future of the heritage and arts program by funding the program with lodging taxes through 2012, and creating an endowment fund from a portion of these same local lodging taxes, that was meant to sustain the program after 2012. With the downturn of the economy, however, the endowment had not met original revenue projections. Without the passage of ESSB 5834 this session, 90% of 4Culture's programs and support for arts and heritage would've been eliminated by 2012.

When signed into law by Governor Gregoire, ESSB 5834 will permit King County to direct an existing portion of local lodging taxes to 4Culture beginning in 2021. In order to bridge the funding gap between 2013 – 2021, the bill authorizes 4Culture to spend down an endowment it has been accruing for the past 10 years.

“4Culture can now plan for a stable future,” said 4Culture board president Dale Smith, “We will continue to steward these public funds in ways that serve all King County residents and provide access to the economic, social and educational benefits of art, heritage and cultural development in all county communities.”

Beginning January 1, 2021, at least 37.5 percent of the county lodging tax revenues will be distributed to the account dedicated for 4Culture's programs. Another 37.5 percent of the county

lodging tax revenues will be distributed for affordable workforce housing and services for homeless youth. Sponsors of the bill included Senators Murray, Litzow, McAuliffe, Nelson, Hill, White, Kohl-Welles, Fain and Eide.

Established in January 2003, [4Culture](#) is a public development authority serving King County's cultural communities. It continues the work of the King County Arts Commission, Public Art Commission, and the heritage programs of the Landmarks Commission. 4Culture is a tax-exempt public corporation with a 15 member Board of Directors who are nominated by the King County Executive and confirmed by the Metropolitan King County Council.

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