

Our Purpose

The purpose of developing a set of social and health indicators for King County that reflects the wealth of knowledge and experience of both residents and technical experts is to:

- ◆ Provide a widely accepted index for monitoring the health and well being of King County communities.
- ◆ Inform funding decisions.
- ◆ Engage citizens in following progress.
- ◆ Complement King County's existing economic and environmental indicators.

Our Beliefs

Three principles have guided this project:

1. Prevention and a long-term view of change are emphasized.
2. A data-based approach informs our understanding of what creates and sustains healthy communities and families.
3. Effective efforts involve citizens and experts, different disciplines, different parts of government, private and public sectors.

Our Process

Through an extensive process, residents expressed their opinions on what they value in their families and communities, what they think creates and sustains healthy people and strong neighborhoods, and what social, health and economic problems they are concerned about. Over 1,500 King County residents participated through a random digit dial telephone survey, a series of focus groups, and seven public forums held across the county. Their opinions were recorded and are expressed as "valued conditions."

At the same time, technical advisors were discussing the scientific side of choosing a strong list of social and health indicators. They considered the valued conditions expressed by residents and were concerned with the scientific quality of the information available issues of validity, reliability, consistency of measurement, whether data are available for the county only or for smaller areas, such as school districts, cities, regions, or for different age groups, ethnic groups, income levels and genders. The indicators selected were the most meaningful to residents and those considered most important to the overall health and wellbeing of people and communities.

