

**WHATCOM COUNTY
EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**

County Courthouse
311 Grand Avenue, Suite #108
Bellingham, WA 98225-4082



Satpal Singh Sidhu
County Executive

Memorandum

To: Whatcom County Council
Through: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
From: Jed Holmes, Public Affairs Manager
Date: January 15, 2026
RE: Interlocal with City of Bellingham to Support the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission

Background

The Whatcom Racial Equity Commission (WREC) was founded through Whatcom County Code 2.107. This commission is tasked with addressing racial inequity and assisting local governments with their commitment to ensure a welcome, inclusive and safe community for everyone.

The County and the City of Bellingham each committed to \$100,000 of funding per year for the first three years (2023-2025); no funding was included for 2026 in the County's adopted biennium budget.

Through the Mid-Biennium Review Process, the County approved a Supplemental Budget Request for \$50,000 to support the Commission's work in 2026. In parallel, the City of Bellingham included \$100,000 for this purpose in its 2026 budget.

In December 2026, the County Council approved a contract with the Whatcom Community Foundation to provide administrative and facilitation services to support the Commission's ongoing operations and strategic initiatives (Contract No. 202512054) in an amount not to exceed \$150,000.

Proposed Interlocal

The proposed interlocal memorializes the parties' shared support for the purpose and goals of the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission and their shared commitment to provide joint funding of certain necessary and allowable expenses incurred by the Commission.

The interlocal confirms that the County will make available and commit funds in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 to support the administration and work of the Commission in 2026. Similarly, the City will provide funds in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 for these purposes. All qualifying expenses up to \$100,000 will be split on a parity basis by the County and City. Any expenses in excess of this amount up to \$50,000 will be covered by the City of Bellingham. The interlocal is consistent with the commitments made through the Mid-Biennium Review and the County's contract with the Whatcom Community Foundation.

Please address any questions regarding this agreement to Jed Holmes, Public Affairs Manager (jholmes@co.whatcom.wa.us).