

Thurston County Treatment Sales Tax, Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Treatment Sales Tax? It is a sales tax of 1/10 of one percent as allowed by Washington State law (RCW 82.14.460) and approved by Thurston County Commissioners in 2008. That equates to one cent on a ten dollar purchase.

How much money will be generated by the tax? At this time it is estimated that the tax will generate about \$3.5 million to \$4 million annually. (It should be noted that the amount raised is greatly dependant on the strength of the economy.)

What is the goal of the Treatment Sales Tax? As described in the documents outlining the program, the goal is to: "Improve the quality of life for Thurston County residents with mental illness and/or chemical dependency by reducing their involvement with the criminal justice system." That means using the proceeds to divert certain youth and adults out of incarceration if possible and into programs where they can receive the treatment they need.

What kinds of programs can be funded? Programs include new or expanded mental health and chemical dependency services and new or expanded therapeutic courts.

When do the programs paid for through the Treatment Sales Tax go into effect and does the tax expire?

The Board of County Commissioners approved a six month planning process. The proposed implementation plan is due to the County Commissioners in June, 2009. New or expanded programs will go into effect in July 2009 and in the following months. The plan also calls for constant monitoring of the programs for value and efficiency. The Treatment Sales Tax is scheduled to expire on January 1, 2017.

Who is deciding how the tax proceeds will be used? A social services and law and justice based committee is working out the details. Planners include staff from Superior and District courts, the Prosecutor's Office, the Office of Assigned Counsel, the Sheriff's Office, Public Health and Social Services Department and Family and Juvenile Court.

How are taxpayers represented in the planning process? The plan will be reviewed and edited by a panel of 45 community representatives including

citizens, representatives of city governments, law enforcement, social service agencies, tribes, businesses, schools and state agencies. (People can also review the plans themselves and comment, see the item below.)

How can I comment on the Treatment Sales Tax implementation plan? You can review the draft implementation plan, and comment, through the Thurston County web site at www.co.thurston.wa.us/treatment-tax. (Drafts of the plan will be available for public review and comment by mid-May.) A public hearing on the Treatment Sales Tax program is scheduled for June 9th. E-mails can be sent to treatment@co.thurston.wa.us You can also comment by mail-

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