



# KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

## 2021 Annual Report

ADVANCING GOVERNMENT EQUITY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND EFFICIENCY

### 2021: Three high-impact audit efforts

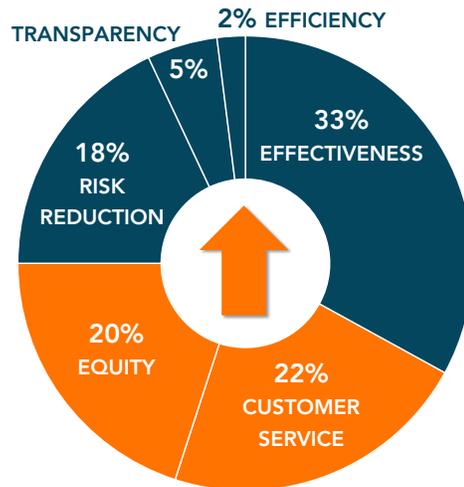
In April, we published leading-edge data analysis in our audit: [Adult Jails Need Risk-Based Approach to Improve Safety, Equity](#). This opened the conversation for significant shifts that will lead to a safer and more equitable working and living environment for people in the jails.

Even before its June publication, our audit, [Contracting Inequities Persist in Race-Neutral Environment](#), helped spur change for county contractors with an executive order addressing issues we identified. It also provided hard data to support County Council's recommendation and the governor's subsequent action rescinding a ban on affirmative action in Washington state.

Finally, we focused on the County's response to the pandemic using five lenses: employee safety, remote work, voluntary separation, furloughs, and customer service.

### Work in 2021 emphasized equity, customers

In 2021 equity issues were the focus of our recommendations, increasing the percentage to 20 percent over 10 percent in 2020. King County customers also received additional focus in our recommendations, increasing from 16 percent in 2020 to 22 percent in 2021. We added a "transparency" category to this meta-analysis.



### Significant impacts from implemented recommendations in 2021



Sexual assault victims are getting resources and support more quickly after an incident.



Paratransit riders are getting to their destinations faster and have ways to provide feedback.



BIPOC- and women-owned businesses in King County will have more equitable access to contracting opportunities.



Transit riders have more timely, accurate information with which to plan their trips.



Wastewater employees are safe at work due to improved training and implementation of a formal safety program.

**90%**  
TOOK ACTION

**Action toward implementation**

Following up on our recommendations increases transparency and accountability and creates momentum for positive change. Last year, we followed up on 245 audit recommendations. Agencies had taken action on 90% of them. We track recommendations until they are complete.

 **186**  
DONE

 **59**  
IN PROGRESS

 **17**  
OPEN

 **9**  
CLOSED

**73%**  
CONCURRENCE

**Concurrence increases impact**

Concurrence with our recommendations is the first step in positive change for King County and is one signal that our recommendations are effectively crafted. In 2021, auditees concurred with 33, partially concurred with nine, and did not concur with three of our audit recommendations.

**>\$10**  
MILLION

**Financial impact for King County**

Estimating the financial impact of audit work can be tricky. Very conservatively, over the past three years our recommendations have identified more than \$10 million in one-time, recurring, and other potential fiscal impacts.

**Three best practice technical papers**

In 2020 and 2021, as we sought ways to add value without adding audit pressure to pandemic-stressed agencies, we developed three documents to support county performance. We are beginning to audit to the principles in the papers and will continue to use them as a basis for future work. All technical papers are available for download on the [King County Auditor website](#).

**Foundational Elements of Department Management**

*Who should review?*

All county agencies in all branches of government.

*What can be gained?*

To help ensure county leadership achieves desired results, this technical paper describes core components of effective organizational management—foundational elements of a system of management that help plan, execute, evaluate, and improve.

**Customer Service Criteria**

*Who should review?*

All county agencies who engage internal or external customers.

*What can be gained?*

To operationalize King County’s commitment to ensuring that county customers receive high-quality services, this technical paper provides fundamental practices for ensuring high-quality customer service, essential components for effective customer service practices.

**Programmatic Alternatives Analysis for Capital Work**

*Who should review?*

All county agencies who are planning capital work.

*What can be gained?*

In an environment in which there are more projects and initiatives than there is funding, this technical paper summarizes key elements of effective programmatic alternatives analysis to prioritize activities that achieve county goals.

## Publications

In 2021, we produced 34 products. All publications are available on the [King County Auditor website](#).

### Performance audits

- [Adult Jails Need Risk-Based Approach to Improve Safety, Equity](#)
- [Contracting Inequities Persist in Race-Neutral Environment](#)
- [Performance Audit of King County's COVID-19 Pandemic Response](#)

### Interim reports

- [Pandemic Response: Shift to Long-Term Remote Work Creates Opportunities for Benefits but Requires More Planning to Mitigate Risk \(pdf\)](#)
- [Voluntary Separation Program Mostly In-Line with Leading Practices, but Changes Could Assist Decision-Making \(pdf\)](#)

### Capital projects oversight

- [Presentation of Clean Water Plan Strategies: Need for Increased Transparency around Costs, Risks, and Guiding Principles](#)

### Technical papers

- [Customer Service Criteria: Agency and Executive-Level Criteria for Customer Service Practices](#)
- [Programmatic Alternatives Analysis: Essential Concepts and Audit Criteria \(pdf\)](#)

### Follow-up reports

- Best Starts for Kids
- County Parking
- Department of Public Defense
- Domestic Violence Policy
- Elections
- Emergency Medical Services
- Family Medical Leave
- Georgetown Combined Sewer Overflow Project
- Homeless Services
- Metro Transit – Component Supply Center
- Metro Transit – Transit Reliability
- Noise Ordinance
- Office of Labor Relations
- Paratransit Service
- Permitting Division
- Personally Identifiable Information
- Property Tax Appeals
- Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network
- Real Estate Services
- Sheriff's Office – Early Intervention System
- Sheriff's Office – High-Risk Equipment
- Sheriff's Office – Overtime
- Sheriff's Office – Sexual Assault Investigations
- Sheriff's Office and Office of Law Enforcement Oversight
- Tax Title Properties
- West Point Treatment Plant

## Auditor's office team

**Kymber Waltmunson** · King County Auditor

**Ben Thompson** · Deputy County Auditor, Transit Audit Manager, & Capital Projects Oversight Manager

**Brooke Leary** · Audit Supervisor and Law Enforcement Audit Manager

**Rachel Rawlings** · Administrative Manager

Justin Anderson · Principal Auditor

Cindy Drake · Principal Auditor

Elise Garvey · Principal Auditor

Peter Heineccius · Principal Auditor

Luc Poon · Principal Auditor

Zainab Nejati · Capital Projects Analyst

Megan Ko · Senior Auditor

Mia Neidhardt · Senior Auditor

Kayvon Zadeh · Senior Auditor

Brian Crist · Auditor

Grant Dailey · Auditor

Anu Sidhu · Auditor

Meg Sykes · Data Visualization Specialist