



## Department of Human Resources

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As part of its vision to create the nation's best-run government, King County launched Investing in YOU, its comprehensive people strategy. Investing in YOU, implemented through a new Department of Human Resources (DHR), will create a culture in which every employee is engaged, experiences trust and respect, and is treated with dignity. It focuses on changing culture and systems to attract and build a racially diverse and culturally responsive workforce that has the skills, experience, and passion to fulfill King County's mission of creating a county where all people and communities thrive.

### OVERVIEW

The need for the DHR became apparent during the 2017 rollout of Investing in YOU. The overall implementation was more complex than necessary because implementing partners were dispersed throughout the County. The County Executive, in consultation with his cabinet, decided to create a new department that brings the majority of Investing in YOU implementation partners into one agency. This consolidation is intended to bring increased consistency and quality of services and demonstrate good stewardship of resources. The new department structure also increases the County Executive's oversight of the initiative and helps elevate and stabilize leadership for success of this major change effort.

### 2019-2020 PRIORITIES

King County's most significant investment is in its employees, and the County relies on them to provide services that meet the needs of a rapidly changing and growing region. Serving communities within King County requires a diverse, agile, and technically skilled workforce. To attract and retain this workforce requires a workplace culture where all contributions are valued, difference is embraced, and all employees are engaged and can develop their talents into meaningful careers.

King County's internal workforce is changing. As expected, the County has experienced a significant increase in retirements over the last three years. An emerging issue that was not predicted is the steady increase in voluntary resignations. The King County region has a highly competitive job market, and salaries at the County have not kept up with market conditions in all areas. King County has been slow to collect comprehensive data about why people leave, but this demonstrates the increased urgency of Investing in YOU focus and investments. The County needs a people-management system flexible enough to respond to multigenerational needs, while recognizing that needs change as workers advance through their own career cycle.

In 2019-2020, DHR's focus areas strike a balance between practices that can be implemented immediately to create more opportunities and stronger engagement for our employees and long-term investments that improve our workforce management practices and policies. DHR will strengthen foundational human resources service delivery and realign current resources to ensure that we align our workforce management systems to best practices, our vision, and our values.



## **King County**

2019-2020 Proposed Budget

### **Organizational Development and Healthy Conflict Engagement**

- The cost of unhealthy conflict and poor management practices is very high. King County has paid \$11.2 million to resolve employment liability issues (alleged harassment, discrimination, hostile work environment, etc.) since 2012. There are \$14.9 million incurred in amounts paid and reserved to resolve existing employment claims. This does not include the toll this takes on morale, leadership, productivity, reputation as a service provider and employer, and other indirect costs.
- DHR will create a new Organizational Development and Healthy Conflict Engagement team that will serve as an internal resource for agencies. The proposed staff will be deployed to worksites to assist during a crisis and in the recovery and stabilization phase after a crisis or conflict. The team would also deploy King County's healthy conflict engagement strategy and focus on developing leadership practices that enable employees to do their best work.

### **Centralization of HR staff and Contract Services**

- DHR will strengthen foundational human resources services and provide consistent quality and equity in human resources practices. Human resources manager positions will be centralized within the new department, allowing for improved accountability and uniform direction without impacting the level of service provided to agencies.

### **Recruiting and Pipelines**

- In our tight labor market, our ability to recruit and retain top talent is critical to our ability to provide quality services. We propose investments to build a stronger employer brand with stronger centralized recruiting systems and processes. This should reduce our time to hire and provide potential employees a better experience during the hiring process.
- DHR will also focus on improving recruiting practices to increase equity and hire a diverse and culturally responsive workforce. This includes looking at our current practices and identifying ways of decreasing bias and building relationships with communities that have been traditionally under-represented.

### **Workforce Equity and Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Managers**

- DHR will increase the County's ability to implement the workforce/workplace goals in the ESJ Strategic Plan. A workforce equity team will increase the consistency and quality of the County's Equal Employment Opportunity and ESJ workforce and workplace strategy implementation. This team will provide consultation and oversight to ensure equity is integrated in all HR and workforce development programs.

### **Training – Anti-Harassment & ESJ Focus**

- DHR will relaunch standard trainings that inform employees about King County policies and expectations. Training services related to ESJ, anti-harassment, and inclusive workplace culture will also be expanded, advancing the County's ESJ goals and providing broader benefit to agencies.