



## King County

### **Dow Constantine**

King County Executive

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800

Seattle, WA 98104-1818

**206-263-9600** Fax 206-296-0194

TTY Relay: 711

[www.kingcounty.gov](http://www.kingcounty.gov)

April 4, 2024

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, ratify a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between King County and the Service Employees International Union, Local 925 (Union), representing employees in the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) for a contractual period of March 19, 2024 through December 31, 2024. Adoption of this proposed Ordinance will enable King County to provide bargained-for wages to employees who provide vital mental health and substance abuse intervention and commitment services in our community.

This MOA covers 43 full-time, non-supervisory positions, as well as five part-time and nine short-term temporary positions which are all part of the Involuntary Commitment Specialist classification in the Crisis and Commitment Services (CCS) Section of the Behavioral Health and Recovery Division (BHRD) in DCHS. The approximately 36 employees currently in these positions respond to mental health and substance use crises in King County, making determinations regarding the commitment of individuals who are experiencing mental health or substance use crises, pursuant to state statute.

CCS is experiencing historically high vacancy rates in the Involuntary Commitment Specialist job classification. As a result, the County has been unable to meet Washington State Health Care Authority contractually mandated mental health or substance abuse crisis response times. Continued inability to meet the mandated response times would result in significant financial penalty, impacting the ability of CCS to provide services.

The County and the Union (the parties) began negotiating the terms of an MOA intended to address the vacancy rate issue on January 17, 2024. The parties completed this process on March 5, 2024, having negotiated a workforce stabilization package. The package includes

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wage range increases for the Involuntary Commitment Specialist classification in the bargaining unit, prospectively effective the first full pay period following the enactment of this proposed Ordinance. The Agreement allows the County to augment the workforce on a short-term, temporary basis by contracting out bargaining unit work.

A complete breakdown of the costs associated with this agreement can be found in the accompanying fiscal note, which has been reviewed by the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget. Supplemental budget authority is not needed for this agreement.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. This important legislation will ratify the negotiated MOA which provides workforce stabilization including the competitive wages necessary to recruit and retain highly qualified Involuntary Commitment Specialists in the Behavioral Health and Recovery Division.

If your staff have questions, please contact Megan Pedersen, Director, Office of Labor Relations, at 206-263-2898.

Sincerely,



for

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers  
    ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff  
            Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council  
Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive  
Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive  
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget  
Megan Pedersen, Director, Office of Labor Relations