

2. Resourcing the Employee Development and Organizational Effectiveness Team to create development tools and provide managers with opportunities to learn and apply the necessary skills to engage their staff on development.
3. Reviewing the County's approach to leave benefits to determine the feasibility of moving to a paid time off program with short and long term disability programs, thereby providing continued wage insurance when employees face illness and injury yet reducing the administrative burden and costs of the current leave package.

While taking these initial steps, the employer value statements and high-level policy direction will guide more fundamental and systemic change – such as potential changes to our classification structure and compensation philosophy. Simultaneously, the County will need to be working through strategies to negotiate and implement, from a systems perspective, the many changes that may result from these efforts.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

a. Mental Health benefits

The County offers a broad array of behavior health services to employees and their families. Employees' use of mental health benefits offered through its health insurance packages as well as the supplemental Making Life Easier program indicate employees' use is at higher levels than the providers' standard book of business, demonstrating that employees are aware of and using the offered benefits. Stress is the fourth most prevalent health risk behind weight, blood pressure, and diet on the County's annual wellness assessment. In order to further connect employees to and educate them about available benefits, staff will continue to develop a comprehensive organizational stress management strategy. More detailed analysis is available in Appendix E.

b. Additional leave options for long-term illness or disability

Many employers are moving to offering a paid time off program that combines vacation and a portion of what was traditionally sick leave, in combination with short and long-term disability options. The County currently offers a long-term disability insurance benefit, and use of accrued leaves as well as donated leave. This issue should be addressed as part of a larger analysis of absence management approaches and the costs associated with different approaches. More detail regarding absence management practices across all sectors can be found in Appendix B.

c. Appropriateness of a leave bank for long-term illness or disability

On a short-term basis, using a leave bank in lieu of the County's current donated leave program would increase efficiency in administering the program, as well as provide more consistency in how the program benefits are offered to employees. That said, a longer-term, more holistic solution may include providing short-term disability insurance in lieu of providing some or all of sick leave. More detail is provided in Appendix B – Absence Management Competitive Practices and Appendix C – Absence Management, Current State Overview.

d. Competitiveness of the County's leave policy for attracting and retaining top employees.

Analysis of the County's current practices and those of other employers revealed we lag behind other employers in offering vacation leave to new hires. Immediate steps should be taken to enable recruiters to incorporate additional leave into negotiations with job candidates and to remove the current prohibition on allowing employees from taking vacation leave during the first six months of employment. More detail can be found in Appendix C – Workforce Management and Absence Management.

e. Relocation reimbursement for job recruitment for certain types of jobs

Immediate steps should be taken to allow recruiters to offer relocation expenses for hard-to-recruit positions (such as information technology candidates, physicians, psychiatrists, and other, hard to fill jobs). The County's practices lag behind comparable employers in the public sector and are no match for when we compete with the private sector. More information can be found in Appendix C – Workforce Management.

f. Maximum amount that can be paid for relocation expenses

The County currently limits the amount it will reimburse for moving expenses to \$6,000. Most agencies of the County's size and complexity pay for actual expenses based upon a three-bid quote. Still others pay in an amount not to exceed a certain percentage of the candidate's starting salary, and pay for temporary housing. Private sector companies go far beyond simply reimbursing expenses. More information can be found in Appendix C – Workforce Management.

g. Programs that provide merit or incentive pay above the top salary step, and their effectiveness as an incentive tool; and whether a better tool could be used

Performance incentives are usually designed to deliver timely rewards and often are not monetary in nature. The County's current system is not working well as an incentive tool for a variety of reasons. Employees receive merit pay co-mingled with their base pay, and thus is perceived as an entitlement. It is not perceived as timely. To determine what will work as a better tool will require more research, costing analysis and some thinking about the County's Employer Values – we want to reward what we value. More analysis of this issue can be found in Appendix B – Total Compensation Competitive Practices and Appendix C – Total Compensation.

h. Appropriate number of ranges and steps for classifications currently paid on the County squared salary table

Most employers, across all sectors, have different kinds of compensation bands for different kinds of jobs. Many will employ a broader, more flexible salary banding for executive level positions, and fewer steps and less time to get to the market based salary step than what is the County's current system. More information can be found in Appendix C – Total Compensation.

i. Conversion to a single type of paid time off

There are many reasons to consider moving to a consolidated paid time off system. Many private sector employers provide this type of leave, particularly in the health care industry. Employers who use the plan report it is more efficient to administer and reduces unplanned absences. Often these are offered in conjunction with short and long-term disability plans. More research and analysis will need to be performed to determine whether this is feasible for the County. More information on this topic can be found in Appendix B – Absence Management Competitive Practices and Appendix C – Absence Management.

j. Standardization of workweeks

The Office of Labor Relations has made significant strides in negotiating reductions to the number of workweeks the County offers to employees, moving from dozens to five. This will continue to be an issue to address and is summarized in greater detail in the Overview section.

k. Standardization or reductions of adds to pay

The County provides a number of premium pays – 149 total in 2013 – that add to the complexity of both the payroll system and administering collective bargaining agreement provisions. Over 60% of the premium pays benefit twenty or fewer employees, indicating there is room to negotiate consolidation or reduction in the numbers. More information on this topic may be found in Appendix F.

l. Improvements for the administration benefits provided under the Family and Medical Leave Act and the King County family and medical leave policies in KCC chapter 3.12

The County's current policies promulgated to supplement the federal Family and Medical Leave Act are difficult to administer. Most employers simply comply with the FMLA. It is recommended the County take immediate steps to streamline the current KCFML policies to be more consistent with federal law and that of other jurisdictions. More information on this topic may be found in Appendix C – Absence Management.

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APPENDIX D: Key to Proviso-Specific Answers

	PROVISO CITATION	SHORT ANSWER	MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND
A	The level of sufficiency, based upon a needs assessment conducted by the Executive, of the mental health benefits provided to employees;	County employees' use of mental health benefits and making life easier is higher than the providers' standard books of business, imply that many people are aware of and using their mental health benefits.	Appendix E – Mental health benefit and stress overview
B	The benefit to employees and the County from implementing additional leave options for long-term illness or disability, such as improved retention of valued employees affected by major illness;	Consideration would have to be given to how long-term disability would fit into a broader absence management approach. Organizations often pair PTO with long-term disability.	Appendix B – Absence Management Competitive Practices
C	The appropriateness of a leave bank for long-term illness or disability to provide a benefit to employees and to reduce administrative costs for the County;	Specifically recommend as an alternative to current the donated leave approach. Longer-term option may include moving to providing short-term disability insurance in lieu of some or all of sick leave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix B – Absence Management Competitive Practices Appendix C – Absence Management, Current State Overview
D	The competitiveness of the County's leave policy for attracting and retaining top employees;	Currently very inadequate for new hires. Immediate steps should be taken to enable recruiters to incorporate additional leave into negotiations; prohibition should be removed from taking vacation in the first six months.	Appendix C- Workforce Management, Absence Management
E	The efficacy for recruitment of the types of jobs eligible for relocation reimbursement;	Immediate steps should be taken to allow recruiters to offer relocation expenses for hard-to-recruit positions (such as IT, and health care professionals).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix C – Workforce Management
F	The efficacy for recruitment of the maximum amount that can be paid for relocation reimbursements;	Currently, public sector jurisdictions offer a range of amounts; more research will be necessary to determine a recommended amount.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix C – Workforce Management
G	Programs that provide merit or incentive pay above the top salary step, and their effectiveness as an incentive tool. Examine whether there is a better tool that could be used;	Our current system is not working well as an incentive tool; most sectors are moving to a total rewards system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix B – Total Compensation Competitive Practices Appendix C – Total Compensation

H	The appropriate number of ranges and steps for classifications current in the County squared salary table;	Should vary by type and level of classification, rather than a one size fits all approach.	Appendix C – Total Compensation
I	Conversion to a single type of paid time off;	There are many positives associated with such a move; it will require additional study, including fiscal analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix C – Absence Management Appendix B – Absence Management Competitive Practices
J	Standardization of workweeks;	OLR has made significant strides in negotiating reductions to the number of work weeks. This will continue to be an issue to address.	Overview of current practices
K	Standardization or reduction of adds to pay; and	We currently have too many with approximately 60% benefiting 20 or fewer employees. It is likely there is room to consolidate and/or reduce the numbers.	Appendix F
L	Improvements for the administration of the United States Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and the King County family and medical leave policies in K.C.C. chapter 3.12.	Immediate steps should be taken to streamline our current FMLA policy to be more consistent with federal law and that of other jurisdictions.	Appendix C – Absence Management