

September 9, 2015

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

Dear Councilmember Phillips:

I am pleased to transmit to you the enclosed document titled “Improving Wage Equity and Promoting Family Friendly Workplace Policies throughout King County: A Work Plan to Implement the Recommendations of the King County Women’s Advisory Board.” This work plan is in response to Motion 14334, in which you requested a path forward for how to implement the recommendations made by the King County Women’s Advisory Board in early 2015.

As a region, we must commit to supporting women and families at work. Closing the wage gap not only has profound benefits for the workplace and our regional economy, it is also foundational to our King County Strategic Plan goal of equity and social justice. While here at King County government women make 99 cents on the dollar relative to men, in the Seattle metropolitan area women earn only 73 cents on the dollar. For women of color, it’s even worse – 41 cents for Hispanic women, 49 cents for African-American women, and 60 cents for Asian and Pacific Islander women.

We can and must do better. This work plan lays out some concrete first steps for how King County can begin to lead and partner with other organizations in the region on this issue. It’s only the beginning, but I look forward to working with you on this important matter.

The Honorable Larry Phillips  
September 9, 2015  
Page 2

The cost to produce this report was approximately \$1,142.

If you have any questions concerning the attached work plan, please contact Nancy Buonanno Grennan, Director, Human Resources Division, at 206-477-3274.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers  
    ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff  
        Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council  
Carrie S. Cihak, Chief of Policy Development, King County Executive Office  
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget  
Caroline Whalen, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive  
    Services (DES)  
Nancy Buonanno Grennan, Director, Human Resources Division (HRD), DES  
Kendall LeVan Hodson, HR Policy Advisory, HRD, DES



King County

# Improving Wage Equity and Promoting Family Friendly Workplace Policies throughout King County

---

*A Work Plan to Implement the Recommendations of the  
King County Women's Advisory Board*

**IMPROVING WAGE EQUITY AND PROMOTING FAMILY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE POLICIES  
THROUGHOUT KING COUNTY: A Work Plan to Implement the Recommendations of the King  
County Women’s Advisory Board**

September 7, 2015

---

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On March 30, 2015, the King County Council passed Motion 14334, requesting the Executive to transmit to Council a work plan for implementing the recommendations and specific actions identified by the King County Women’s Advisory Board for improving wage equity and promoting family friendly workplace policies throughout King County.

Motion 14334 specifically requires that the work plan:

- identify a timeline for implementing the recommendations and specific actions, as well as describe any necessary changes to King County Code or other legislative actions required;
- identify outcome or performance measures;
- identify additional analysis and a timeline for conducting said analysis for recommendations that require further assessment or consideration; and,
- describe the reasons, such as cost or impracticability, why any recommendations cannot be implemented.

The table below summarizes the overall approach to each of the seven recommendations made by the Women’s Advisory Board. The full work plan that follows describes in detail the considerations, measurements and timeline for each recommendation.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Summary</b>
1. Create a public/private compact pledging to end the wage gap	King County plans to sign on as a foundational member to “100% Talent: A Gender Equity Initiative for King County.”
2. Promote and encourage employees to take family leave	Legislation and a work plan to implement a new parental leave policy due to Council by October 15, 2015.
3. Offer and promote workplace flexibility, such as job-sharing, telecommuting, and part-time employment options	A greater preference toward part-time work could require a charter change and would necessitate a comprehensive discussion about benefit costs. Near-term steps include additional research, data gathering and individualized work with departments.
4. Achieve wage transparency	King County has been sharing and analyzing compensation data for several years; plans to support others through “100% Talent.”
5. Eliminate conscious and unconscious bias in hiring and in the workplace	King County currently provides implicit bias training as part of all recruitments and plans to offer to “100% Talent” partners.
6. Provide access to affordable childcare	Will require additional research and market analysis.
7. Increase representation of women in traditionally “male” fields	Robust efforts are currently underway with respect to vehicle maintenance, the trades, and law enforcement. Additional research also required.

**Background:**

The King County Women’s Advisory Board (WAB) was established in 1978 and is charged with making recommendations to the King County Executive and the King County Council to ensure the needs, rights, and wellbeing of women are taken into account by County government. Having adopted the focus topics of “wage equity” and “family friendly workplace policies,” the WAB dedicated 2014 to hearing from a diverse group of leaders and experts on those topics. The result of their research and thoughtful deliberation was a set of seven recommendations for the King County Executive and the King County Council aimed at both improving King County’s practices as an employer, as well as positioning King County government as a regional leader on women’s advancement.

Taking the WAB’s recommendations to heart, in late March, 2015 the King County Council passed Motions 14334 and 14348. This work plan is responsive to Motion 14334, which requested that the Executive outline a plan for implementing the WAB’s recommendations. Motion 14348 requested that the Executive analyze, present a work plan and transmit legislation to implement paid parental leave, which is a key action in the WAB’s recommendations. A report including cost/benefit analysis is due to Council on September 15, 2015. The implementation package is to be transmitted by October 15, 2015.

**Recommendation 1:** *Create a public/private compact pledging to end the wage gap and encourage family friendly workplace policies.*

In June of 2015 the Women’s Funding Alliance, a Seattle-based organization dedicated to advancing leadership and economic opportunity for women and girls, and the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, launched “100% Talent: A Gender Equity Initiative for King County.” Based on best practices from national leaders like the cities of Boston and San Francisco, and predicated on the idea that valuing women in the workplace is good for business, “100% Talent” aims to get 500 companies to pledge to help close the gender wage gap. By signing on, companies agree to implement some of 33 recommended best practices, which include steps like creating recruiting initiatives for women in underrepresented fields, providing structural supports to move women up the talent pipeline, and designing incubators and co-working spaces to support entrepreneurs with families.

With strong support from both the King County Executive and King County Councilmembers, King County plans to sign-on as a lead sponsor to “100% Talent.” King County is proposing to make both a monetary and in-kind commitment of resources, such as training and data consultation. King County leaders also plan to be actively involved in recruiting other prominent King County companies and governments.

<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Implementation Steps</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Create a committee to develop a Compact for King County similar to that of Boston’s	King County plans to sign onto “100% Talent, A Gender Equity Initiative for King County,” as an early sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sept, 2015</li><li>● Will continue to resource and advocate for compact</li></ul>
<b>Measures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● # of companies making the pledge</li></ul>		

**Recommendation 2:** *Promote and encourage employees regardless of gender to take family leave by creating incentives for employees at higher levels to both role model this and to create a work environment where taking family leave is acceptable.*

Motion 14348 made it the policy of the County to establish a paid parental leave program for County employees and requested that the Executive analyze costs and benefits, create a work plan and draft legislation to implement the new policy. While more detail will be provided in the report to be transmitted by September 15, 2015 and the subsequent work plan and legislation to be transmitted October 15, 2015, the table below summarizes the County’s approach to implementing this recommendation.

At present, the County offers a robust paid sick and vacation leave package that employees currently use to address family leave needs; that leave increases as employees’ tenure increases. The County’s current policy goes further than the national family and medical leave legal requirements in both the length of job-protected leave and in the expansion of the definition of covered family members. That said, the County is reviewing how best to address this need for employees, regardless of tenure date, in the context of its total leave package.

Specific Actions	Implementation Steps	Timing
Promote awareness among all employees that family leave is available under Federal Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently communicate regularly to employees regarding family medical leave (FML); hired new staff on Safety and Claims team dedicated to helping employees navigate the leave process and understand what’s available</li> <li>• Additional communication will occur as part of implementing new parental leave policy</li> </ul>	Pending passage of legislation and on-going
Offer paid family leave to King County employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental leave cost/benefit analysis to Council</li> <li>• Legislation and implementation plan to Council</li> <li>• More analysis needed for other types of family leave</li> </ul>	9-15-2015 10-15-2015
Encourage male employees to take family leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan to advance broader regional approach through the “100% Talent” Initiative</li> </ul>	TBD
Incentivize leadership to encourage family leave usage and create flexible opportunities upon return to work	As part of paid parental leave implementation, the Human Resources Division (HRD) will work with the County’s departments and divisions to figure out the most effective ways to prioritize flexible return-to-work options (as it will vary by the type of work and line of business)	Pending passage of legislation and on-going
<b>Measures*:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FML usage by gender</li> <li>• Paid parental leave usage by gender (no data until implemented)</li> <li>• Working with system partners to identify other mechanisms to track leave data</li> </ul>		

\*While the County's enterprise systems can currently track employee usage of job protected federal family medical leave, processes for tracking and entering FML data vary across departments and divisions and use of leave is currently under-reported. Implementing the new paid parental leave policy will require new and standardized processes and data practices, which will ultimately lead to more reliable measures.

**Recommendation 3:** *Offer and promote workplace flexibility. Encourage options such as job sharing, telecommuting, time-shifting and expand part-time employment opportunities to higher level jobs.*

The 2014 Performance Audit of Part-Time Employment in King County done by the King County Auditor's Office found that "working part time can help employees balance care for small children, sick or elderly dependents, pursue academic or skill training, or ease into retirement," and recommended that King County explore options to increase the availability of voluntary part-time work for employees. However, the audit report also noted that the King County charter and current benefits structure may create significant barriers to making part-time work more available.

Specifically, the King County Code states the County's intention "to minimize its use of part-time and temporary employees." It goes on to clarify that, "it is the policy of King County to have ongoing, relatively stable, and predictable bodies of work necessary to the provision of services to the public performed by career service employees, and to minimize its use of part-time and temporary employees."

Benefits costs present other challenges. At present, part-time employees working fifty percent or more receive the same benefits as full-time employees because of the half-time threshold for career service in the King County Charter and the Code provisions regarding employee benefits. This means that job sharing results in both employees receiving a full benefit package, which can be a financial disincentive to operating departments with tight budgets.

It's also worth noting that some collective bargaining agreements limit the number of part-time workers, so the County would also likely have bargaining obligations associated with increasing the availability of part-time work. Further, the King County Council's labor policy (LAP 6-030) states a preference for fulltime positions, providing "it shall be the policy of King County to maximize the use of fulltime employees and consolidate less than full time positions whenever possible."

Given these challenges, as a first step to implementing the audit findings, the Human Resources Division is working to gather additional data related to part-time employment, including adding a question to the fall all-employee survey. Armed with some additional information, the County can then make a determination of whether or not a charter change is recommended, as well as identify ways to best support part-time work and flexible schedules in specific lines of business.

Similarly, additional research will be required to better understand how flexible schedules could be implemented for service areas that require shift work. In addition to taking on this research program, the Human Resources Division will also be working in collaboration with department human resource managers to identify flexible schedule opportunities that work for our many unique lines of business.

Specific Actions	Implementation Steps	Timing
Change its current policy, which encourages only full-time employment (see <i>Performance Audit of Part-Time Employment in King County</i> ).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially requires a charter change</li> <li>• In the process of collecting additional data on use of and interest in part-time employment at the County (i.e. questions in all employee and exit surveys) per audit follow-up plan</li> </ul>	Data collection in fall of 2015 and on-going
Adopt uniform policies to encourage part-time employment and job-sharing, to specifically include higher-level positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging part-time employment would potentially require a change to the King County Charter</li> <li>• Additional research planned in order to better understand best practices and options for part-time work across different lines of business, specifically shift work</li> </ul>	First quarter of 2016
Offer and encourage flexible hours for both male and female employees to accommodate childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already have robust use of flexible schedules in some lines of business</li> <li>• Roundtable discussions with HR managers regarding options for service areas not currently employing flexible schedules</li> <li>• Additional research planned in order to understand best practices for some service areas</li> </ul>	First quarter of 2016 and on-going
Encourage telecommuting when possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already have robust telecommute options in some lines of business</li> <li>• Roundtable discussions with HR managers regarding options for service areas not currently employing telecommute options</li> </ul>	On-going
Promote awareness of these policies and encourage participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications will vary by service area</li> </ul>	On-going
<b>Measures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of p/t employees at King County</li> <li>• % of employees interested in p/t work, by field, line of business and gender</li> <li>• % exit survey participants who would have considered remaining at the County if p/t work were available</li> </ul>		



**Recommendation 4:** *Achieve wage transparency.*

Not only is King County’s compensation data, as an employer, already public record – the County has been actively disaggregating and analyzing that data by race and gender for several years now. Further, the learnings generated by the wage data have supported many of the cCounty’s recruiting and talent development initiatives over the past year.

At the same time, there is significant work to be done toward wage transparency at the regional level. Through the “100% Talent” Initiative, King County plans to take a leading role in mentoring and supporting other organizations in sharing and analyzing their compensation data.

Specific Actions	Implementation Steps	Timing
Encourage and offer incentives to employers in King County who eliminate policies which prohibit salary sharing	Working through the “100% Talent” Initiative, King County plans to encourage pledging companies to eliminate these policies	Fall 2015 and on-going
Encourage and offer incentives to employers who share rates of pay and salary ranges	Working through the “100% Talent” Initiative, King County has proposed offering consulting support to other pledging organizations including help with data analysis, benchmarking and communication	Fall 2015 and on-going
<b>Measures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # “100% Talent” companies who are reviewing, analyzing and potentially sharing their own internal wage data</li> </ul>		

**Recommendation 5:** *Eliminate conscious and unconscious gender bias in hiring and in the workplace.*

The “Hiring” Best Practices put forth by the “100% Talent” Initiative (those making the pledge agree to tackle at least three from the larger list of 33) include:

- Create initial applicant screening processes that are free from gender bias;
- Seek diversity in applicant pools and evaluate candidates as a pool;
- Include diverse evaluators in hiring processes;
- Help evaluators and hiring managers overcome bias; and
- Evaluate starting salaries for new hires.

King County has made a strong commitment to each of these best practices and is leading the way by including implicit bias training as part of every hiring process. A group of recruiters from across the government are working to establish standard processes at every stage of the recruitment process, to ensure each of these best practices are embedded into every hire. Additionally, because research

clearly shows that women and applicants of color systemically negotiate lower starting salaries (relative to their skills and experience), King County is actively assessing all new hire offers through an equity lens.

However, to be successful, this work must also be taking place at a regional level. Thus, part of King County’s planned contribution to the “100% Talent” initiative is providing implicit bias training to interested companies who have signed on to the initiative.

Specific Actions	Implementation Steps	Timing
Encourage employers to provide education and training to hiring managers	As a member of “100% Talent,” King County plans to provide implicit bias training to interested initiative partners	Spring 2016
Encourage and offer incentives to employers to institute changes in hiring practices	Working through the “100% Talent” Initiative, King County plans to encourage pledging companies to institute changes in hiring practices	Fall 2015 and on-going
Encourage employers to reevaluate pay for new hires based on objective criteria that rates the value of the work	Working through the “100% Talent” Initiative, King County plans to encourage pledging companies to institute changes in their compensation approach	Fall 2015 and on-going
Provide the same policies and sanctions for other workplace discrimination to gender discrimination and harassment	King County’s non-discrimination policy is the same for many different protected classes, including gender	n/a
<b>Measures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of 100% Talent members trained on implicit bias</li> </ul>		

**Recommendation 6:** *Provide access to affordable childcare.*

According to the 2014 National Study of Employers, which is produced by the “Families and Work Institute” and “Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM),” only about 7% of companies nationwide offer care “at or near the worksite,” which has decreased from 9% in 2008. In the late 1990’s King County looked at providing childcare as a benefit to employees. Unfortunately, trying to meet state regulations at a price affordable to both the County and parents, proved insurmountable and a County-sponsored child care benefit never came to fruition. The County’s many and widely distributed worksites and the fact that many parents needed coverage for shift work were also cited as key barriers.

That said, childcare remains a significant challenge for working parents across the region and specifically for King County employees. The 33 best practices articulated in the “100% Talent” agreement include:

- Evaluate causes of attrition among women, including mothers and non-mothers;
- Offer onsite or subsidized childcare; and
- Offer childcare referral or back-up on child care services.

Working through the “100% Talent” initiative, King County plans to participate in a broader regional conversation about how to address the affordability of childcare for working parents. At the same time, the Human Resources Division will do some preliminary research and market analysis related to childcare as a potential employee benefit.

King County does offer “Making Life Easier (MLE),” a program that offers personal legal, financial and other consultation services to King County employees and their dependent family members. A core service of MLE is childcare consultation and referral.

Specific Actions	Implementation Steps	Timing
Provide on-site and/or subsidize childcare for its employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will require additional research and market analysis</li> <li>• Potential option of a childcare benefit to be including in Total Compensation conversations with labor partners under Best Run Government project</li> </ul>	TBD
Encourage and offer incentives to employers in King County who provide and offer on-site childcare or subsidize childcare for their employees	Working through the “100% Talent” initiative, King County plans to participate in a regional conversation about how to provide more affordable childcare to working parents	Fall 2015 and on-going
<b>Measures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>		

**Recommendation 7:** *Increase representation of women in traditionally male fields.*

Over the years, King County has undertaken a multitude of efforts to increase the number of women represented in traditionally male fields. A couple of examples are outlined below.

- Women in vehicle maintenance. For the past three years, Metro Transit’s vehicle maintenance program has been actively working to increase the number of women employed in heavy duty diesel mechanic work by hosting female students from local trade schools and through the ANEW (Apprenticeship in Non-traditional Employment for Women) program, which provides three classes per year of between 15 and 18 women. However, increasingly the program is finding that women must be reached even further upstream in order to be successful. Therefore, they are in the process of creating a high-school job shadow program, which would include a mentorship component with current mechanics. Further, they have applied for a grant

to fully fund a two-year project manager to continue work in vehicle maintenance to bridge the gender gap. Even with a robust program that has been shared nationally, results are difficult to come by. While King County could succeed in creating more interest amongst girls at the high school level, and then in supporting them through trade education programs, there is no guarantee that they will ultimately come to work at King County.

- Women in the trades. The Facilities Management Division has made increasing the representation of women in the trades a key initiative. The next step in this work will be to begin conversations with the Joint Craft Council (JCC) regarding training and apprenticeship programs. That work is scheduled to begin as soon as JCC negotiations close.
- Law Enforcement. The King County Sheriff’s Office is in the process of finalizing their Diversity Recruitment Team efforts and recommendations, which were due to Council on September 1, 2015. In addition to supporting efforts to encourage job-sharing, the Sheriff’s Office is also planning on offering women-specific workshops for deputy positions that stress work/life balance, physical requirements, community engagement, and provide a physical fitness workshop.

In addition to continuing and expanding upon the successful efforts noted above, additional research is needed to understand how we further move the dial on getting more women into these fields. What’s more, work through the “100% Talent” initiative will allow King County and initiative partners to identify more regional solutions for this labor market-wide issue.

Specific Actions	Implementation Steps	Timing
Work to inform and recruit female candidates for apprenticeship opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued work in transit vehicle maintenance to encourage more women to enter the field</li> <li>• Meeting with the JCC to create a plan to increase the number of women in the trades</li> <li>• Continuing research on how to implement efforts across the County</li> </ul>	Fall 2015 and on-going
Encourage and offer incentives to employers in King County to recruit and hire female employees in traditionally male fields	Working through the “100% Talent” Initiative, King County plans to encourage pledging companies to increase the representation of women in traditionally male fields	Fall 2015 and on-going
Continue efforts to achieve a high percentage of female and minority owned businesses	Work will continue	On-going
<b>Measures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % women in County lines of business that are “traditionally male” fields</li> </ul>		

**Conclusion:** *Going Forward*

The efforts laid out in this work plan are only the beginning. With a regional wage-gap of 27 cents on the dollar for all women, and an ever greater gap for women of color, the road ahead will require commitment, determination and creativity. The continued support and participation of the Women’s Advisory Board and the King County Council will be critical to advancing wage equity both within King County as an organization and as a region.

Per Motion 14334, the Executive will provide the Council will an update on the outcomes and performance measures anticipated in this work plan by July 31, 2016 and annually thereafter.