



## Legislation Text

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Clerk 07/18/2019

AN ORDINANCE creating an equity, civil rights and social justice commission; establishing its purpose, responsibilities and composition; adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 3 and repealing Ordinance 2647, Section 3, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.010, Ordinance 2647, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.020, Ordinance 2647, Section 5, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.030, Ordinance 12058, Section 4, and K.C.C. 3.10.040, Ordinance 2647, Section 7, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.050, Ordinance 2647, Section 8, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.060 and Ordinance 6891, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.070.

### PREAMBLE:

In 2008, the King County executive launched the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative. The executive and departments made commitments to advance equity in policies and decision-making, organizational practices and engagement with communities.

On October 20, 2010, Ordinance 16948, also referred to as the Equity and Social Justice Ordinance, was enacted, moving equity and social justice from an initiative to an integrated effort that intentionally applies the countywide strategic plan's principle of "fair and just" in all the county does in order to achieve equitable opportunities for people and communities.

Established on January 1, 2015, the office of equity and social justice works hand-in-hand with the equity and social justice interbranch team, operations cabinet and cabinet to support the work of all county employees and agencies. The office also serves as the coordinator of key county

efforts to advance equity and social justice in the organization and community. Although there is now an office of equity and social justice, every county agency and employee is still ultimately responsible for advancing and being accountable for equity and social justice activities and deliverables.

The 2016-2022 Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is a blueprint for change, mutually created by county employees and community partners. The plan defines bodies of work at the department, agency and countywide levels. Strategies and actions include integrating equity into policy work through a pro-equity policy agenda and into county practices and systems through six goal areas.

The current commitment to equity and social justice moves the county beyond practices that have historically been designed to react to problems and crises in communities after they arise. The county's primary equity and social justice strategies are to invest upstream and where needs are greatest, in community partnerships, and in employees, with transparent and accountable leadership.

Community participation and accountability are central to the success of King County's equity and social justice work. Oversight and partnership with community to ensure equitable outcomes are key in existing bodies of work plus in emerging issues.

King County's civil rights commission was established in 1976 to serve in an advisory capacity to the county executive and the council on matters concerning affirmative action, disability access, equal employment opportunity, contract compliance, fair housing, minority/woman business and public accommodations to ensure the consistent application of all county ordinances, rules and regulations concerning those programs.

The office of civil rights investigates and resolves discrimination complaints under King County antidiscrimination ordinances as codified in K.C.C. chapters 12.17, 12.18, 12.20 and 12.22.

In January 2017, funding for the office of civil rights was integrated into the office of equity and social justice, providing new opportunities to infuse equity and social justice recommendations post investigations and support policies and practices that prevent discrimination. Joining equity, civil rights and social justice improves the county's service to and work with low-income communities, communities of color and immigrants and refugees.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. The following are each hereby repealed:

- A. Ordinance 2647, Section 3, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.010;
- B. Ordinance 2647, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.020;
- C. Ordinance 2647, Section 5, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.030;
- D. Ordinance 12058, Section 4, and K.C.C. 3.10.040;
- E. Ordinance 2647, Section 7, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.050;
- F. Ordinance 2647, Section 8, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.060; and
- G. Ordinance 6891, Section 4, as amended, and K.C.C. 3.10.070.

SECTION 2. Sections 3 through 9 of this ordinance should constitute a new chapter in K.C.C. Title 3.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 3. The King County equity, civil rights and social justice commission is hereby established.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 4.

A. The commission shall:

- 1. Provide ongoing analysis of the county's policies, practices and procedures to assist county decision-makers in fulfilling the county's commitment to address the root causes of inequities and distribute resources equitably;
- 2. Exercising an explicit focus on racial justice and equity in outcomes for communities of color and low-income communities;

3. Provide analysis of enterprise level work, including policy agendas and countywide practices that currently hinder equitable outcomes;

4. Recommend to the executive and council policies and legislation including, but not limited to, either additional civil rights protections or special initiatives, or both, that strengthen county antidiscrimination ordinances, as codified in K.C.C. chapters 12.17, 12.18, 12.20 and 12.22, and support the county's equity and social justice goals;

5. Provide testimony supporting or opposing local legislation proposed by the executive or council that may support or hinder the work of the commission;

6. Encourage progress on equitable outcomes in county policies, programs and other initiatives, that might disproportionately impact either communities of color and/or low income communities, or both;

7. Support the executive and county council to ensure equitable allocation of the county's resources, with investments that are consistent with equity and social justice values, focused on people and places with the greatest needs;

8. Advise the executive, the council and the public on the progress of equity and social justice plans and policies, such as those in county equity and social justice strategic plans and the commission's on plans; and

9. Develop additional goals, objectives, and work plans within the scope of the duties outlined in subsection A.1. through 8. of this section.

B. In line with the integration of the office of civil rights into the office of equity and social justice, the commission shall advise on civil rights issues within the scope of county antidiscrimination ordinances, as codified in K.C.C. chapters 12.17, 12.18, 12.20 and 12.22, as well as issues of concern to the community. The commission may consider gaps in legal protections and develop recommendations, special initiatives and policies for consideration by the executive and council that strengthen county antidiscrimination protections and the county's equity and social justice agenda.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 5.

A. The commission shall be comprised of fifteen members, who shall facilitate transparency and accountability and meet the county's commitment to invest in partnerships that can steadily inform and influence the county's decision-making;

B. The commission members shall satisfy the following requirements:

1. Membership shall reflect a range of ethnicities, professional backgrounds, socioeconomic status and places of origin, to reflect the racial and economic diversity of the county's communities, with an emphasis on those most disproportionately impacted by inequities;

2. All members shall demonstrate active and engaged civic participation in equity and social justice areas, such as health, transportation, housing and civil rights, and be well-versed on the issues affecting the county's communities;

3. Membership shall reflect gender diversity;

4. Membership shall represent a diverse range of age groups;

6. At least five members shall represent and be recommended by a community organization that includes civil rights and equity and social justice in any one or more of the organization's goals, mission or guiding principles. Of those members, at least three shall represent and be recommended by a grass-roots community-based organization that has an annual budget of less than two-hundred fifty thousand dollars, that supports the needs of those disproportionately impacted by inequities and is composed predominantly of members of those communities.

7. Two representatives shall be from community organizations, including at least one whose main office is physically located inside of unincorporated King County;

8. At least one member shall have experience with investigations and enforcement of civil rights areas within the purview of the office of equity and social justice;

9. At least one member shall have familiarity with King County government, systems and agencies;

10. At least eight members shall be from suburban cities and unincorporated areas;

11. Some members should be from organizations representing communities where the needs are greatest, such as the African American, Native American and Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinx, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer and disability communities;

12. All members must be residents of King County;

13. To ensure collaboration and coordination between the equity, civil rights and social justice commission and the immigrant and refugee commission; one seat on the commission shall be held by a member of the immigrant and refugee commission; and

14. Representatives that includes all nine council districts.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 6. A. The commission shall elect a chair and a vice chair annually, who shall each serve a one-year term.

B. The commission may adopt bylaws and other rules for its conduct.

C. The commission shall convene as necessary, but at least six times per year, to perform the duties specified in this chapter.

D. The commission chair may consider and approve requests for absence from meetings. The chair may remove any member who is absent without excuse from three consecutive commission meetings.

E. The commission shall hold at least two community-based meetings each calendar year. At least one of the community-based meeting shall be held in unincorporated King County.

F. The commission shall hold at least one community briefing each year to solicit input from King county residents on top priorities, and share progress towards goals.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 7. A. For initial appointments, the chair of the council and the executive shall jointly announce a call for applications to seek candidates. The chair of the council and the executive shall work collaboratively to ensure that the announcement be publicized widely to the general community, with a special emphasis on those most disproportionately impacted by inequities. Publicity methods shall

include, but shall not be limited to, the county's website, ethnic and non-English-language media, community-based organizations and community leaders with expertise and focus on communities most disproportionately impacted by inequities.

B. For initial and subsequent appointments, the executive's designee shall use Candidates seeking initial and subsequent appointment must submit an application form provided by the executive or designee, two letters of recommendation from community members and one letter of recommendation from a community organization, coalition or network serving the African American, Native American/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinx, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or disability community, or any combination thereof. Candidates shall also submit ten endorsement signatures from King County residents who are members of a group listed in this subsection that is identified as having the greatest need and that the candidates identify as being members of.

C.1. A final list of candidates for recommended appointment shall be determined by a review committee comprised of two council representatives appointed by the council chair, two executive-appointed representatives and three members of the civil rights commission recommended by the chair of the commission. For initial term appointments, the final list of candidates for recommended appointment shall be determined by a committee comprised of two council representatives appointed by the council chair, two executive-appointed representatives and three members of the civil rights commission who are not seeking appointment to the equity, civil rights and social justice commission.

2. The review committee shall also ensure that the final list of candidates for appointment meet the requirements as outlined in section 5 of this ordinance and seek input from the public.

D. Members of the commission shall be appointed by the executive from the final list of candidates for appointment and confirmed by the council.

E. The executive shall establish initial terms of appointment by lot, following completion of the initial appointment and confirmation process. Five positions shall have initial terms of three years, four positions

shall have initial terms of two years and the remainder of the positions shall have initial terms of one year.

F. At the conclusion of the initial term of each appointment, all subsequent terms of each position shall be for three years. A commission member whose term has expired may continue to serve into the following term until a successor has been appointed to complete the term. A member shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. A vacancy for an unexpired term shall be filled by the appointment process provided for in this section.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 8. A. Beginning in 2020, the commission shall issue and deliver an annual report to the executive and council that outlines its progress towards goals during the prior calendar year as well as its anticipated work program for the following calendar year. The report shall be filed in the form of a hard copy and an electronic copy with the executive and the clerk of the council by April 15 of each year.

B. The annual report shall be available on the county website, distributed widely to the communities most impacted by inequities, and shared with the media by the executive's designee.

C. The commission shall provide annual briefings to media and elected officials representing cities, the county and the state to ensure that the commission's lessons learned, processes and progress towards goals are shared with the public and policy makers.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 9. A. The executive shall appoint a designee to staff the commission. The county shall reimburse commission members for mileage at the standard county reimbursement rate for travel to and from scheduled commission meetings, workgroup meetings and community meetings and for parking at meetings outside of county facilities. Members attending meetings or conducting business related to the commission at county facilities shall have parking in the county garage paid by the executive.

B. In addition to expenses for mileage and parking, commission members may be paid a stipend by the county in order to have representation from those who have had least access to county decision making. The office of equity and social justice shall determine the amount of the stipend and base the stipend on need.