

## Questionnaire for Executive Department and Key Subordinate Unit Appointees

Appointee: Please prepare written answer to the below questions and return the answers to the lead staff for the Committee of the Whole no later than the close of business on **September 14, 2018**. This questionnaire will be printed in the committee packet, provided to the Councilmembers and become part of the public record of your appointment.

1. Please describe your experience and what qualifies you to lead the agency to which you have been nominated?

As a long time King County employee, I have appreciated the opportunity to use my skill set in a new setting as the Director of the Human Resources Division (HRD) and feel that I can continue to contribute as we design and implement the re-organization and re-energization of the new Department of Human Resources. I believe that the County is one of the more interesting and exciting places to work and that addressing human resource issues and opportunities is critical to keeping the County moving forward. I have significant experience in moving organizations toward best practices, reducing costs, and streamlining processes; working with unions, community organizations, other jurisdictions, and elected officials; and managing a portfolio of projects and contracts. I particularly enjoy building relationships and mentoring staff and have significant contacts throughout the County.

I have worked for King County for 30 years, and during that time, I have had ample opportunities to manage human resource issues. I have led hundreds of interview processes, been a shop steward and chair of the King County Policy Committee for Local 17, and been responsible for many hiring, firing, and disciplinary decisions. As part of negotiation teams, on both sides of the table, I've helped to develop terms for a number of labor agreements. Working with staff at the highest levels of County human resources and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, I have participated in legal settlement negotiations and testified in court on behalf of the County.

After three decades as a County employee, I understand what it takes to affect change, build coalitions, and implement policy and programs that are critical to successfully standing up a new department.

2. King County has a well-established policy for examining and considering equity and social justice in its decision-making process. Please describe your thoughts on the topic and how you plan to advance these goals in your leadership of the agency?

As the current Director of the Human Resources Division, I recognize that the linkage between King County's equity and social justice goals and our human resources function, particularly in the workforce, workplace, and leadership goal areas, needs to be very strong. Our ability to provide culturally responsive services is influenced in part by who we hire and the workplace we create. Our ability to retain a diverse workforce depends on our ability to welcome all

perspectives, ensure people feel safe sharing their concerns, are encouraged when sharing their ideas, and are rewarded for their passion and hard work.

It is my goal that the new Department of Human Resources will continue to evaluate how our policies, practices, and workplace culture contribute to the experience of our diverse workforce. We know that there are inequities in experience and outcomes for employees due to institutionalized racism. Our work in recruiting, training, organizational development, and policy will be designed with an equity lens so that we progress toward our goal of a more fair, just, and equitable workplace.

On a personal note, my commitment to building community, creating opportunities, and removing roadblocks are key values in my work and personal life.

3. What is your vision for the agency you have been nominated to lead?

My vision for the agency is to create a stable department that achieves our goals for engagement and equity, as described in the Executive's Investing in YOU initiative. This includes communicating well, setting standards and policies that align with our goals and values, holding ourselves accountable for delivering quality human resources services, and encouraging a healthy workplace culture.

I have worked with employees and leaders across the organization during my tenure at King County. I've learned through experience the various needs that human resources meets – from assisting with trauma in the workplace to maintaining legal compliance with state and federal policies – and I want to build a department that thoughtfully fulfills those needs on behalf of the organization.

I will be transmitting a Strategic Plan for Human Resources that shapes our policy for the next six years. Updating the personnel guidelines and all of the code related to workforce are key to creating a modern, efficient workforce.

Human Resources impacts the daily lives of our employees, their families, and our communities. We design and provide the benefits that keep us healthy, do our best to hire the right employee for the job, provide support when something goes wrong, and support employees so they can develop a long, satisfying career.

4. What challenges does this agency currently face?

The Department of Human Resources is a new department, which means it requires extra focus on vision, strategy, and stabilization. This is an exciting time for the agency, but it is also coming out of a three-year period of leadership turnover that created confusion and fatigue for many of the employees. During this time, HRD was asked to accomplish many complex projects but didn't always receive the necessary resources to accomplish this, leading to further frustration for both customers and employees.

5. How do you plan to address those challenges?

The Department of Human Resources requires solid, stable leadership and direction to be able to accomplish what it's being asked to do. I plan to reduce the frustration and fatigue, while increasing the consistency and quality of services by:

1. Hiring and providing appropriate leadership to support and give direction to employees.
2. Establishing a six-year strategic plan that sets the vision, goals, strategy, and metrics to help both HR employees and customers know what can be expected from the Department.
3. Investing in our culture and establishing healthy approaches to dealing with conflict. This will help us both align with broader County goals and model the way for other agencies.
4. Advocating for adequate resources to do the work that is needed and working with leadership to prioritize the work of the department.
5. Creating a transparent, accountable culture that empowers employees and creates the stability necessary for employees to focus on the projects and needs of our workforce.

6. How can your agency do a better job of serving the public? How do you plan to implement those changes?

There are three primary ways we can better service the public:

1. Increase our ability to recruit and hire from diverse communities so that our workforce represents our community at all levels. A more diverse workforce that works well together will help us solve the complex problems our agencies deal with on a daily basis. We will continue to focus on our recruiting and hiring practices so that we reduce bias in our hiring processes and hire an excellent workforce.
2. Improve training and management of employees so that they are empowered to solve problems and provide the highest quality of services to the public. While HR doesn't interface with the public very much (aside from recruiting and hiring), we influence engagement and attitudes of the employees who do. By improving the work experience of employees I believe we can influence the experience of the public. We have work to do on our training program, and it is one of my top priorities to improve and standardize numerous foundational trainings.
3. Support overall stewardship of taxpayer dollars by reducing risks, accidents, and employment related complaints and lawsuits. I will focus on proactively addressing complaints and conflict in the workplace so we can resolve issues at the earliest opportunity. I will also continue to work with our safety and claims staff to prevent injuries and provide benefits that make sure employees are as healthy as can be.

7. How do you plan to promote ethical behavior among your staff and in your agency?

I am very clear that as the Department of Human Resources we must model ethical behavior. I emphasize openness and transparency in my leadership style and hold people accountable for their actions. I also rely on practices that formalize expectations – signed policy statements, behavior and performance agreements, etc. While a signature doesn't guarantee ethical behavior, employees know where I stand and what I expect from them.

8. Does your prior work history or any other relationship create any conflicts of interest with carrying out the duties of leading the agency to which you have been appointed?

No.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay Osborne  
Director, Human Resources Division