



Legislation Text

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AN ORDINANCE establishing a pilot program that encourages King County employees to be innovative and for the county to commercialize creative ideas, inventions, tools and software programs generated by its employees.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. King County has approximately fourteen thousand employees with a wide range of talents and skills.
2. In the course of conducting their work of providing services to the public, county employees occasionally develop new and unique products that not only allow for greater productivity, but have the potential to be patented, licensed and commercialized.
3. Examples of unique and potentially commercial products include software programs and tools.
4. It is in the public interest for county employees to find creative ways to improve productivity and for the county and its employees to experience benefits from commercializing ideas and products generated by employees.
5. Although some departments have explored ways to commercialize ideas, there is no systematic program or process for employees to promote an innovative idea in the workplace.
6. Because King County has not undertaken a project of this type to any significant degree in the past, it is appropriate to create a pilot program to commercialize creative ideas with an evaluation as to its effectiveness after some time.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. The executive shall establish a pilot program to encourage innovation. The purpose of the program is to encourage county employees to be creative and bring innovative ideas to their jobs in order to commercialize these ideas for the benefit of the county, employees and the public.

SECTION 2. For purposes of this ordinance, "innovative ideas" includes any ideas developed by county employees related to or in the course of their county job that could be commercially valuable through a patent, copyright, license or other means of commercialization. "Innovative ideas" may include, but is not limited to, ideas, software programs, tools and inventions. "Innovative ideas" does not, however, include processes such as, but not limited to, workflow efficiencies.

SECTION 3. The executive shall establish an innovation team for the pilot program, to be led by the director of the office of performance, strategy and budget. The director shall determine the size of the team; however, it shall include the chief information officer or the chief information officer's designee and one member from the legislative branch. Departments that have people with expertise relevant to an innovative product may also be brought into the team on an ad hoc basis.

SECTION 4. The innovation team shall:

- A. Develop a charter for the innovation team describing its purpose and operating procedures; and
- B. In consultation with the prosecuting attorney's office and outside organizations, consider the intellectual property policies, proposed intellectual property legal agreements, and any other elements that may be needed to facilitate the functioning of the innovation team, and develop a process for how the team shall obtain those elements.

SECTION 5. The innovation team should develop a process for identifying and encouraging county employees to develop innovative ideas, software programs, tools and inventions that could be commercially valuable through a patent, copyright, license or other means of commercialization.

SECTION 6. The innovation team may consult with individuals and organizations such as the Cascadia

Med Tech Association and the Center for Commercialization at the University of Washington to learn methods for managing and sharing the benefits of intellectual property. The innovation team may also consult with venture capital firms to identify intellectual property agreements as well as potential business models or approaches to commercialization.

SECTION 7. The innovation team may make use of the county's existing partnership with the Economic Development Council of Seattle and King County to advance the implementation of this pilot program. The Economic Development Council of Seattle and King County facilitated the establishment of the Cascadia Med Tech Center in the city of Federal Way to help local businesses commercialize ideas for medical devices, creating an industry cluster. The Economic Development Council of Seattle and King County has expertise that is available to King County that could be helpful in launching the county's pilot innovation program.

SECTION 8. The innovation team shall operate using existing staff and resources. If the executive determines that moneys are necessary to commercialize a product or idea, the executive may submit an appropriation ordinance for council consideration.

SECTION 9. In order to fully implement the pilot program the executive shall transmit to the council one or more ordinances. The ordinances shall propose:

- A. Policies to guide the pilot program;
- B. A methodology for sharing net revenues with employees that generate commercially viable ideas or innovations if where and when appropriate; and
- C. Any changes to the King County Code that are necessary to implement the pilot program.

SECTION 10. By September 1, 2015, the executive shall transmit to council a progress report on the accomplishments of the innovation team. By six months before the expiration date of this ordinance, the executive shall submit a final report to the council that evaluates the pilot innovation program and include the executive's recommendation as to whether or not the pilot program should be extended. The reports required in

this section shall be filed with the clerk of the council in the form of one paper original and an electronic copy, which shall be distributed by the clerk of the council to all councilmembers.

SECTION 11. This ordinance expires three years after the effective date of this ordinance.