

Legislation Text

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AN ORDINANCE establishing the King County renters' commission; amending Ordinance 11955, Section 6, as amended, and K.C.C. 2.16.130 and adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 2.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. More than forty-two percent of households in King County are renter households, according to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.
2. The median household income of renters is less than 50 percent of the median income of homeowners in King County, according to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.
3. Sixty-two percent of white households in King County own their homes, compared to twenty-eight percent of African-American and thirty-four percent of Latino residents, according to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.
4. The median net worth of renter households in the United States is two percent of the median net worth of homeowner households, according to the 2016 Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer Finances.
5. A recent study published in the journal Urban Affairs Review found that low-income renters are nearly twice as likely as homeowners to be displaced by gentrification.
6. The renter population is representative of many protected classes, including people of color, people living with disabilities and LGBTQ people, as well as young adults, seniors, low-income people, those paying rent with assistance, those with felony records and renters who have experienced homelessness.

7. Renters in King County are directly impacted by a wide variety of issues facing the county, such as housing affordability, transportation access, access to green and other public spaces, land use, renter protections, public health and safety, education and economic growth.

8. King County has sought to include diverse perspectives on housing, such as with the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force, and a renters' commission will formalize participation of a group that comprises over forty percent of the county's households.

9. In 2010, Ordinance 16948, also referred to as the "Equity and Social Justice Ordinance," was enacted and fourteen determinants of equity were identified as the conditions that lead to the creation of a fair and just society in King County, which includes housing for all people that is safe, affordable, high quality and healthy.

10. In 2016, Motion 14754 was passed expressing support for regional planning, coordination and funding efforts to address the challenges of homelessness and housing affordability in King County.

11. The King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Five Year Action Plan calls for better engaging local communities and other partners in addressing the urgent need for and benefits of affordable housing.

12. A renters' commission will offer useful insight and perspective inclusive of diverse renter voices from across the county that historically have not had a voice without such intentional and proactive efforts.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Ordinance 11955, Section 6, as amended, and K.C.C. 2.16.130 are hereby amended to read as follows:

A. The department of community and human services is responsible to manage and be fiscally accountable for the children and youth services division, the behavioral health and recovery division, the

developmental disabilities and early childhood supports division, the adult services division and the housing, homelessness and community development division.

B. The duties of the children and youth services division shall include the following:

1. Working in partnership with communities and other funders to develop, support and provide human services that emphasize prevention, early intervention, and community education, and that strengthen children, youth and young adults, families and communities in King County;

2. Managing programs that promote healthy childhood development, enhance youth resiliency, reduce justice system involvement, strengthen families and communities and ensure all children and youth have the opportunity to achieve their full potentials. The division shall also provide staff to support the King County children and youth advisory board.

C. The duties of the behavioral health and recovery division shall, subject to available resources and to its exercise of discretionary prioritization, include the following:

1. Managing and operating a comprehensive continuum of behavioral health services including prevention, mental health, substance use disorder and co-occurring disorder treatment services for children, youth and adults who meet eligibility criteria;

2. Managing and operating a twenty-four-hour crisis response system, including civil commitment as a last resort;

3. Selecting appropriate agencies for the provision of behavioral health services and developing, implementing and monitoring the provision and outcomes of contracted services;

4. Being responsible for resource management of a comprehensive behavioral health system including provision of staff support to appropriate advisory boards, and serving as liaison to federal, state, and other governments and relevant organizations in carrying out planning and allocation processes;

5. Facilitating the continuing availability of appropriate treatment services for eligible individuals with a diagnosis of a mental illness, substance use or co-occurring disorder; and

6. Developing and maintaining a continuum of appropriate treatment services for eligible individuals.

D. The duties of the developmental disabilities and early childhood supports division shall include the following:

1. Managing and operating a system of services for infant mental health, early childhood development screening and a system of services for persons with developmental disabilities in accordance with relevant state statutes and county policies and to provide staff support to the King County board for developmental disabilities; and

2. Negotiating, implementing and monitoring contracts with community agencies for the provision of developmental disabilities and early childhood support services.

E. The duties of the adult services division shall include the following:

1. Working in partnership with communities to develop, support and provide human services and programs that emphasize health and safety, self-sufficiency and healthy aging. The programs are to include, but not be limited to, providing employment and training for adults to achieve self-sufficiency, providing supports to survivors of abuse and trauma, and providing health, socialization and wellness services to promote healthy aging in place;

2. Providing assistance to indigent veterans and their families as authorized by chapter 73.08 RCW; and

3. Providing staff support for the women's advisory board as specified in K.C.C. 2.30.040 and for the veterans, seniors and human services levy advisory board and its committees consistent with state and county requirements.

F. The duties of the housing, homelessness and community development division shall include the following:

1. Managing programs that address housing, homelessness and community development needs, and helping implement improvements identified in subarea and neighborhood plans for low and moderate income

communities;

2. Administering the county's federal housing, homelessness and community development funds and other housing, homelessness and community development programs; ~~((and))~~

3. Developing housing, homelessness and community development policies and programs to implement the growth management policies throughout King County to provide affordable housing to low and moderate income residents; and

4. Providing staff support for the renters' commission as specified in K.C.C chapter 2.xx (the chapter created by section 2 of this ordinance).

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

NEW SECTION. SECTION 3.

A. There is hereby created a King County renters' commission that shall advise the executive and council on issues and policies of importance to tenants in residential rental properties countywide.

B. This chapter expires ten years after the effective date of this ordinance.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 4. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

A. "Commission" means the King County renters' commission.

B. "Rental agreement" means all agreements that establish or modify the terms, conditions, rules, regulations or any other provisions concerning the use and occupancy of a dwelling unit.

C. "Renter" means a tenant in a residential rental property.

D. "Residential rental property" means a structure or that part of a structure that is used as a home, residence or sleeping place, by one person or by two or more persons maintaining a common household, including, but not limited to, single-family residences and units of multiplexes, apartment buildings and mobile homes, and that is occupied primarily for living or dwelling purposes under a rental agreement.

E. "Tenant" means an person who is entitled to occupy a rental unit primarily for living or dwelling

purposes under a rental or lease agreement, written or oral, express or implied. "Tenant" also includes a subtenant who is in occupancy with the consent of the owner.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 5.

A. The commission shall be composed of fifteen members. Appointments should be made to ensure that varied renter perspectives are represented, including those of renters who live in unincorporated King County and those of renters who identify with or are affiliated with organizations that use an equity lens or that work with historically underrepresented groups, such as low-income renters, LGBTQ renters, renters with felony records, immigrant renters, those paying rent with assistance and renters who have experienced homelessness. Appointments should be made, to the extent possible, so that the commission membership is representative of the county geographically. Each member of the commission must be a renter within King County at the time of the member's appointment and throughout the member's term.

B. Members serve without compensation.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 6.

A. Member positions shall be one through fifteen. Individuals shall be appointed into these numbered positions. Members in positions one through nine shall be appointed by the council. Members in positions ten through twelve shall be appointed by the executive. Members in positions thirteen through fifteen shall be appointed by the commission. All appointments are subject to confirmation by the county council by motion.

B. For the initial round of appointments, odd numbered positions will serve one-year terms and even numbered positions will serve two-year terms. After the conclusion of initial terms, all subsequent terms of each position shall be for two years. A member shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. Any vacancy in an unexpired term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. If a person is appointed to fill the duration of an unexpired term, then that term shall count as one of the two consecutive terms only if the portion of the unexpired term actually served is at least one year.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 7. The duties of the commission include the following:

A. Provide information, advice and counsel to the council, the executive, the department of community and human services, the office of equity and social justice and other county departments concerning issues and policies affecting renters, including, but not limited to, housing affordability, transportation access, access to green and other public spaces, land use, renter protections, public health and safety, education and economic growth;

B. Monitor the enforcement and effectiveness of legislation related to renters and renter protections;

C. Provide periodic advice on priorities, policies and strategies for strengthening and enhancing the enforcement and effectiveness of renter protections;

D. Develop an annual report that includes recommendations to improve housing affordability, especially in urban unincorporated King County;

E. Adopt an annual work plan. The plan shall include a briefing on the commission's public involvement process for soliciting community and citizen input in developing the commission's annual work plan and updates on the work plan; and

F. Meet periodically with other county commissions and committees, departments, the King County housing authority board of commissioners, the affordable housing committee of the King County growth management planning council, the Seattle renters' commission and other community groups and associations, including those representing rental property landlords, to gather information, feedback and recommendations related to the King County renters' commission's work.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 8. The director of the department of community and human services or designee shall be responsible for the staffing and operation of the commission. Before undertaking its other responsibilities, the commission shall elect officers and adopt administrative procedures.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 9.

A. Meetings of the commission shall be open to the public and the commission shall operate subject to the state Open Public Meetings Act of 1971, in accordance with chapter 42.30 RCW.

B. Any member may request an excused absence from a commission meeting from the commission or the commission chair. The commission may recommend, by a majority vote of all members of the commission, that the council or executive remove

any member who is absent without excuse for three consecutive meetings. The appointing authority may remove any member for cause.