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# **King County, Washington**

## **Chief of Staff**

Recruitment Services Provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates

# King County

King County has a very strong and resilient economy and an environment where people and businesses thrive. Located on Puget Sound in Washington State, and covering 2,134 square miles, King County is nearly twice as large as the average county in the United States. With more than 2 million people, it also ranks as the 12th most populous county in the nation.

King County is comprised of 39 cities and is truly an international destination with over 100 languages spoken in the region and 30 million visitors annually. King County is home to the City of Seattle, suburban cities, small towns, islands, and rural communities, as well as forests, bodies of water, and farmlands.

Cities within King County frequently appear on “Best Places to Live” lists and it is #4 on the Forbes “The Best Places for Business and Careers” list. Many King County communities have highly rated schools, nationally recognized restaurants, vibrant recreation, and numerous cultural opportunities. Housing options range from easy-to-access islands, downtown high-rises, and distinct Seattle neighborhoods to suburban developments that boast walkable amenities.

All of these qualities make King County one of the nation’s best places to live, work, and play.

King County is the second largest government and the most populous county in Washington State. It provides an array of regional services, including public health, Metro transit, wastewater treatment, solid waste, community and human services, and criminal justice and is the local government for the roughly 250,000 people living in unincorporated King County.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, King County has been a national leader in implementing measures to slow the spread of the disease and in vaccinating its population. In addition, King County has worked expeditiously to allocate and distribute over \$1.5 billion in federal aid meant to support the public health response to the pandemic and to support struggling residents, businesses, and non-profits. Throughout this process, the Council has prioritized funding programs and organizations that assist those hit hardest by the pandemic – traditionally underserved communities of color and front-line workers. Despite the magnitude of the federal funds, there is a tremendous amount of work to be done to help the region recover and to do so in an equitable manner. The County Council will be an integral component of setting policies that will assist the recovery and the Chief of Staff will have the opportunity to support that process.

# The King County Council

As the legislative arm of King County, the Council sets policies, enacts laws, provides oversight of services provided by the Executive branch, and adopts budgets. The Council plays an essential role in communicating with residents to understand their needs and priorities and ensuring high-quality services are provided.

King County government continues to build on a legacy of shared values of equity and social justice, employee engagement, innovative thinking, and continuous improvement. With this commitment, King County has adopted a pro-equity agenda – including a Council-adopted Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, equity analysis tools, and a robust investment

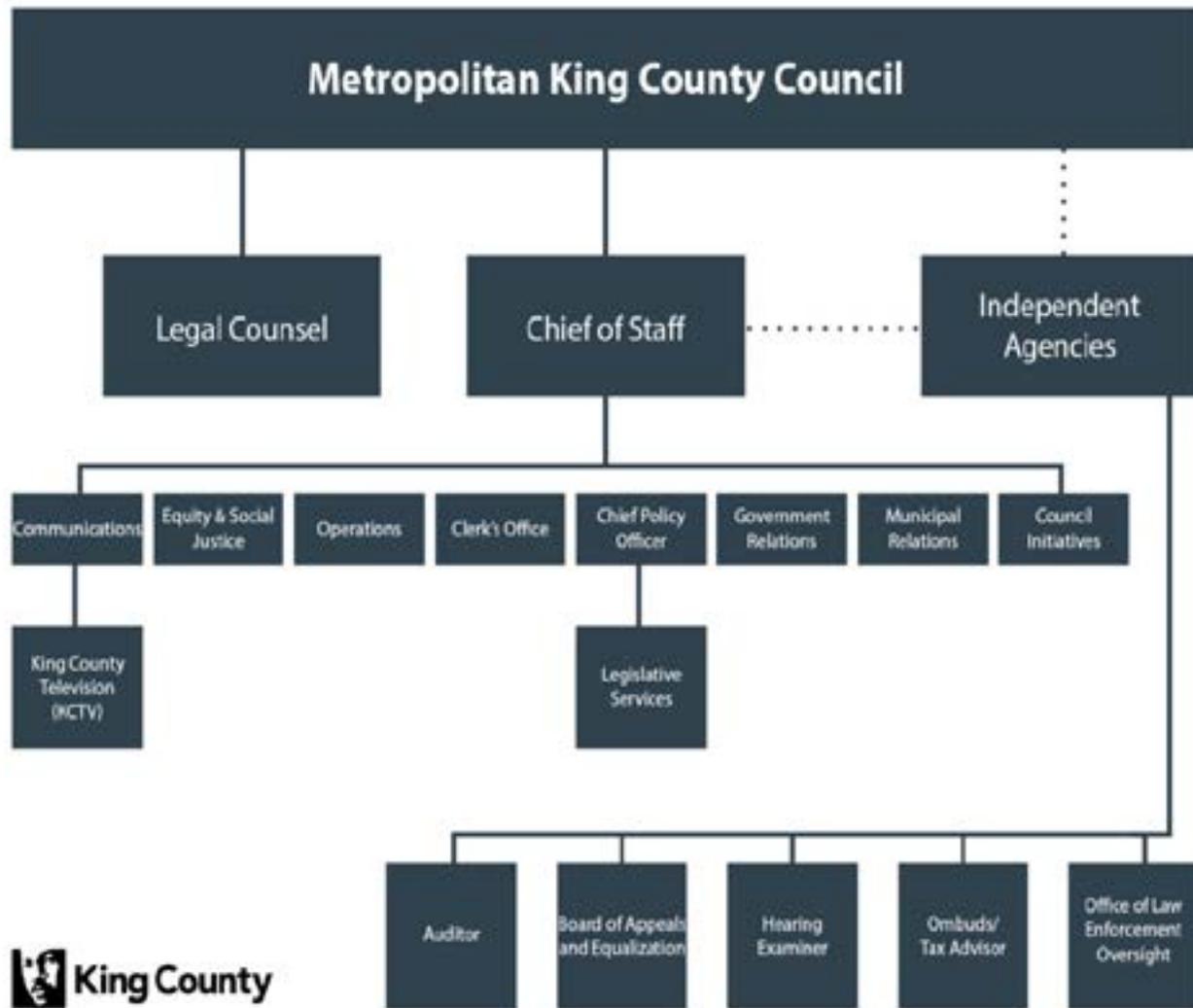


in diversity inclusion staff and training across the government – aimed at advancing regional change. As part of this commitment, the County is developing the systems and standards necessary to achieve better outcomes for all residents, particularly for those who have suffered the injustices of racism and poverty.

Each of the nine members of the King County Council represents a geographical district of about 250,000 residents. Councilmembers are elected on a non-partisan basis and serve four-year terms.

Five independent agencies and their staff are in the legislative branch, which is led by the Metropolitan King County Council: The King County Auditor's Office, the Board of Appeals and Equalization, the Hearing Examiner, the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight, and the Ombuds Office.





# *The Position*

The Chief of Staff is an at-will, exempt position that is directly appointed by the Metropolitan King County Council. Serving as the senior executive leader for the Central Staff, the Chief of Staff reports to the Council chair on a day-to-day basis but is also responsive to the needs and priorities of all nine Councilmembers. The Chief of Staff works closely with and coordinates among all members of the Council and routinely interacts with other leaders within the Executive branch and externally. The Chief of Staff leads Council central staff by managing and coordinating the activities and services that support the Council. Functions performed by the central staff include policy analysis, administrative operations, equity & social justice development, government relations, municipal relations, the Council clerk's office, and communications (including King County Television).

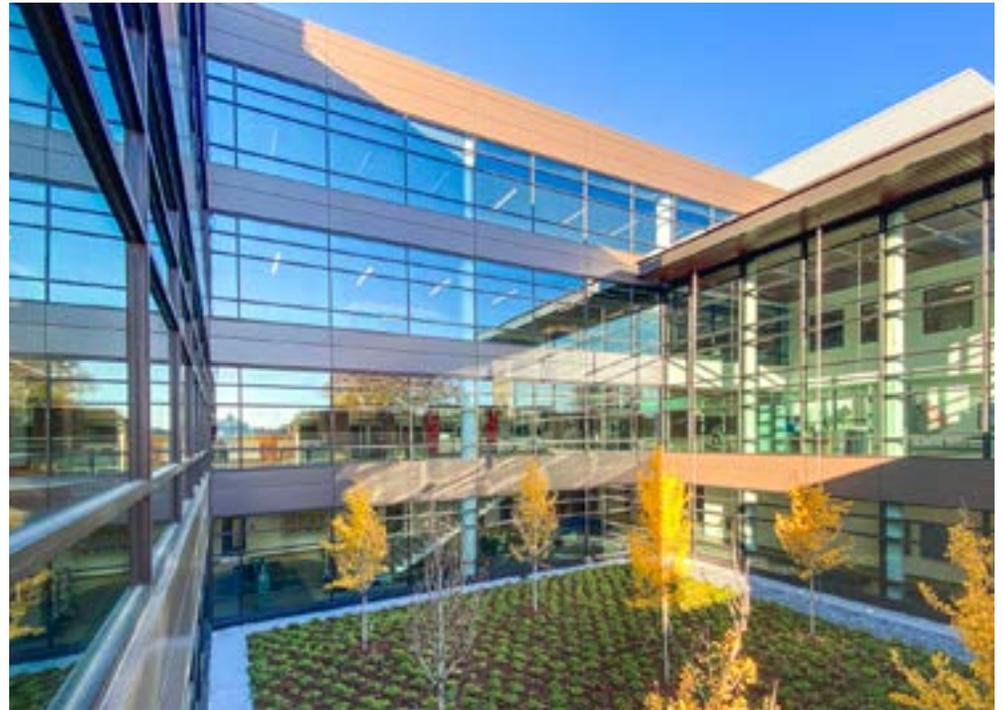
The Chief of Staff is regularly required to solve problems having far-reaching impact on and consequences for King County and directs and coordinates the activities of the central staff to ensure that they serve the Council objectively. The Chief of Staff also monitors and supports the activities of the five independent agencies: The King County Auditor's Office, the Board of Appeals and Equalization, the Hearing Examiner, the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight, and the Ombuds Office. In total, the Chief of Staff oversees 56 staff and an annual budget of approximately \$12.4 million.

## **Key aspects of the position are:**

- Ensures effective operations of the Council central staff by planning, directing, and coordinating their activities, in collaboration with directors.
- Develops, recommends, implements, and monitors work plans of staff directly supervised and assists in developing and monitoring other staff work plans.
- Leads in developing the budget for Council administration, including proposing programs and staffing needs for Council central staff, and coordinates with independent agency heads in their budget development.
- Fosters a team environment by acting as a resource for all legislative branch staff.
- Supports the overall career development of Council central staff and ensures that directors and managers provide proactive support to staff in all areas of Council operations.

## The Position *continued*

- Serves as the Council's bargaining lead for all legislative branch bargaining units.
- Implements the Council's commitment to Equity and Social Justice by fostering a diverse, inclusive, and respectful working environment for staff in coordination with the Equity and Social Justice section.
- Develops, recommends, implements, and interprets complex policies and procedures affecting Council administration.
- Serves as a liaison to other branches of government ensuring strong lines of communication are maintained.
- Serves as a high-level liaison to other jurisdictions on issues related to the Council's agenda, proposed legislation, and strategic partnerships as needed.
- Serves as a point of contact for the legislative branch independent agencies and provides guidance on Council related matters as requested.
- Serves as a point of communication and coordination for Councilmembers and fosters collaboration and communication among them.
- Serves as a trusted resource who can maintain confidentiality for Councilmembers.
- Performs other duties as assigned that support the overall objective of the position.



# *The Ideal Candidate*

In addition to being ethical and well-qualified, the next Chief of Staff must possess certain traits that will be essential for success:

- Solid leadership, organizational and management skills, combined with the ever-important soft skills such as empathy, listening and adaptability are needed for this environment. The Chief of Staff should have an innate ability to form structure in ambiguous environments and translate that structure into actionable results.
- This role requires a leader who is committed to equity and impartiality – up, down, and across the organization. Simple principles, such as ensuring that Councilmembers have the same and timely information also have application in leading the staff. The Chief of Staff should possess a high level of integrity, personal accountability, and humility.
- The Chief of Staff is a politically savvy leader who thrives in a fast-paced environment and embraces the County's Equity and Social Justice strategic plan when interacting with others and in everyday decision making.
- Building effective and equitable relationships across all of members of the Council and their respective staffs is a critically important aspect of this position. Previous experience reporting directly to a council, board or similar governing body would be an important ingredient to success in this role, especially if that experience was gained in a political environment.
- A positive attitude and even temperament at all times is both contagious and highly effective. The Chief of Staff's positivity will help frame a healthy and productive organizational culture. At the same time, when conflict invariably occurs it must be dealt with quickly, inclusively, and thoughtfully. The Council seeks a steady hand as a leader of the Central Staff.
- A commitment to developing a healthy and winning culture, where employees are valued and invested in, will be beneficial to both the organization as a whole and to all of its members.
- An understanding of and experience in or with local government, will provide candidates with visibility of trends and upcoming issues, and allow the organization to be better prepared when they occur.



## Qualifications

The following are the qualifications required for the position of Chief of Staff:

**Experience:** At least eight years of experience in the following areas:

- Public policy or a related field
- Legislative environment
- Interacting with elected officials
- Intergovernmental affairs
- Leading a complex organization
- Advancing equity and inclusion goals
- Supervisory experience

**Education:** A Master's degree in Public Administration, Political Science, Business, or related field can substitute for three years of experience in the areas listed above.

**Vaccination:** All Legislative Branch staff must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and provide proof of vaccination to Council HR staff by December 2, 2021. The selected candidate will be required to submit proof of vaccination upon hire. People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine. Employees may make requests for a reasonable accommodation based on a medical disability or for sincerely held religious beliefs. Philosophical, political, scientific, or sociological objections to vaccination will not be considered for an exemption or accommodation.



# Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for the Chief of Staff is **\$166,236 to \$223,568**, depending upon qualifications. King County offers an excellent benefits package including the following major areas:

**Insurance:** Excellent insurance options are available to employees, including medical, dental, vision, life, as well as short- and long-term disability.

**Retirement:** Retirement is provided through the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), offered through the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems. The Director will have the choice of PERS Plan 2 or Plan 3.

**Leave:** King County provides paid vacation and sick leave.

**Additional Benefits:** A number of additional benefits are provided including free wellness resources and a free ORCA transit pass.



# *Recruitment Process*

All interested candidates should apply **by December 27, 2021**, by submitting a compelling cover letter and comprehensive resume to [apply@ralphandersen.com](mailto:apply@ralphandersen.com). Confidential inquiries are welcomed to Mr. Greg Nelson at (916) 630-4900. Prior to interviews, candidates will be required to sign a release form to authorize verifications to be conducted including employment history, degrees obtained, and other certifications.



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