

Metropolitan King County Council

Position Description



Position: Director of Government Relations	FLSA: salaried, overtime exempt
Department: Governmental Relations	Salary Grade: 131
Council Approved: April 22, 2013	Revised: 10/11/22

Summary

The Director of Government Relations is responsible for planning, managing, and overseeing the activities and operations of the County Council’s government relations office, including monitoring state and federal government activities; developing legislative agendas that advance the work of the county and the County Council; managing the Council’s federal and state consultants; and coordinating legislative activity with the executive branch and other stakeholders. The Director of Government Relations also analyzes and interprets highly complex state and federal proposals, laws, and regulations and their impact on the county. This position is a salaried, at-will, overtime exempt classification that reports to the Council Chief of Staff but is responsive to all members of the council.

Distinguishing Career Features

The Director of Government Relations is an executive-level position, responsible for directing, coordinating, facilitating, and accomplishing the Council and county’s political and legislative objectives at the state and federal level. The Director is an appointed position and requires considerable skill and expertise at mobilizing and managing county efforts to support and advocate for specific legislation.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Legislative Advocacy

- Coordinate with legislative and executive branch staff and elected officials to develop, implement, and monitor work plans to achieve legislative objectives.
- Provide overall direction for the county’s legislative presence at the state level, including developing, recommending, and implementing strategies, methods and resources to advance county interests.
- Develop the Council and county state legislative agenda, including soliciting and integrating legislative priorities of individual Councilmembers into one cohesive agenda. Work cooperatively with county agencies to identify and refine proposed issues included in the legislative package.
- Conduct work sessions to establish priorities and goals within the context of the state’s legislative and political environment. Prepare and present legislative agendas for assigned topics/portfolios to the Council.
- Ensure representation of the county’s interests throughout legislative sessions, at interim committees, work groups, negotiations, and discussions. Leverage legislative and executive

resources to develop information and materials for use in advocating positions.

- Attend and represent the County Council at hearings, meetings, and other events, including testifying before legislative committees. Conduct informal and formal negotiations with legislators, members of the executive branch, and other local governments.

Policy Analysis

- Propose and develop legislative amendments and resolutions in response to legislative developments, often under urgent and sensitive deadlines.
- Provide consultation, political advice, advocacy, or defense of county interests, management of special projects, leadership on legislative workgroups and analysis of legislation and policy affecting county operations.
- Establish and oversee the timely review and analysis of pending legislation. Direct support staff to research and review legislation using reports, meeting minutes, and information from legislative information systems.

External Affairs

- Develop and maintain effective relationships with members of State Legislature, the Governor's Office, members of Congress, and other elected officials to advance matters important to the county. Meet with state policy and decision makers to present the County's positions.
- Represent the Council's positions and interests with a wide range of citizen groups, state and national municipal and private sector associations, and other stakeholders.
- Oversee the planning and coordination of delegation visits to state and federal legislators, and coordinate legislative visits to the County Council.

Team Management

- Plan, direct, and coordinate the work of the government relations staff, including providing coaching and guidance, establishing performance expectations and conducting performance evaluations, resolving conflicts, and resolving personnel matters.
- Direct the activities of consultants and lobbyists engaged in promoting or advocating the county's positions and proposals to legislators. Ensure compliance with contract requirements and manage performance.

Qualifications

Knowledge and Skills

- Advanced knowledge of government structures, public administration, and state and federal legislative processes, including advanced principles of legislative analysis and the statutory and ethical obligations of lobbyists.
- Familiarity with laws and regulations that govern the legislative process, as well as legislative, council, and committee parliamentary rules and procedures.
- A broad working knowledge of principles and practices of civil and administrative law, particularly those relating to municipal governments and state subdivisions.
- An understanding of the principles and practices associated with supervision, leadership style,

team building, and performance management.

- Working knowledge of county functions, strategies, programs, policies, and related legislative, intergovernmental, and community issues and challenges.
- Political savvy, discretion, and judiciousness.
- An ability to conduct research, understand and synthesize complex data, and present information in a clear and accessible way.
- Outstanding communications and public relations skills to adapt to diverse personalities and styles, establish harmony and cooperation with work teams inside and outside the legislative branch, facilitate group discussions, make formal presentations, and carry out complex negotiations.

Abilities

The Director of Government Relations must have the ability to:

- Learn, interpret, and apply relevant sections of the King County Code, and local, state and federal legislation.
- Think judiciously to prioritize workload, maintain confidentiality, and use discretion when dealing with politically charged topics.
- Analyze, interpret, and communicate complex information to a variety of audiences, including the ability to understand implications of new information for current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
- Testify authoritatively before public bodies and represent the County effectively with legislative, government, business, community groups, and the public.
- Communicate and present information in a clear, concise, interesting, and logical manner, both orally and in writing.
- Apply equity and social justice principles to all aspects of the position, including management of staff.
- Develop and maintain positive and influential work relationships with peers, other committees, county organization units, communities, and agencies.
- Occasionally travel to remote locations and participate in after-hours meetings.

Education and Experience

The position typically requires a bachelor's degree in public administration, political science, or related discipline and ten years of progressive experience in legislative research, legislative representation, and/or intergovernmental affairs, with four years in a leadership capacity. An advanced degree or law degree is preferred and may substitute for some experience.

Working Conditions

Work is performed indoors where minimal safety considerations exist.