

Metropolitan King County Council Position Descriptions

Council unit:	Ombuds/Tax Advisor
Job description:	Principal Deputy Ombuds (Ombuds 3)
Salary range:	79 (KC Squared Table)

Classification Summary

The Ombuds series is a three-level career progression. The primary responsibilities of this position classification include performing initial screening and preliminary investigation of complaints involving King County government. The work of the Principal Deputy Ombuds is governed by the King County Charter Section 270, King County Code 2.52, King County Employee Ethics Code KCC 3.04, and Whistleblower Protection Code in KCC 3.42. This classification provides investigative and dispute resolution services, giving access and opportunity to members of the public and County employees to raise concerns and voice complaints about administrative acts, and offering objective resolutions and remedies.

Distinguishing Features of the Position

Principal Deputy Ombuds plans, conducts, and communicates work under the guidance of the King County Ombuds Director or designee(s). Principal Deputy Ombuds investigates and makes determinations on very complex* or politically sensitive complaints about the County's operations and governmental ethics, whistleblower, retaliation, and lobbyist disclosure allegations. Principal Deputy Ombuds may work on ten or more projects concurrently that require managing large amounts of information, meeting statutory timeframes, qualitative and quantitative analyses, synthesizing multi-faceted findings, participation in complex public meetings, and interfacing with county leaders and staff. Principal Deputy Ombuds are expected to participate in officewide work efforts, consistently build and independently manage external relationships, may coach other staff when complexity or significant conflict is expected, and may be assigned to take the lead in partnership with less senior staff on complex complaints. Principal Deputy Ombuds must be able to balance and deliver on competing priorities and high workload and generally require minimal supervisory support, coaching, and editing of written products. This is a salaried, represented, overtime-exempt position that reports to the Ombuds Director.

Career Progression

Principal Deputy Ombuds is the highest-level individual contributor classification within the three-level Ombuds professional classification series. To advance to Senior Principal Deputy Ombuds, there must be both a vacant Senior Principal Deputy Ombuds position and an operational need to fill the role as determined by the County Ombuds Director. The Principal Deputy Ombuds must possess a high degree of mastery with a broad skill set, including: intake; investigations; complaints and/or assistance; scoping; case research; investigative plans; evidence collection and review; analyses; production of high-level written and oral communications; and the ability to balance and deliver on competing priorities and a high workload. The Principal Deputy Ombuds must also have a high degree of competency with office policies and process; professional ethics, integrity and objective judgement; workload management; application of equity principles; and teamwork/culture. Finally, the Principal Deputy Ombuds must have an extensive understanding of King County government or similarly

* Very complex and sensitive work is defined by the presence of more than two of the following: involvement of multiple agencies or department-wide issues; layered legal environments; political sensitivities; multifaceted equity issues; scenarios with strong emotion, high stakes, and differing opinions; complainants experiencing crises; multi-system or multi-jurisdiction involvement; and other complexities.

complex authorizing environments; have demonstrated results within such an environment; and successfully demonstrated the ability to coach staff, manage personnel performance and office operations.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

In addition to performing the same duties and responsibilities of lower-level classifications in the Ombuds series with less supervision and support, the Principal Deputy Ombuds will also:

- Coach less experienced staff on efforts and topics included in their essential duties and responsibilities lists and conduct quality assurance as assigned. May be assigned to supervise administrative staff.
- Conduct complex, very complex, and sensitive intake, investigations, complaints, and/or assistance within statutory timeframes.
- For complex, very complex, and sensitive assignments, develop multi-faceted preliminary case research, define scope of inquiry, conduct equity analyses, and develop investigative plans for review by the County Ombuds or designee.
- For complex, very complex, and sensitive assignments, execute investigative plans, collect and review evidence, conduct analyses, apply appropriate legal and evidentiary standards. Research and evaluate issues, policies, laws, and procedures.
- Independently develop formal written reports for review and issuance by the Ombuds Director or designee that include well-supported findings, conclusions, and recommendations that withstand potential legal appeals, public, and media scrutiny.
- Independently plan and conduct work in which ambiguity, conflict, or complexity is expected.
- May participate in formal mediations conducted by the County's Alternate Dispute Resolution office and advise the Ombuds Director on fair and transparent case settlements that promote the public interest.
- Provide expert, objective problem-solving and system-navigation assistance, referrals, and conflict management facilitation.
- May be assigned to participate in or lead portions of cross-departmental work groups, efforts to develop office knowledge bases and resources, policy or procedure development, lessons-learned processes, and engagement with external constituencies, organizations, or media.
- Apply Legislative Branch Code of Conduct principles, building and maintaining effective professional internal and external relationships. Apply an anti-racist mindset relating to individual and interpersonal racism in the workplace. Identify and address implicit bias. Support and contribute to positive office culture.
- Identify complaint trends and patterns and recommend initiatives to the Ombuds Director for responding to systemic and entrenched issues.
- Performs other duties as assigned that support the overall objective of the position.

Qualifications

Required Knowledge and Skill

- Expert knowledge of the principles, methods, and techniques used in the research and investigation of complaints. Knowledge of the principles and practices in one or more of the following areas: government ombuds, administration, management analysis, research, planning, social work, or the equivalent that can aid investigation and complaint resolution work.

- Expert knowledge of codes, regulations, administrative, and legal procedures as they apply to the operation and jurisdiction of the Office of the Ombuds/Tax Advisor.
- Expert knowledge of the principles and practices of local government administration, and the organization of County functions, operations, and interrelationships.
- Advanced quantitative and qualitative analysis skills, including the ability to develop and interpret statistical and operating information.
- Expert understanding of the concepts of institutional and structural racism and bias and their impact on underserved and underrepresented communities, especially related to King County government.
- Expert skill and background in the research and analysis of complex legal issues.
- Expert knowledge of privacy, public information, record retention laws, including those involving the handling of information and communications of a confidential and sensitive nature.
- Advanced knowledge of office applications, including word processing, databases, spreadsheets, presentations, and in specialized research tools.
- Advanced knowledge of the English language to write reports requiring the utmost discretion in choosing grammar and syntax to deal with complex, sensitive issues.
- High emotional intelligence and public relations skills to adapt to diverse and sometimes challenging personalities and styles, gain trust while working with others in sensitive and difficult situations, resolve conflict, and employ lines of questioning for fact finding.
- Advanced skills in trauma-informed interviewing or comparable skills in working with people experiencing high emotion and/or mental health crises.

Required Ability

- Work independently and manage workload with multiple and concurrent assignments and tight deadlines.
- Use logic and reasoning to analyze and organize data.
- Listen, consider, and respond with composure to people who may be experiencing and/or expressing strong emotions.
- Analyze and define sensitive issues and problems, evaluate alternatives, and develop independent conclusions and recommendations in accordance with policies, codes, and laws, and the public interest.
- Understand and apply principles of objectivity, independence, professional skepticism, and professional ethics including appropriate applications of confidentiality.
- Interpret and apply the King County Code, and local, regional, state and federal laws, mandates and programs.
- Present facts and information in a clear, concise, logical, and objective manner, both orally and in writing.
- Apply collective principles of engagement when disagreeing with internal staff.
- Apply an anti-racist mindset relating to individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism in the workplace. Engage in continuous reflection and positive actions toward an anti-racist organization.
- Models providing feedback in alignment with Group Agreements.

- Conduct observations and analyses in the field at remote sites, with varying schedules.
- Conduct investigations at various hours and in the field at remote locations.
- Travel throughout King County or surrounding areas in a timely manner

Education and Experience

Advanced degree in law, public administration, or related discipline that will enable job performance, plus eight years of experience performing professional-level investigative, analytical, legal, dispute resolution; this includes extensive specialized knowledge in a field that would contribute to the provision of investigative and dispute resolution services, or related capacity. Any combination of education and experience that clearly demonstrates the ability to perform the job duties of the position may be substituted. Investigative experience with a focus on writing detailed analytical findings is strongly desired.

Levels Within the Same Series

Deputy Ombuds (Ombuds 1)

Senior Deputy Ombuds (Ombuds 2)

Principal Deputy Ombuds (Ombuds 3)