Performance Audit of Part-time Employment in King County

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May 7, 2014

Executive Summary

While King County provides greater benefits for part-time employees compared to its peers, it primarily uses part-time schedules to reduce labor costs. The County is somewhat restricted in its use of part-time schedules, however, because of provisions in the King County Code and Charter, which encourage full-time schedules and provide full benefits for many of those working part time. We make recommendations to improve information available to policy-makers regarding part-time employment and to provide guidance to county managers and departments regarding its use to further county strategic goals.

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Performance Audit of Part-time Employment in King County

Report Highlights

MAY 7, 2014

Purpose

This audit reviewed part-time employment in King County, the costs of part-time employees relative to their full-time counterparts, and the effect of existing policies and procedures regarding part-time work. We sought to identify ways King County could more effectively use part-time employees, and what information is necessary to improve current policies. This audit coincides with King County's review of a number of long-standing employment practices and its attempt to overhaul and modernize the personnel system as part of its Employer of the Future initiative.

Key Audit Findings

In many instances, King County uses part-time workers effectively for business purposes, but the lack of flexibility in county policies may limit opportunities for employees interested in voluntary part-time work. Given the low number of voluntary part-time workers and the advantages to both the County and employees from part-time work, increased use of part-time schedules may present opportunities for greater productivity and increased employee retention. Changing access to part time as well as the benefits costs associated with such work may involve amending the county charter and could result in unintended consequences such as reducing the availability of part-time workers.

About 10 percent of King County's 13,000 employees work part time, mainly as part-time transit operators. Almost all part-time employees work half time or more, thus receive the same benefits as full-time employees – at a cost of about $16,000 per employee in 2014.

What We Recommend

We make two recommendations to improve the amount of information available regarding part-time employment and to provide guidance to county managers and departments regarding its use. Human resources management tools can be better utilized to gather data on employee interest and participation in part-time work. These actions would help develop more robust information regarding the relationship of part-time work with job retention and employee satisfaction.

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Part-time Employment in King County

How does King County use part-time employment?

Less than 10 percent of King County employees work part time.
While most of King County's 13,000 permanent county employees work full-time schedules, about 1,200 work part time and receive or are eligible to receive benefits.[1] Of these 1,200 part-time workers, over 900 are part-time transit operators, and the remaining workers are in a variety of positions throughout county government. In addition to part-time transit operators, the county uses part-time employees to meet specific business needs for which it may be inefficient to use full-time staff, such as part-time security screeners. Lastly, some staff voluntarily work part-time schedules, for example, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) offers a job share program that allows two employees to share a single position.[2]

How does King County define part-time employment?

King County defines part-time employees as employees working less than a full-time schedule.
The number of hours per week defined as full time varies among King County departments (ranging from 35 to 40 hours). Part-time employees who work over half time are provided benefits as career service employees of the county. The King County Charter[3] addresses employee membership in career service.[4] By default, all county employees are members of career service except for certain categories of employees in elected or managerial positions and other specific roles, including part-time and temporary employees, except those employed at least half time. The county code defines part-time employees who work under the half-time threshold as "part-time," and those over the half-time threshold as "part-time regular." Career service employees receive leave benefits and are eligible for medical, dental, vision, life, and disability benefits.[5]

Do King County's part-time employees receive the same benefits as full-time employees?

Part-time employees who work over half time receive the same benefits as full-time employees.
All of the county's full-time employees are eligible to receive county-paid benefits including medical, dental, vision, and basic accidental death and long-term disability insurance. Benefits cost about $16,000 per employee in 2014.

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[1]While all full-time and most part-time employees receive county-paid benefits as a condition of their employment, some part timers receive either no benefits or they have a portion of the cost of their benefits deducted from their pay.
[2]For the purposes of this report, we have defined voluntary part-time employees as those employees who request a part-time schedule on a temporary or permanent basis.
[3]King County Charter, Section 550.
[4]Membership in the career service provides certain employees due process rights regarding termination, demotion, and/or suspension under federal law. See *Cleveland Board of Education v. Loudermill*, 470 U.S. 532, 105 S.Ct. 1487 (1985).
[5]King County Code §3.12.040; §3.12.010 defines "part-time regular" and "term-limited temporary" employees as members of career service.

Part-time Employment in King County

King County part-time employees who work over half time receive the same benefits as full-time employees: full family medical coverage, transit pass (ORCA) card, and access to other benefits. Leave (sick and vacation), however, is earned based on hours worked. There are exceptions to this policy, detailed below.

Part-time employees' access to benefits depends on the half-time threshold, which the county determines on an annual basis.[6]

Exhibit A: There are Exceptions to King County's Half-time Threshold for Part-time Employee Benefits

Agency	Part-time Status	Type of Part-time Benefits
Metro Transit	Part-time transit operators working less than 50%	Eligible for partial medical benefits in Group Health but pay 20% of the cost for themselves and 100% for all dependents
Solid Waste Division	Part-time scale operators at transfer stations	Eligible for full benefits
Prosecuting Attorney's Office	Employees working less than 50%	Provides ORCA card and leave but no medical benefits

Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of information received from county departments.

Why do part-time regular employees receive the same benefits as full-time employees?

King County's policy, in charter and code, provides full-time benefits to part-time employees.

Part-time employees working 50 percent or more receive the same benefits as full-time employees, because of the half-time threshold for career service in the King County Charter and the Code provisions regarding employee access to benefits. Specifically, King County Code states the County's intention "to minimize its use of part-time and temporary employees."[7] These provisions may discourage part-time work in the County.

The Career Service Review Committee reviews temporary and part-time positions annually to determine whether the work could be met with a career service position.[8] The committee can then recommend reclassification for

[6]The half-time threshold is calculated based on the equivalent full-time position, e.g. 910 hours for persons in positions that are typically 35 hours a week, and 1020 hours for positions that are 40 hours a week. An employee's status is determined in annual increments so that an employee's benefits status is stable throughout the year.

[7]"Therefore, it is the policy of King County to have ongoing, relatively stable, and predictable bodies of work necessary to the provision of services to the public performed by career service employees, and to minimize its use of part-time and temporary employees. To achieve that goal, the council hereby adopts the procedures set forth in this chapter." KCC §3.12A.010.

[8]The Career Service Review Committee's (CSRC) procedures are delineated in King County Code §3.12. The CSRC review focuses on evaluating bodies of work that are over the half time Charter threshold.

the work in benefitted positions, or that the work should be eliminated. Settlement of the *Logan* and *Knox* class action lawsuits in the mid-nineties led the County to modify its career service procedures.[9]

How does part-time employment at King County compare to peers?

King County covers more of the benefits costs of part-time employees than peers.

We interviewed both local government and transit peers and found the other jurisdictions' utilization of part-time employment and provision of health benefits varied widely.[10] The majority of jurisdictions we spoke to use part-time employment to supplement their regular work force; however, the range of benefits coverage varies.

Exhibit B: King County Provides a Greater Share of Benefits to Part-time Employees than Local Government Peers

Local Government Peers	Pro-Rata[11] Premium Sharing (Yes/No)	Specific Policy Features
King County, WA	No	Part-time employees working more than 50% receive full benefits
Pierce County, WA	Yes	Employee shares cost based on hours worked in addition to any premium share
Snohomish County, WA	Yes	Employee shares cost based on hours worked
Santa Clara County, CA	Yes	Employee shares cost based on hours worked
Clark County, NV	No	Employees are not eligible for benefits
Multnomah County, OR	Yes and No	Employee shares cost based on hours worked per week for benefits above basic package; however, some part-time employees are not benefit eligible

Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of interviews from King County and peer counties.

We also found that the majority of part time use by peer counties is reserved to fill business needs. There are few instances where part time is used for voluntary purposes, such as for new parents, retirees, or better work-life balance.

[9]The *Logan* and *Knox* plaintiffs alleged that they were unfairly excluded from being designated as career service employees due to misclassification/manipulation of work schedules as part-time and/or temporary employees of King County, and therefore not afforded benefits due career service employees. Per the settlement terms, the County contributed $22 million toward a claimant fund and avoided further litigation.

[10]We selected this group of peer jurisdictions based on geographic proximity and size of the jurisdiction. We also interviewed transit peers in our comparison given the high percentage of part-time employees in King County who work for Metro Transit. Metro Transit identified its peers.

[11] In a pro-rata system, employees pay a portion of the benefits costs based on the percentage of full-time schedule worked.

Transit peers provide fewer benefits and utilize fewer part-time employees compared to King County.

The Department of Transportation's staffing model determines the optimal mix of operators by taking into account average wages, benefits, and other costs along with the contractual limits for the allowable percentage of part-time operators. Since King County transit operations usually involve two peak-time periods corresponding to the morning and afternoon commutes, part-time employment is used to fill this demand. Positions in operations, such as bus operators and customer service representatives, are typically used for part-time employment, with bus operators being the most common. This is typical of the peer agencies we surveyed although as a percentage of the total workforce, peers have fewer part-time employees than King County. King County uses a greater percentage of part-time transit operators, because it has determined that this is the most efficient means to provide service.

Similar to King County, the majority of transit agencies we interviewed offer part-time employees benefits. However, all of the other transit agencies that offer benefits require employees to pay at least a part of the cost. This is substantially different from King County's system where only part-time transit employees working less than half time incur any premium copays.

Exhibit C: King County's Metro Transit Uses Part-time Employees More Than Peer Agencies

Entity	# of Full-time	# of Part-time	% of Part-time	Part-time Policy
King County, WA	1,636	940	36%	Employee premium contribution or reduced health benefits for operators less than 50%, full health benefits for operators greater than 50%
Tri-Met, Portland, OR	2,270	315	12%	Full health benefits for single operators, 75% coverage for part-time operators and dependents
San Francisco, CA	2,122	17	1%	Full health benefits for operators, includes employee contribution
Boston, MA	5,617	592	10%	Full health benefits for operators, includes employee contribution
Houston, TX	3,320	280	8%	No health benefits provided, however 3rd party health plans available for employee purchase

Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of information from King County and peer organizations.

Part-time Employment in King County

What is the cost impact of part-time employment in King County?

Under the current system, part-time employees are relatively more expensive on a per hour basis than their full-time counterparts. The proportionally higher per hour benefits cost associated with these part-time employees is relatively small – approximately $1.5 million. We calculated the additional costs of part-time schedules by removing part-time employees in job shares and part-time transit operators from the total population of 1,200 part-time employees, leaving about 300 employees.[12] King County uses part-time schedules in a variety of circumstances, most of which are designed to reduce its labor costs. However, using part-time schedules under the all or nothing system of benefits means the per hour cost of a part-time employee will be proportionally greater than a full-time employee. This is because the cost of benefits will be spread over fewer working hours increasing the per hour benefits cost. This is not to say that if King County eliminated part-time positions it would save this money. This simply illustrates that all things being equal, under current King County policy, it is more expensive on a per hour basis to employ part-time employees.

Are decisions about part-time employment equitable?

Decisions about who works part time are primarily made at the departmental level and no uniform guidance exists to ensure the county has consistent policies about part-time employment. This raises potential equity issues, as similar positions may have inconsistent access to part-time status based on the subjective determinations of individual supervisors or departments.

Current guidance to departmental managers regarding part-time positions is focused on ensuring positions are appropriately classified regarding career service. For example, the Human Resources Division (HRD) provides a Contingent Worker Manual to executive agencies to guide decision-makers about standards and the Career Service Review Committee review process. Nothing in the manual, however, addresses considerations for personnel who are interested in less than full-time work, e.g., an employee already in a full-time position who inquires about working reduced hours.

Some labor agreements dictate terms of part-time employment

Several themes arose from our interviews with department managers and our review of personnel data. First, functions with large numbers of benefitted

[12]We eliminated transit operators because the Department of Transportation, which employs the vast majority of part-time employees, uses a staffing model that takes into account the benefits costs of part-time transit operators to determine the optimal mix of full and part-time operators.

part-time positions tend to be limited to those specifically designated as part time by virtue of a collective bargaining agreement. The largest groups of these employees, such as the part-time transit operators, are represented. The largest non-union group of part-time benefitted employees, in the PAO, has policy guidance on part-time status within the Prosecuting Attorney's Association agreement (on behalf of the non-senior deputy prosecuting attorneys for King County).

No consistent procedures to allow employees to work part time
Second, different departments and agencies reported varying practices to document the status and reasoning behind an individual's status as a part-time regular position. None noted a specific, formal process for documenting the interest or request by the employee for part-time status, or review and approval for that status by their supervisor and department management, except the PAO. One department reported that they "might" note the position as voluntarily part time as part of an Alternative Work Schedule agreement. The language in the HRD's Alternative Work Arrangements Guide does not include any mention of potential voluntary part-time status.

Career service status impacts employees' ability to work part time
Third, differences in career service status may affect the way county agencies address voluntary part-time positions. The PAO, whose employees are career service exempt, has a formal process for staff interested in voluntary part time through identifying persons interested in job sharing. In this situation, one employee works over half-time and receives medical benefits, while the other works less and does not–typically split 60 percent to 40 percent. These job share arrangements were not observed in Executive departments, which are subject to career service administrative review processes.

Retirement credits may impact employees' willingness to work part time
Finally, from an employee's perspective, there may be additional considerations besides county medical benefits that affect interest in particular thresholds of part-time service. Under state law, service credit for retirement benefits (PERS 2 and PERS 3) is earned monthly as follows:

- Up to 69.9 hours = 1/4 month of service credit
- 70 to 89.9 hours = 1/2 month of service credit
- 90 hours and up = one full month of service credit

Employees, therefore, may have an interest to work at least half time to obtain county benefits, but to also work sufficient hours to obtain a full service credit toward PERS retirement.[13] Our analysis of part-time employees outside of Transit found that, of the 300 individuals working part time, only about 40 percent worked less than this 90 hour per month standard required to receive a full month of service credit.

Recommendation 1

The County Executive should develop and submit for County Council approval a plan detailing how it plans to use part-time schedules to further county strategic goals. This plan should include more uniform guidance defining 'voluntary' part-time employment, so departments can take a more consistent approach for authorizing and/or promoting part-time employment for interested personnel.

What data exists on part-time employees and job satisfaction or retention?

Because the County does not yet track or monitor part-time employment institutionally, it is not clear if the county's current policies adversely impact employee retention and satisfaction related to part-time work.

The county's personnel database (PeopleSoft) has fields for designating an employee's status as part time based on position or request. However, human resources staff reported that this data is not accurate, because it is up to individuals at the department level to keep this information current and human resources staff has found this is not always the case. They explained that while this field is accurate from a budgeting perspective it is not always up-to-date in terms of whether an individual employee is working a part or full-time schedule. More detailed data and improved accuracy on the status of part-time employment would support county human resources goals-as outlined in the Employer of the Future Report. For example, the report identifies as a goal that employees have flexibility about when and how they accomplish their work. As we discuss in the following section, greater flexibility could increase worker productivity and retention for employees interested in part-time schedules.

[13] This threshold is reached at a 0.7 FTE for 35 hour-per-week standard positions (.643), and 0.6 FTE for 40-hour positions (.563).

Part-time Employment in King County

What challenges and benefits exist with part-time employment?

The academic and professional literature regarding part-time work identifies several benefits for both workers and employers from part-time employment.[14]

Our review of academic and professional literature suggests that for workers, flexibility is the key advantage of part-time employment. Employees who work part time generally find that working fewer hours enables them to more successfully integrate work and home lives. Working part time can help employees balance care for small children, sick or elderly dependents, pursue academic or skill training, or ease into retirement. Managers of part-time employees note that part-time positions permit them to hire people they otherwise would not have had access to, such as employees with special backgrounds and skills, and that part-time employees may be especially productive–perhaps because part-time staff may have more time outside of work to take care of personal responsibilities and are accordingly focused on the tasks at hand during their scheduled work time. Two part-time employees may provide a wider set of skills than in one full-time person. Research has found that part-time workers were more productive hour for hour, and experienced fewer turnovers, than their full-time counterparts.

There are challenges with part-time employment as well.[15] For employees, shorter hours may mean less take-home pay. As with King County, employers may find administrative costs for part-time workers are higher because they must provide full benefits at higher marginal cost, process paperwork, and provide more management oversight, on a per hour basis, than full-time workers. Consistency of performance may be more difficult when more than one person works at the same task to varying degrees. In addition, part-time employees in non-voluntary positions may be more inclined to leave when offered full-time work or a higher salary elsewhere, and employee skill and/or career development may be slowed because of limited availability for training opportunities or special projects. Further abbreviated schedules may present communication challenges since the staff member is not always present during regular business hours.

[14]We reviewed a number of documents regarding part-time schedules. Examples include: Duke Human Resources Department, Flexible Work Options, http://www.hr.duke.edu/benefits/family/flexwork/options/abbreviated.php; Massachusetts Alternative Work Options Part-Time Employment Guidelines, http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/hr-policies/alt-work-options/alternative-work-options.html; Houston Chronicle, Advantages & Disadvantages of Part-Time Jobs, http://work.chron.com/advantages-disadvantages-parttime-jobs-15847.html.

[15]See the references above for discussions of the challenges of part-time schedules.

Recommendation 2

The Human Resources Division (HRD) should develop an evaluation plan to track part-time employees over a two-year period to monitor impact on employee retention and satisfaction. This would include better data on who works part time, the reason for the part-time schedule, and include part-time issues during employee exit interviews and employee surveys. HRD should report the evaluation results to the County Council in 2016.

What options exist for managing the costs or other aspects of part-time employment?

As we outlined above in the peer comparison, we identified three options for providing benefits to part-time employees:

1. Provide full benefits (status quo)
2. No benefits
3. Pro-rata (employer and employee share the cost of benefits)

Each option has advantages and disadvantages as shown in Exhibit D.

Exhibit D: Several Options for Providing Benefits Could Reduce the Cost of Part-time Employment

Policy Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Status Quo	• Simple to administer • Provides county with flexibility to use part-time employees • Makes King County more desirable for part-time employees	• All or nothing system • Most costly
No Benefits	• Cheapest option • Simple to administer	• Discourages employees to work part-time schedules
Pro-rata Benefits Costs	• Divides cost of benefits between employer and employee • Provides greater flexibility to the county to offer voluntary part-time schedules	• Those least able to pay for benefits contribute to defray costs • Increased complexity of administration • May have to be negotiated with labor union

Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis

Making changes to allocate benefits costs to part-time employees would require a policy decision balancing the county's competing strategic goals of maintaining a quality workforce and financial stewardship. Changing the current part-time policy could involve:

- Additional costs associated with amending the county charter or costs of bargaining for and administering a new system.
- Eliminating the status quo could have unintended consequences such as making it more difficult to recruit and retain employees for essential part-time positions.
- It is unclear what the final impact of the Federal Affordable Care Act will be. The Act's employer mandate could reduce King County's flexibility to change the current system.[16]

It is unclear that any cost savings achieved by changing the current policy would exceed the costs associated with such a change.

Conclusion

As King County reexamines its personnel policies through its Employer of the Future and other initiatives, policy-makers may wish to consider the pros and cons of part-time schedules and determine if current policies discouraging part-time schedules further the county's strategic goals. Improved information regarding the County's current use of part-time schedules and data regarding to what extent current employees would be interested in utilizing a part-time schedule will assist policy-makers in making decisions about personnel policies. Any changes in county policy might balance benefits costs with economic and social justice objectives of county policy as well. If the County Council decides to change the county's approach to part-time schedules, it might consider code and charter changes and other associated costs necessary to accomplish this goal.

[16]The Affordable Care Act defines full-time as employees hired to work more than 30 hours a week, therefore, it is unclear what impact this definition would have on a pro-rata system, as employees who work between 30 and 40 hours a week while classified as full-time may have additional contribution requirements that full-time employees working 40 hours a week would not.

Executive Response

King County

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KING COUNTY AUDITOR
APR 02 2014
RECEIVED

March 27, 2014

Kymber Waltmunson
King County Auditor
Room 1033
COURTHOUSE

Dear Ms. Waltmunson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed final report of the 2014 Performance Audit of Part-time Employment in King County. Thank you also for the professionalism and collaboration of your staff with executive branch departments throughout the audit process.

The recommendations in the report are both timely and helpful in light of the work we have recently undertaken related to becoming the "Employer of the Future." Effectively utilizing part-time employment will be critical if we want to attract the next generation of public servants, as well as efficiently manage our workforce. Further, the recommendations set forth a solid methodology for addressing the important issues of recruiting and retaining excellent employees while at the same time ensuring that we live within our restricted budget.

Why this is urgent and important work

In order to become the best run government in the country, one that delivers fast, accurate, reliable services to the community, and constantly evolves to meet our region's changing needs, we have to do things differently, and that starts with our most valuable resource – our employees.

As a result of increasing retirements coupled with our natural turnover rate, we anticipate that approximately 46% of our workforce (or 6,141 employees) will turnover by the year 2018. What's more, the next generation of public service employees who will be filling those gaps is not only significantly more diverse, they also have different expectations and values for what they want out of their employment experience.

As is aptly pointed out in the report, part-time employment has many potential benefits. It can help employees to balance care for small children, sick or elderly dependents, pursue academic or skill training, or ease into retirement. The findings in this report that the County should explore how part-time employment can help us meet our strategic goals and that the process for voluntarily requesting part-time work should be made more transparent and equitable are exactly in line with the type of flexibility we need to start providing in order to attract and retain our future workforce.

Using data to understand and address our challenges

Prior to the implementation of our PeopleSoft enterprise system, very little of this data and analysis would have been possible. Because we now have reliable, countywide data in a single system, we are able to look not only at issues like our use of part-time employees, but also how related issues like turnover, promotions, leave usage and many other factors are impacting our workforce. While we are just beginning to explore the possibilities this "big data" analysis holds, I am optimistic that, with respect to part-time employment and many others issues, it will be a critical tool in how we learn and grow as an organization. I am pleased that data from our central system was able to play such a key role in this report, and also appreciative that the recommendations rely on this new, valuable set of data.

Report Recommendations

Across the board we believe these recommendations will help us along on our journey of transforming our role as an employer and the employment experience for our employees. The enclosed table indicates our full support of both recommendations and our initial approach to implementing them.

Again, I would like to extend my appreciation to the audit team for their thoughtful and collaborative work. If you have any questions about this response, please contact Nancy Buonanno Grennan, Director, Human Resources Division, at 206-477-3274. We look forward to working with you again in the near future in our shared goal of becoming an employer of the future.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

Recommendation	Agency Position	Schedule for Implementation	Comments
1. The County Executive should develop, and submit for County Council approval, a plan detailing how it plans to use part-time schedules to further County strategic goals. This plan should include more uniform guidance defining "voluntary" part-time employment, so departments can take a more consistent approach for authorizing and/or promoting part-time employment for interested personnel.	Concur	• Comprehensive approach to be developed as part of Employer of the Future work. • Interim guidance provided to departments and agencies on the definition of "voluntary" and a recommended process to create more consistency in part-time authorizations by October 31, 2014. • Update to Council by October 31, 2014.	A strategic, comprehensive approach to part-time employment will necessarily be part of the Employer of the Future work but timing for that part of the project is still to be determined. HRD will work closely with human resources staff from departments and agencies to construct guidance and recommendations.
2. The Human Resources Division (HRD) should develop an evaluation plan to track part-time employee retention and satisfaction. This would include better data on who works part-time, the reason for the part-time schedule, and include part-time issues during employee exit interviews and employee surveys. HRD should report the evaluation results to the County Council in 2016.	Concur	• Questions regarding part-time employment to be included on the countywide employee exit survey by 2nd quarter, 2014. • Exploration of additional information that could be gathered in PeopleSoft by 1st quarter, 2015. • Exit interview question recommendations to departments and agencies by October, 31, 2014. • Report to Council in 2016.	It is possible that the issue of gathering additional information in PeopleSoft could be explored earlier than 2015, but timing will depend on the PeopleSoft upgrade happening currently through the end of 2014.

Statement of Compliance, Scope, Objective & Methodology

Statement of Compliance with Government Auditing Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Audit Scope and Objectives

The objectives for the performance audit of part-time employment in King County were to:

1. Determine to what extent part-time work schedules are used in King County.
2. Describe how departments and divisions within King County determine who can work part-time.
3. Identify whether King County can more effectively use part-time schedules to further its strategic goals.

Methodology

To achieve the objectives noted above, the King County Auditor's Office conducted audit work at the five agencies within King County that made the most use of part-time schedules. These were the Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Department of Public Health, and Department of Executive Services. We based our analysis on PeopleSoft data provided by the Human Resources Division. We interviewed human resources personnel from each of these agencies to determine how their organizations made decisions about part-time schedules and the effect of current King County personnel policies regarding part-time employment. We also interviewed a number of officials in other jurisdictions to understand how they used part-time schedules and how they provided benefits to part-time employees. We interviewed Pierce and Snohomish counties in Washington; Multnomah County, Oregon; Clark County, Nevada; and Santa Clara County, California. We selected these counties based on geographic proximity as well as similarities in size compared to King County. For transit agencies, we interviewed Tri-Met, Portland; San Francisco, California; Boston, Massachusetts; and Houston, Texas. We selected these agencies based on input from the Department of Transportation and relative system size based on information in the National Transit Database. We also surveyed relevant literature, including academic and professional journals to identify trends and best practices related to part-time employment.

Scope of Work on Internal Controls

We assessed internal controls relevant to the audit objectives. This included review of selected policies, plans, processes, and reports. In many areas of this audit, we relied on computer-generated data. We tested the reliability of the data using a variety of techniques depending on the data and our purposes. We determined that the data used was sufficiently reliable for our intended purposes.

List of Recommendations & Implementation Schedule

Recommendation 1: The County Executive should develop and submit for County Council approval a plan detailing how it plans to use part-time schedules to further county strategic goals. This plan should include more uniform guidance defining 'voluntary' part-time employment, so departments can take a more consistent approach for authorizing and/or promoting part-time employment for interested personnel.

> **Implementation Date:** Update to Council by October 31, 2014.
> **Estimate of Impact:** A utilization plan for part-time employment will identify criteria for evaluating county practices relative to larger fiscal efficiency and workforce performance goals, in turn providing guidance for county managers, increasing equity, and facilitating County Council policy direction and review.

Recommendation 2: The Human Resources Division (HRD) should develop an evaluation plan to track part-time employees over a two-year period to monitor impact on employee retention and satisfaction. This would include better data on who works part time, the reason for the part-time schedule, and include part-time issues during employee exit interviews and employee surveys. HRD should report the evaluation results to the County Council in 2016.

> **Implementation Date:** Report to Council in 2016.
> **Estimate of Impact:** Detailed employee input and wide-ranging data regarding part-time work will allow HRD to better evaluate opportunities to improve employee satisfaction, while also providing comprehensive information to County Council and executive management to utilize part-time employment for increased efficiency and reduced costs.