



KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

DECEMBER 1, 2021

Follow-up on Labor Relations

The Office of Labor Relations (OLR) has implemented three recommendations, helping to better monitor and communicate contract timeliness and ensure high-quality contract language. OLR has implemented several project management processes that allow the agency to monitor and communicate whether contracts are meeting milestones and are going through language quality review steps. This includes a contract tracking system, guidance documents, and a checklist of steps negotiators must take for each contract. OLR has created more formal expectations for review processes with other county agencies, including the Department of Human Resources and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, helping to ensure language is clear and consistent and contracts are reviewed for potential legal issues before being finalized.

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) along with other county agencies have started developing a database to track grievances across King County. Completing this project will help increase equity and efficiency by allowing agencies to see how similar grievances have been addressed across the county and identify potential improvements in contract language. DHR anticipates the project will be complete by December 2022.

Of the four audit recommendations:

	3 DONE		1 PROGRESS		0 OPEN
Fully implemented Auditor will no longer monitor.	Partially implemented Auditor will continue to monitor.	Remain unresolved Auditor will continue to monitor.			

Please see below for details on the implementation status of these recommendations.



Recommendation 1

DONE



The Office of Labor Relations should develop and implement a project management-based schedule to manage the workflow of those parts in the contracting process that the Executive Office controls. The schedule should include the timeframe, deadline, and responsibilities for each task in the process, and the critical path for timely contract completion.

STATUS UPDATE: OLR hired a project manager in 2021 who developed several project management tools that treat contracts as projects, creating rigor in contract development and schedule. These tools include a tracking system with key milestones and due dates, which OLR leadership and negotiators use to manage and monitor contract progress in real time.

IMPACT: Implementing this schedule tracking system has allowed OLR to identify when contracts might miss key deadlines and be able to communicate that with relevant county agencies and its labor partners.

Recommendation 2

DONE



The Office of Labor Relations should develop, document, and implement procedures to guide and support negotiators in ensuring high quality contract language.

STATUS UPDATE: OLR has created or formalized several procedures to ensure quality contract language. OLR created a guidance document and checklist of these procedures for negotiators to ensure each contract goes through review check points with partners like the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Business Resource Center, and DHR. For example, negotiators circulate implementation language through Prosecuting Attorney's Office before tentative agreement. OLR has also incorporated internal peer review where negotiators review each other's contracts and provide feedback on language and other issues.

IMPACT: These steps have helped OLR ensure that language is used more consistently across contracts and to catch issues before contracts are finalized. It has also helped ensure county agencies with roles in implementing contracts have an opportunity to see drafts and provide feedback so the language is clear for implementation purposes. This will help avoid confusion or conflicts after a contract has been finalized.

Recommendation 3

DONE



The Office of Labor Relations, working with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO), should define and document the purpose and timing of the PAO's review of contracts and ensure that PAO participates as outlined.

STATUS UPDATE: OLR and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office have agreed on at least two review steps by the Prosecuting Attorney's Office prior to finalizing contracts. OLR has included those review points in its checklist for negotiators.

IMPACT: This has created a more consistent and predictable review process for the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, helping to ensure it has the ability to catch potential legal issues with contract language.

Recommendation 4

PROGRESS



The County Executive should develop and implement a grievance database in consultation with the Office of Labor Relations and county agencies that would be using the data.

STATUS UPDATE: DHR is leading an effort with OLR, King County Information Technology, Metro Transit, and other county agencies to stand up a database that would include information about grievances across King County. DHR anticipates this project will be complete by December 2022.

WHAT REMAINS: This recommendation will be considered complete once the database is operational and being used by county agencies. Implementing this recommendation will help improve efficiency and equity through understanding how similar grievances are addressed and identify where improvements in contracts could be made.

Elise Garvey conducted this review. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the King County Auditor's Office at KCAO@KingCounty.gov or 206-477-1033.