



Ombudsperson

Role Title: Ombudsperson (Ombuds)

Salary: \$110,000

Overview of KCRHA

The King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) stewards homelessness-related programming and prevention initiatives in the Seattle/King County region. The Authority was created with an interlocal agreement between the City of Seattle and King County in 2019. The KCRHA's job is to build and implement a regional approach to ending homelessness in King County. To accomplish this, the KCRHA is tasked specifically with:

1. Building upon partnership and shared power with people who have experienced homelessness in decision-making processes and program implementation, assessment, and design.
2. Focusing on restorative justice-based approaches to ensure humanity and respect for every person at every level of homelessness related systems and actively addressing and changing practices that foster racially disparate negative outcomes in the population experiencing homelessness; and
3. Integrating the perspectives of a wide range of community partners and individuals with lived experience across King County through a sub-regional planning process that recognizes the unique attributes of communities within the county.

The KCRHA is currently in its founding era and seeks dynamic and skilled leaders at all levels to carry out its mission to significantly decrease the incidence of homelessness throughout King County, using equity and social justice principles. We believe people with lived experience must be centered in system design. Thus, we strongly encourage applications from people with lived experiences of homelessness and housing insecurity and people who identify as BIPOC or Trans and Gender-Expansive.

Team Overview

The Office of the Ombudsperson (Ombuds Office) is responsible for assisting the King County Regional Homelessness Authority, providers, and the greater community to improve access to equitable and quality homelessness services that center people with lived experience. The

Ombuds Office will promote constituent confidence in KCRHA by responding to concerns from people living homeless and use this feedback to inform policies and programs within the homelessness system. The primary goal of the Ombuds Office is to assist people living homeless on their path to fairer access to external resources and improve their quality of life while in shelter and other housing interventions. The Office will be an advocate to ensure that people experiencing homelessness have a meaningful role in the decision-making processes throughout the homelessness system.

The team will consist of the Chief Ombudsperson and approximately four team members with direct lines of interaction with all offices across the KCRHA and will work closely with the Executive Office to ensure direct alignment with the big-picture strategy and goals of the Regional Authority.

The Ombuds team will also work closely with the Lived Experience Coalition (LEC) to co-develop important components of the office and maintain accountability to centering people with lived experience. The LEC is an independent coalition that represents a diverse group of people who are currently or have formerly experienced homelessness. They work collectively to drive systems change, shift power, and advance transformative approaches to justice through a race and social justice lens.

The vision of the Ombuds Office was primarily driven by the LEC and the foundational recommendations supporting a comprehensive system redesign advise that the LEC “continue to be a driving partner in defining and designing the structures and processes of the Ombuds Office.”¹

Role Description

The Ombuds primary role is to assist the Ombuds team in supporting constituent decision-making power, facilitating ongoing community engagement, investigating claims, resolving issues, providing restorative focused technical assistance, and engaging in community-based participatory research and data collection. The purpose of this work is to leverage the Ombuds Office’s engagement with the community to ensure homeless service environments are safe and respectful for everyone and meaningfully integrate the daily lived experiences and perspectives of people living homeless in the Authorities policies and priorities. **This role will grow and evolve with the office as needed.**

Essential Job Accountabilities

- Partner with the Chief Ombuds to support the development and design of Ombuds related work.
- Regularly engage community groups to support ongoing improvement and design efforts.

¹ National Innovation Service. (2019). *Implementing Action #2: Consolidate Regional Investments King County*.

- Provide referrals and direct assistance to people experiencing homelessness, including advocacy in navigating the KCRHA's processes and access to services.
- Evaluate, investigate, and assist people experiencing homelessness in resolving grievances with provider partners and systems, and to foster service environments that foster healthy and mutually respectful relationships between people using services and the providers of services.
- Provide training and support to the greater homelessness system on how to center lived expertise and partner with community-based organizations and people with lived experience to design and implement these trainings.
- Work with the Ombuds team to develop proposals and make recommendations to change KCRHA policies and contracts to improve the system.
- Assist in identifying complaint trends and patterns and recommend changes to the Chief Ombuds and Ombuds Team for responding to systemic issues.
- Assist in designing and implementing ways of collecting data, engaging communities, and developing goals that promote the KCRHA's mission to respond to feedback from people with lived experience.
- Assist in developing metrics, in partnership with people with lived experience, providers, and the Lived Experience Coalition, that measure the system's ability to serve the holistic needs of households experiencing homelessness.

Preferred Qualifications

- Comfortable with ambiguity, flexible and adaptable to change, and an ability to thrive in a startup work environment that encourages critical thinking and creative problem solving.
- Exceptionally detail oriented with excellent interpersonal communication skills including exceptional listening skills.
- Fluency in equity and racial justice concepts, an understanding of one's own privilege and power, and a willingness and ability to analyze equity in the context of their role and daily tasks.
- Ability to effectively organize work activities to accomplish goals.
- Ability to meet with partners and people experiencing homelessness across the region.
- Experience working with people making complaints and handling them with kindness, compassion, and courtesy.
- Deep connections to communities most impacted by homelessness.
- Experience listening to people's stories and creating solutions to influence policy and practice.
- A working knowledge of the homeless system, its programs, and interventions.
- A willingness to learn and develop mediation and conflict intervention skills grounded in principles of transformative and restorative justice.
- Ability to conduct work with data and understand policy to make recommendations.
- Experience working effectively with others from different backgrounds and cultures.

- Ability to provide and accept feedback.
- Willingness to learn technology that may be used by the KCRHA.
- Must have strong initiative and the ability to work independently with minimal direction/supervision.
- Excellent follow through on commitments, using sound judgment with the ability to recognize and handle sensitive/confidential information.

Vaccination Mandate

KCRHA is subject to the King County requirement that all county contractors and volunteers working onsite (Workers) at Executive branch agencies (Agency/Agencies) be fully vaccinated.

If you are the successful candidate for a position, KCRHA will send you a conditional offer letter. As a condition of employment, prior to a final offer of employment, you will be required to:

- submit proof of vaccination, or
- have an approved request for medical or religious exemption and an approved accommodation. Philosophical, political, scientific, or sociological objections to vaccination will not be considered for an exemption or accommodation.

People are considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 two weeks after receiving the final dose of a vaccination approved by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

EEO Statement

The King County Regional Homelessness Authority is committed to a policy of Equal Employment Opportunity and will not discriminate against an applicant or employee on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, alienage or citizenship status, ancestry, nationality, national origin, marital or domestic partnership or civil union status, familial status, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. In addition, The RHA will provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities.