

September 13, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Seattle City Council
From: Karina Bull, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120172: Third Quarter Employment Ordinance

On September 14, 2021, the Governance and Education Committee will discuss and may vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120172](#), the Third Quarter Employment Ordinance. This memo summarizes the background and content of the legislation.

Summary

This legislation would (1) return thirteen positions to the civil service system and (2) amend five classification titles. Central Staff has not identified issues or concerns with this legislation.

A. Return thirteen positions to the civil service system

The Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) Director has determined that the work performed by thirteen positions no longer meets the criteria for civil service exemption and recommends returning the positions to civil service. See Table 1 for a list of these positions.

Table 1: Thirteen positions that would return to civil service

	Job Classification	Department	Vacancy Status	Number of Positions
1	Manager 2, Finance, Budget, and Accounting	Department of Education and Early Learning	Filled	One
2	Strategic Advisor 1, Gen Gov't	Finance and Administrative Services (FAS)	Vacant	One
3	Strategic Advisor, Purchasing, Contracting, & Risk Management	FAS	Vacant	Two
4	Strategic Advisor 1, Gen Gov't	Office for Civil Rights	Vacant	One
5	Strategic Advisor 2, Finance, Budget, and Accounting	Office of Emergency Management	Vacant	One
6	Manager 2, Engineering and Plans Review	Parks and Recreation	Vacant	One
7	Strategic Advisor 1, Gen Gov't	Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR)	Vacant	One
8	Accountant, Principal	SDHR	Filled	One
9	Strategic Advisor 1, Information Technology	Seattle Municipal Court	Vacant	Three
10	Executive Assistant, Senior	Seattle Public Utilities	Vacant	One

Under the [City of Seattle \(City\) Charter Article XVI, Section 3](#), the civil service system provides public employees with job protections such as merit-based hiring and promotions, probationary periods of employment, opportunity for employees to correct performance issues, and “for cause” termination (i.e., termination based only on unsatisfactory job performance). Employees exempt from the civil service system do not serve a probationary period and are subject to “at will employment” (i.e., employment that may be terminated at any time for any reason not prohibited by law).

The Charter requires civil service classification for all City employees except for elected officials, heads of departments, specified appointive offices, assistant City Attorneys, members of boards and commissions, and additional positions exempted by legislation approved by two-thirds vote of the Council. In total, about 90 percent of City positions are civil service classified.

Under [Personnel Rule 2.2](#), the SDHR Director may transmit legislation to Council that recommends returning a position to civil service or exempting the position from civil service. Council also has authority to introduce legislation on civil service classification.

B. Amend classification titles

This legislation would amend five classification titles to reflect the transfer of positions from the Seattle Police Department to the Community Safety and Communications Center. See Table 2 for details on the classification titles.

Table 2: Classification titles that would be amended

Former Classification Titles	New Classification Titles ♦ Effective June 1, 2021
Police Comms Dispatcher I	9-1-1 Emergency Comms Dispatcher I
Police Comms Dispatcher II	9-1-1 Emergency Comms Dispatcher II
Police Comms Dispatcher III	9-1-1 Emergency Comms Dispatcher III
Police Comms Dispatcher Supv	9-1-1 Emergency Comms Dispatcher Supv
Police Comms Analyst	9-1-1 Emergency Comms Analyst
Police Comms Dispatcher I	9-1-1 Emergency Comms Dispatcher I

Financial Impacts

There would be no direct costs associated with these employment actions. Any costs that might be associated with an incumbent’s change in civil service status or classification title would be absorbed by the department’s existing budget authority and would not require appropriation of new funds.

Racial Equity Impacts

The City’s commitment to workforce equity includes (1) eliminating institutional and structural barriers impacting employee attraction, selection, participation, and retention and (2) enabling

opportunity for employment success and career growth. Increasing the number of positions with civil service status could support these goals.

The [City's 2021 Workforce Equity Technical Report](#) finds that Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) employees, and especially BIPOC women, are underrepresented at the top levels (e.g., supervisors and high wage earners) of City employment when compared to the general population. Increasing the number of positions, especially higher-paying positions, with civil service protections could achieve more equity for BIPOC employees by removing the barriers that create risk and uncertainty for employees seeking career growth. Many of the positions in this legislation that would return to civil service are Strategic Advisor positions. According to SDHR, such positions are often the first type of jobs for employees moving out of step-placement positions and seeking career mobility. Strategic advisor positions that offer job stability and financial security could attract a greater diversity of candidates.

Please contact me if you have questions about this proposed legislation.

cc: Esther Handy, Director
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