



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31910, Version: 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION requesting a plan to develop an “Infants at Work” pilot program for eligible City of Seattle employees and their infants.

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Washington State Department of Health implemented an “Infant at Work Program”

based on the long-term health value of breastfeeding or chestfeeding newborns and bonding, and allows eligible parents or guardians to bring their infants aged six weeks to six months to work; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners marked 20 years of its “Infants in the Workplace” program, during which they have been recognized for excellence in promoting work-life balance; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, King County developed a work plan for implementing an “Infants at Work” pilot program in King County Elections; and

WHEREAS, the King County Women’s Advisory Board issued a report in 2019 finding that the cost of childcare in King County has been growing faster than the rate of inflation for the last 25 years and families making the area median income (AMI) are spending nearly one-quarter of their income on child care; and

WHEREAS, the King County Women’s Advisory Board’s report also found that childcare costs for infants and young toddlers are more expensive than childcare for older children; and

WHEREAS, the Parenting in the Workplace Institute reports that more than 2,100 infants in more than 200 organizations have been successfully brought to work in office-based, cubicle-based, and open-plan environments; and

WHEREAS, the Parenting in the Workplace Institute reports that key benefits of “Infants at Work” programs for families are lower childcare costs, better financial stability for employees, lower stress, increased bonding, and fewer barriers to breastfeeding and chestfeeding; and

WHEREAS, the Parenting in the Workplace Institute reports that key benefits of “Infants at Work” programs for employers are increased employee loyalty, lower turnover costs, increased productivity, and lower healthcare costs from increased breastfeeding and chestfeeding rates; and

WHEREAS, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reported that the United States has one of the lowest breastfeeding and chestfeeding initiation rates among industrialized countries, and that returning to work is one of the reasons why parents never start breastfeeding or chestfeeding, or only do so for short durations; and

WHEREAS, a program to allow infants in the workplace could create increased opportunities to breastfeed or chestfeed, which has been proven by the World Health Organization to improve the health of parents and infants with health benefits that include reduced infant mortality, reduced perinatal mood disorders, and accelerated infant recovery during illnesses that could require employees to take sick leave; and

WHEREAS, Black parents, Indigenous parents, and parents of color who breastfeed and chestfeed often face racial discrimination in medical care, including lactation support, as well as barriers to resources and workplace policies that promote breastfeeding and chestfeeding goals due to structural and institutionalized racism; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle supports the women, men, and non-binary individuals who help Seattle run while balancing caretaking responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle recognizes that many individuals raise children, including parents, grandparents, and other caretakers; and

WHEREAS, children develop differently, and age is only one factor in appropriate limitations for an “Infants at Work” program; and

WHEREAS, establishing an “Infants at Work” pilot program would further The City of Seattle’s commitment to recruiting and retaining a diverse and excellent workforce to better serve the people of Seattle, and would maintain the City’s commitment to strong labor protections for its employees; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:

Section 1. The City Council (“Council”) requests the Executive to develop an “Infants at Work” pilot program that outlines a plan to provide eligible parents and guardians the opportunity to bring their infants to work for a limited period during the infant’s first year of life.

A. The Council requests the Executive to review and consider resources on “Infants at Work” programs, including, but not limited to, publications by the Parenting in the Workplace Institute, and to consult with organizations that have planned, implemented, and/or evaluated such programs including, but not limited to, the Washington State Department of Health, the Nevada State Health Division, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, and King County Elections.

B. The Council requests the Executive to consult with the Seattle Women’s Commission, Office for Civil Rights, and the Office of Labor Standards; unions representing City employees including but not limited to the Coalition of City Unions; and other relevant stakeholders, including new parents or guardians and the Workforce Equity Planning and Advisory Committee (WEPAC), in the development of a pilot program, and to consider the racial, gender, and economic equity impacts of implementing a pilot program.

C. The Council requests the Executive to transmit a plan for a pilot program that includes, but is not limited to:

1. A description of program eligibility requirements;
2. A description of any workplace environment considerations, such as safety guidelines, facility requirements, and recommended operational practices to ensure the adequate care of the infant, adequate workplace hygiene, and continued employee productivity;

3. The policies and procedures for events when an infant is disruptive to the work environment for a prolonged period, as well as a recommendation as to who will decide what behavior qualifies as disruptive;
4. An evaluation plan to assess the pilot program that includes quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. The number, gender, race or ethnicity, and compensation rate of employees who have used the program;
 - b. The employees' distribution among the City's departments and divisions, and wage bands;
 - c. Employee retention and satisfaction outcomes;
 - d. Any changes to productivity of participating work groups; and
 - e. Any cost or estimated cost savings associated with the program; and
5. The policies and procedures for cultural and religious accommodations;
6. A timeline for implementing the pilot program, including the duration and beginning and end dates;
7. The scope of employee groups to participate;
8. Alternative options for employees for whom bringing children to work may not be feasible based on work-type or the child's special needs or temperament, including telecommuting options, flexible scheduling, additional paid days off, or childcare subsidies; and
9. Training for participating staff, including training on communication, expectation setting, and safety/equipment needs, and for non-participating staff and employees to mitigate bias and supervision.

Section 2. The Council requests the Executive to transmit the plan for a pilot program, as described in this resolution, by April 15, 2020, along with any legislation necessary to implement the pilot program. The Council requests the Executive to file the plan with the City Clerk ("Clerk") in the form of a paper and an

electronic copy. The Clerk shall retain the paper copy and forward the electronic copy to all Councilmembers.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2019, and signed by
me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2019.

President _____ of the City Council

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2019.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)