

City of Seattle



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Director Human Services Department

Confirmation Packet
February 27, 2015

Catherine Lester



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray
Mayor

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CITY CLERK

February 27, 2015

The Honorable Tim Burgess
President, Seattle City Council
Seattle City Hall, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Council President Burgess:

I am pleased to transmit to the City Council the following confirmation packet for my appointment of Catherine Lester as Director of the City's Human Services Department.

The materials in this packet are divided into two sections:

A. Catherine Lester

This section contains Ms. Lester's appointment and oath of office forms, her resume, and the press release announcing her appointment.

B. Background Checks

This section contains the report to the Mayor's Office on Ms. Lester's background check.

Catherine Lester is a committed leader and innovative thinker, and her proven leadership will be effective in getting our resources to the people who need them most in our community – those who are homeless, youth looking for summer jobs and survivors of domestic violence. She has been a key leader of the Department's efforts to be results and data-driven, getting the most out of our public investments.

Catherine previously served as the Department's Acting Director from 2013-2014, during the transition between the Mayoral administrations, and was Deputy Director between 2011 and 2013.

Prior to coming to Seattle, she was Director of Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care at Cuyahoga County's Office of Health and Human Services in Ohio. Through her leadership in this role, child welfare recidivism improved and a new Continuous Quality Improvement process was implemented to maximize performance-based contracting for the county. She has a Master's of

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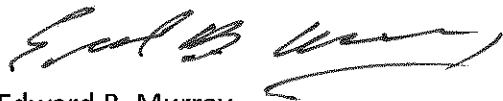
The Honorable Tim Burgess
February 27, 2015
Page 2

Science degree in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University and a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Ryerson University.

She is also a 2013-2014 Annie E. Casey Foundation Children and Families Fellow, a nationally-recognized leadership development program focused on systemic changes to improve the lives of children and families in the United States. Catherine will be an excellent Director for the Human Services Department and I urge you to confirm her.

If you have any questions about the attached materials or need additional information, please contact Deputy Mayor Kate Joncas at 206-684-3790, or via e-mail, at kate.joncas@seattle.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward B. Murray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Edward B. Murray
Mayor

SECTION

A



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray
Mayor

February 18, 2015

Catherine Lester
Seattle, WA 98124
Transmitted via e-mail

Dear Catherine,

It gives me great pleasure to appoint you to the position of Director of the Human Services Department (Executive 3), effective February 18, 2015 at an annual salary of \$151,000.

Your term of office is four years and you serve at the pleasure of the Mayor. Your appointment as Director is subject to City Council confirmation; therefore, you will need to attend the Council's confirmation hearings.

Your contingent offer letter provided employment information related to the terms of your employment, benefits, vacation, holiday and sick leave. If you have questions about your employment with the City of Seattle please contact Susan Coskey, Human Resources Director, at 206-615-1622.

I look forward to working with you in your role as Director and wish you success. We have much work ahead of us, and I am confident that the Human Services Department will thrive beyond expectation under your leadership.

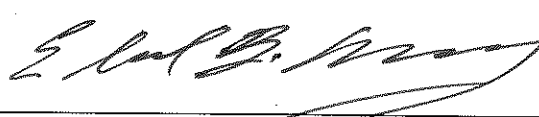
Sincerely,

Edward B. Murray
Mayor

cc: Department of Human Resources

City of Seattle

Notice of Appointment

Name: Catherine Lester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive Appointment <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative Appointment
Appointed to: Director of Human Services Department	Date of Appointment: February 27, 2015
Authority (Ord., Res.): Seattle Municipal Code 3.20.020	Term of Office From: City Council Confirmation To:
<p>Catherine Lester is a committed leader and innovative thinker, and her proven leadership will be effective in getting our resources to the people who need them most in our community – those who are homeless, youth looking for summer jobs and survivors of domestic violence. She has been a key leader of the Department’s efforts to be results and data-driven, getting the most out of our public investments.</p> <p>Catherine previously served as the Department’s Acting Director from 2013-2014, during the transition between the Mayoral administrations, and was Deputy Director between 2011 and 2013.</p> <p>Prior to coming to Seattle, she was Director of Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care at Cuyahoga County’s Office of Health and Human Services in Ohio. Through her leadership in this role, child welfare recidivism improved and a new Continuous Quality Improvement process was implemented to maximize performance-based contracting for the county. She has a Master’s of</p> <p>Science degree in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University and a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Ryerson University.</p> <p>She is also a 2013-2014 Annie E. Casey Foundation Children and Families Fellow, a nationally-recognized leadership development program focused on systemic changes to improve the lives of children and families in the United States.</p>	
Authorizing Signature: 	Name and Title of Officer Making Appointment: Edward B. Murray, Mayor



**CITY OF SEATTLE - STATE OF WASHINGTON
OATH OF OFFICE**

STATE OF WASHINGTON

COUNTY OF KING

I, Catherine Lester, swear or affirm that I possess all the qualifications prescribed in the Seattle City Charter and the Seattle Municipal Code for the position of Director of the Human Services Department; that I will support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Washington, and the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Seattle; and that I will faithfully conduct myself as *Director of the Human Services Department*.

Catherine Lester

**Subscribed and sworn to before me
this _____ day of _____, 2015**

(affix seal)

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

Catherine L. Lester

OBJECTIVE

Human services leader with more than 15 years of progressive experience, with a deep personal commitment to be a change agent focused on achieving results for vulnerable children, families and communities.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Deputy Director

2011-Present City of Seattle (Human Services Department), Seattle, WA

- Supervise eight senior level staff, 320 FTEs, 450 contracts, \$128M annual budget
- Oversee department's service delivery and business operations
- Develop budget proposals and projections
- Manage workforce planning including filling key vacancies, disciplinary matters, performance management and succession planning
- Create and lead organizational improvements and strategic planning efforts

Interim Director

2013-2014 City of Seattle (Human Services Department), Seattle, WA

- Supervised 10 senior level staff, 320 FTEs, 450 contracts, \$128M annual budget
- Oversaw department's service delivery and business operations
- Served as point of contact with Mayor's Office, City Council and other stakeholders
- Managed workforce planning including filling key vacancies, disciplinary matters, performance management and succession planning

Director, Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care

2009-2011 Cuyahoga County (Office of Health & Human Services), Cleveland, OH

- Supervised 10 direct reports, 12 contracts, \$13M annual budget
- Led transition planning for county's System of Care (SOC) initiative
- Achieved key outcomes for children and youth enrolled with Tapestry SOC:
 - 80% of youth demonstrated improved functioning
 - 24% reduction in juvenile justice recidivism
 - 90% placement stability for youth in foster care
- Implemented continuous quality improvement process
- Increased operating efficiencies that resulted \$160K in contractual cost savings
- Presented at the:
 - First Annual Cuyahoga County Conference on Social Welfare
 - National Federation of Families for Children Mental Health conference

Director, Vision Charlotte Initiative

2006-2009 City of Charlotte (Neighborhood Development Department), Charlotte, NC

- Supervised four direct reports, eight contracts, and \$500K annual budget
- Managed a public/private partnership to improve the quality of life in a revitalization neighborhood
- Supported 60 residents reach employment, with 70% retention for 6+ months
- Trained 120 residents on various leadership development topics

- Served more than 220 children and youth in out-of-school time programs
- Provided case management and crisis services to more than 180 residents

Social Service Manager

2004-2006 Mecklenburg County (Department of Social Services), Charlotte, NC

- Supervised seven direct reports
- Led integration of system reform efforts to address Federal audit requirements
- Secured \$3.4 million in Federal funds to support system improvement work
- Managed the implementation of a Title IV-E waiver demonstration project
- Implemented capacity building strategies for child welfare staff and providers
- Presented at the:
 - Council on Accreditation Best Practices conference
 - Improving Child Welfare Outcomes through System of Care conference

System Reform Coordinator

2000-2004 Mecklenburg County (Department of Social Services), Charlotte, NC

- Led the strategic planning and implementation of Family-to-Family initiative
- Organized and facilitated community conversation about child protection
- Developed strategy for contracting with community and faith based organizations
- Led the strategy for increasing recruitment of community-based foster homes
- Created a family center meeting model for making child protection decisions

Program Officer

1998-2000 Cuyahoga County – Family & Children First Council, Cleveland, OH

- Developed a countywide respite program for multi-system involved children
- Implemented a Request for Proposal for implementation of respite program
- Assisted with outreach efforts related to expansion of children's Medicaid services
- Facilitated workgroups focused on system coordination and alignment

EDUCATION

1997-1999 Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH

- Master of Science in Social Administration
- Recipient of Dean's Award

1993-1997 Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada

- Bachelor of Social Work
- Minor in Public Administration

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Annie E. Casey Foundation Children and Family Fellow, 2014

National Forum for Black Public Administrators Executive Leadership Institute, 2011

Consultant with Union County Department of Social Services, 2008-2009

Adjunct Faculty with Central Piedmont Community College, 2004-2007

Crisis Counselor with Carolinas Healthcare System, 2003-2005



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE **FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Viet Shelton, Mayor's Office Communications Director, 206.552.4996
Jason Kelly, Mayor's Office Press Secretary, 206.684.8379

Mayor Murray nominates Catherine Lester as Director of HSD

SEATTLE (Feb. 18, 2015) –Mayor Ed Murray today nominated Catherine Lester as Director of the Seattle Human Services Department.

Lester, who has a long career working in human and social services is currently HSD's Deputy Director, and will take over for John Okamoto, who Mayor Murray appointed as acting director in 2014.

"Catherine is a committed leader and innovative thinker, and we are lucky to have her," Murray said. "Her leadership will be effective in getting our resources to the people who need them most in our community – those who are homeless, youth looking for summer jobs and survivors of domestic violence."

"I am excited to serve as the leader of the Human Services Department. I am humbled by the commitment and passion demonstrated day in and day out by both the staff in this department, and the network of local service providers," Lester said.

"The question is not whether or not we can afford to invest in our most vulnerable neighbors and communities; it is whether we can afford not to. I look forward to continuing to partner with staff and providers to make sure that everyone in Seattle can enjoy the quality of life we all desire," she said.

"Catherine is the perfect choice to lead this Department. She has been the architect and driver of the Department's efforts to be results and data-driven – getting the most out of our public investments focused on disparities," said acting director John Okamoto.

"Catherine understands and knows our robust network of service providers. She is nationally recognized for her work, and she has the confidence of the employees of the Department. I am very pleased to hand over leadership to her," Okamoto said.

Okamoto will remain at HSD as a special projects consultant, assisting with the transition and providing strategic guidance over several projects, including the homeless investment analysis.

Lester previously served as Acting Director of HSD from 2013-2014 during the transition between the Mayoral administrations, and was also Deputy Director of HSD between 2011-2013. Prior to coming to Seattle, she was Director of Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care at Cuyahoga County's Office of Health and Human Services in Ohio. Through her leadership in this role, child welfare recidivism improved and a new Continuous Quality Improvement process was implemented to maximize performance-based contracting for the county. Lester has a Master's of Science degree in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University and a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Ryerson University. She is also a 2013-2014 Annie E. Casey Foundation Children and Families Fellow, a nationally-recognized leadership development program focused on systemic changes to improve the lives of children and families in the United States.

HSD's mission is to provide assistance to some of the most vulnerable individuals living in the city so that children, youth, and families can thrive. HSD will invest nearly \$37 million this year on services and programs to help prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless as well as to help people who are homeless find stability and permanent housing. This year's One Night Count saw a 21% increase of unsheltered homeless people in Seattle compared to last year, and under Lester's leadership, Mayor Murray has set expectations for HSD to focus on data-driven and outcomes-based efforts to better align the city's homelessness investments with innovative principles such as housing first and rapid re-housing strategies.

"As Seattle continues its generous investment in our community, it is important that our dollars produce outcomes for the clients of our many government, religious and non-profit programs," Murray said.

The Seattle Human Services Department is one of the largest contributors to Seattle's safety net, and provides \$99 million in funding through 522 contracts to nearly 200 agencies that support Seattle's most vulnerable residents each year.

HSD has an annual budget of \$129 million and 320 full-time employees. Catherine will start effective Feb. 18, and her salary will be \$151,000 per year.

-MoS-

SECTION

B



City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Seattle Department of Human Resources

Susan L. Coskey, Director

Date: March 3, 2015

To: Adam Schaefer, City Budget Office
Linet Madeja, City Budget Office

From: Melissa Beatty, HR Manager, Seattle Department of Human Resources

Subject: **BACKGROUND CHECK – CATHERINE LESTER**

The HR Department has received a copy of Catherine Lester's background check run by A-Check Global. There were no findings that would impact the employment eligibility of Ms. Lester.

cc: Personnel File, Human Services Department Director

