

September 15, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Seattle City Council
From: Karina Bull, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120654: Third Quarter 2023 Employment Ordinance

On September 19, 2023, the City Council (Council) will discuss and may vote on [Council Bill 120654](#), the Third Quarter Employment Ordinance. This memo provides an overview of the legislation and describes potential impacts.

Overview

The Council authorizes certain City of Seattle (City) personnel actions through quarterly employment ordinances. In the Third Quarter 2023 Employment Ordinance, Council would authorize the Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) Director to:

1. Return seven positions to the civil service system,
2. Exempt one position from the civil service system,
3. Adjust the salary ranges for two job titles, and
4. Establish three job titles with corresponding salary ranges.

1. Return seven positions to the civil service system.

The SDHR Director has determined that the work performed by seven positions no longer meets the criteria for civil service exemption and recommends returning these positions to the civil service system. See Table 1 for information on these positions.

Table 1. Positions that would return to civil service.

	Department	Original Classification (Exempt)	Proposed Classification (Civil Service)	Vacancy Status
1	Finance and Administrative Services (2 positions)	Strategic Advisor 2, Exempt	Strategic Advisor 2, General Government	Vacant
2	Seattle Public Utilities (2 positions)	Strategic Advisor 2, Exempt	Strategic Advisor 2, Utilities BU-P	Vacant
3	Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs	Strategic Advisor 1, Exempt	Strategic Advisor 1, Human Services	Vacant
4	Office of Economic Development	Strategic Advisor 2, Exempt	Strategic Advisor 1, Purchasing, Contracting, and Risk Management	Vacant
5	Human Services Department	Executive 1	Manager 3, General Government	Vacant

Civil service provides a range of job protections for City employees, including merit-based hiring and promotions, opportunity for employees to correct performance issues, and “for cause” termination (i.e., termination based only on unsatisfactory job performance). In contrast, employees exempt from civil service may be appointed without a competitive hiring process 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 [City Charter Article XVI, Section 3](#)¹ requires civil service membership for all City employees except for those in positions specifically exempted from civil service in the Charter and [Seattle Municipal Code \(SMC\) 4.13](#).² Approximately 90 percent of City employees are in the civil service.

The SDHR Director has authority under [Personnel Rule 2.2](#) to determine whether a position is exempt from civil service under SMC 4.13. The Director may exempt the following types of positions:

- Positions requiring a particularly high degree of professional responsiveness and individual accountability;
- Positions requiring a confidential or fiduciary relationship with the appointing authority; or
- Judicial positions requiring insulation as a third branch of government.

After making this determination, the SDHR Director may submit 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.

2. Exempt one position from the civil service system.

The SDHR Director has determined that the work performed by one position meets the criteria for civil service exemption and recommends exempting this position from the civil service system. The SDHR Director’s recommendation for this exemption will only take effect upon approval by two-thirds vote of the Council. See Table 2 for information on this position.

Table 2. Position that would be exempted from civil service.

	Department	Original Classification (Exempt)	Proposed Classification (Exempt)	Vacancy Status
1	Seattle Information Technology	Strategic Advisor 2, Exempt	Information Technology Professional A, Exempt	Filled

¹ Under the Charter, positions exempted from civil service include elected officers, certain appointive offices, assistant city attorneys, heads of departments, members of boards and commissions, and additional positions exempted by legislation approved by two-thirds vote of the Council.

² Under SMC 4.13, positions exempted from civil service include identified job titles in all employing units and specific positions. Examples of exempted job titles include temporary employees, interns, administrative secretaries, executives, office/maintenance aides, and exempt strategic advisors, managers, and information technology professionals. Examples of specific positions include electric utility executives at Seattle City Light, administrative staff and executive assistants identified by position number, and all directors of offices in the Executive Department.

3. Adjust the salary range for two job titles.

The SDHR Director recommends adjusting the salary range for two job titles. The salary adjustment would address a long-standing practice of paying employees in the Personnel Analyst, Senior and Personnel Analyst, Supervisor titles the same as their counterparts in the Compensation/Classification unit for equity purposes. This personnel action would permanently align the salary range of these titles and would impact ten positions with Personnel Analyst, Senior or Personnel Analyst, Supervisor titles. See Table 3 for information on these titles.

Table 3. Adjusted salary ranges.

	Title	Current Salary Range	Proposed Salary Range
1	Personnel Analyst, Senior	\$44.14 - \$45.75 - \$47.57 - \$49.49 - \$51.39	\$46.68 - \$48.48 - \$50.43 - \$52.41 - \$54.34
2	Personnel Analyst, Supervisor	\$47.57 - \$49.49 - \$51.39 - \$53.45 - \$55.44	\$54.34 - \$56.46 - \$58.55 - \$60.78 - \$63.09

4. Establish three job titles and corresponding salary ranges.

The SDHR Director recommends establishing job titles and corresponding salary ranges for three titles that were created and funded for the Community Safety and Communications Center (CSCC) in the City’s 2023 Mid-Year Supplemental Budget ([ORD 126876](#)). This personnel action would create titles and pay for seven positions in the CSCC. See Table 4 for information on these titles.

Table 4. Proposed job titles and corresponding salary ranges.

	Title	Proposed Salary Range
1	Community Crisis Responder I	\$36.47 - \$37.84 - \$39.28 - \$40.86 - \$42.57
2	Community Crisis Responder II	\$44.95 - \$46.68 - \$48.48 - \$50.43 - \$52.41
3	Community Crisis Responder Supervisor	\$48.48 - \$50.43 - \$52.41 - \$54.34 - \$56.46

Potential Impacts of CB 120654

Financial Impacts

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

Racial Equity Impacts

Increasing the number of positions with civil service status would support the City's commitment to eliminating racial disparities and achieving workforce equity.³ The City's [2021 Workforce Equity Update](#) reports that Black, Indigenous, and 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 with civil service protections, especially those with opportunities for higher pay and/or additional benefits, could achieve more equity for BIPOC employees by requiring a competitive hiring process and removing the barriers that create risk and uncertainty for employees seeking career growth.

Exempting positions from civil service creates greater risk for employees. In recognition of these risks, SDHR has partnered with the City Budget Office and Finance Managers to prioritize civil service status for new positions and decrease the number of exemption requests submitted to Council. Additionally, SDHR is developing plans and cost estimates to refine the civil service exemption process to ensure more consistency and equity in the Director's recommended personnel actions. Pending funding in the 2024 Adopted Budget, SDHR intends to undertake this effort alongside a full compensation and classification program review, last performed over 30 years ago.

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

cc: Esther Handy, Director
Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director
Yolanda Ho, Supervising Analyst

³ In the City's 2021 Workforce Equity Update Report, "workforce equity" is defined as (1) when the workforce is inclusive of people of color and other marginalized or under-represented groups at a rate representative of the greater Seattle area at all levels of government and (2) where institutional and structural barriers impacting employee attraction, selection, participation, and retention have been eliminated, enabling opportunity for employment success and career growth.