

SNOHOMISH COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

PUBLIC ADVOCATE

Spec No. 1164

BASIC FUNCTION

The Public Advocate is a community outreach position, accountable for organizing and implementing services and work activities which provide responses to citizen's complaints within its jurisdiction, including giving access and opportunity for citizens (including employees) to raise concerns and voice complaints. The office will receive, investigate, and make recommendations to the council and appropriate county agencies on complaints concerning the operation of county government and respond to inquiries from the public concerning the operation of county government.

STATEMENT OF ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES

1. Manages the administration and operation of the County's Office of Public Advocate by establishing and implementing business and program objectives, assigning workload and supervising employees who are engaged in investigations and customer service to the taxpayer.
2. Directs and performs intake of concerns through direct contact with constituents.
3. Develops and implements action plans resolving concerns; determines the methods by which complaints are made, received, and acted upon.
4. Determines the nature of communications that will be provided to the Council, Executive, and affected citizens, taking into consideration the need of confidentiality.
5. Monitor and report to the Council on the nature and disposition of whistleblower, ethics and human rights complaints filed pursuant to other county ordinances or procedures.
6. Prepares periodic public reports on work activity and outcomes of the Office. Oversees and prepares web pages, brochures, and other communications for public viewing.
7. Manages Office's responses to public disclosure and discovery requests.

STATEMENT OF OTHER JOB DUTIES

8. Performs other duties as assigned that support the overall objective of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications for this position are established by Snohomish County Code SCC 2.11.060. The position requires a person of recognized judgment, objectivity and integrity, who is well-equipped to analyze problems of law, administration, and public policy and shall hold no other elective or appointive office or position in county government. The position requires a degree from an accredited college or its equivalent in service to government.

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MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS (Continued)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

A valid Washington State Driver's License required for employment.

KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- codes, regulations, administrative, and legal procedures as they apply to the operation and jurisdiction of the Public Advocate Office
- principles and practices of public administration, the organization of the County functions, operations and interrelationships
- principles and practices associated with supervision, leadership style, team building, and performance management
- the principles, methods, and techniques used in the research and investigation of citizen complaints
- privacy, public information, record retention laws, including those involving the handling of information and communications of a confidential and sensitive nature
- the English language to write reports requiring the utmost choice of grammar and syntax to deal with complex, sensitive issues
- human relations skills to gain trust while working with others in extremely difficult, volatile, or at-risk situations, resolve conflict, employ lines of questioning for fact finding, deliver reports in formal settings, and review performance
- sufficient math skills to account for expenditures, and to develop, prepare and submit to the executive annual budget estimates for the office
- ability to use computers and common desktop productivity software

Ability to:

- carry out the functions and objectives of the position and office. Requires the ability to plan, organize, direct, implement the policies, programs, services and activities of the Public Advocate
- plan, organize and manage the activities of an office specializing in the review, resolution of complaints and allegations of wrongdoing by County officials and employees
- meet with constituents to determine problems and concerns regarding access to county service; craft solutions to constituent problems with county government services; recommend to Executive and Council changes, enhancements or redesign of county services to improve constituent experiences with county government
- communicate effectively both orally and in writing with diverse populations
- analyze and define complex and sensitive issues and problems, evaluate alternatives, and develop independent conclusions and recommendation in accordance with policies, codes, and laws, and in consideration of trade-offs and risks
- prepare clear, concise and comprehensive reports and other written materials

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KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES (Continued)

- establish and maintain effective work relationships with those encountered on work-related matters, including elected officials, County employees, representatives of other governmental agencies and the public
- keep confidential any complaint or investigative information, subject to applicable law

SUPERVISION

Employee is subject to administrative direction by the council chairperson or chief of staff.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Work is performed indoors where some safety considerations exist due to the strained or sensitive nature of investigations.

Snohomish County is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer.
Accommodations for individuals with disabilities are provided upon request.

[EEO policy and ADA notice](#)

Class Established: January 2014

Revised: August 2015

Revised and retitled: June 2017, Ombudsman

EEO Category: 1 – Official and Administrators

Pay Grade: 113 Management Exempt Pay Plan

Worker's Comp: 5306 – Non-Hazardous