

Diversity & Inclusion: King County's journey to become the Best-Run Government

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- Why am I here?
- What will I accomplish?
- What can you glean from listening to me?

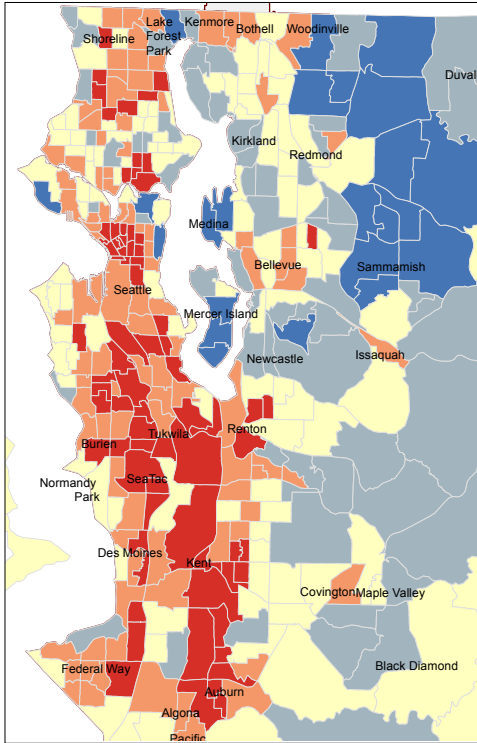
King County, WA – *at a glance*



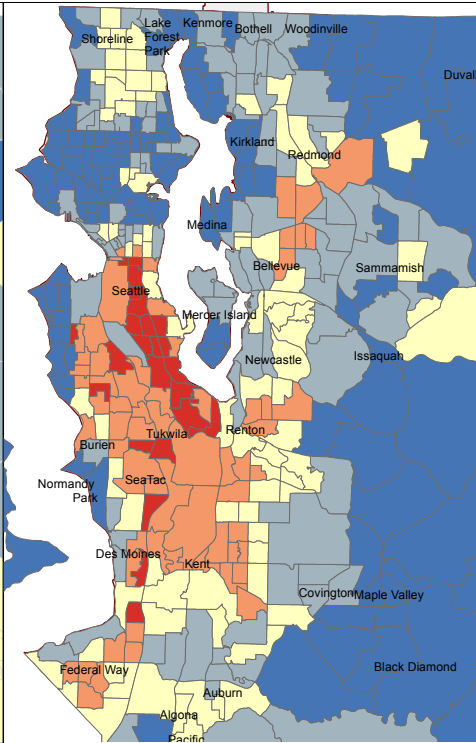
A robust and innovative economy, stunning natural beauty, a thriving cultural and arts scene, and *openness to diversity* make King County a unique home to more than 2 million residents.

Demographics of King County, WA – at a glance

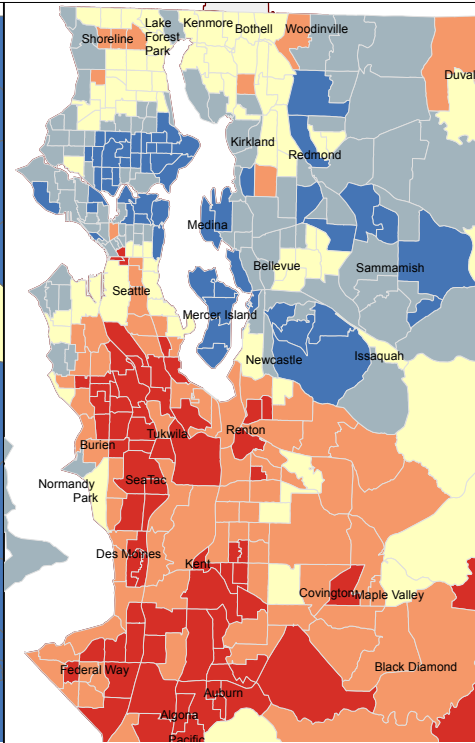
Income levels



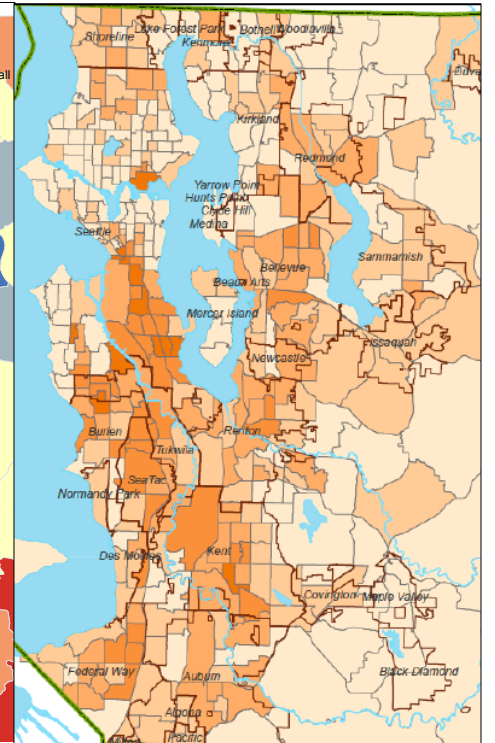
People of Color



Education Attainment



Limited English-speaking



1 in 4 King County residents speaks a language other than English, at home

“Most of the county’s population growth since 1990 has been among persons of color... The county is slated to become ‘majority minority’” by 2030.

A Goal for King County to be the Best-Run Government

What does that mean?

- Embracing continuous improvement
- Instituting best management practices
- Empowering employees to innovate
- Striving for second-to-none customer service

A Goal for King County to be the Best-Run Government

How will we do it?

To be the best-run government, King County needs

- **Equity and Social Justice** (ESJ) embedded into all of our work that we do, and
- a **diverse, engaged** and highly-skilled workforce that can meet the changing needs of our residents.

Diversity is *Key* for Organizational Effectiveness...

“...new research provides compelling evidence that **diversity unlocks innovation and drives market growth**...because inherently diverse contributors understand the unmet needs in under-leveraged markets.”

(December 2013, [Harvard Business Review](#))

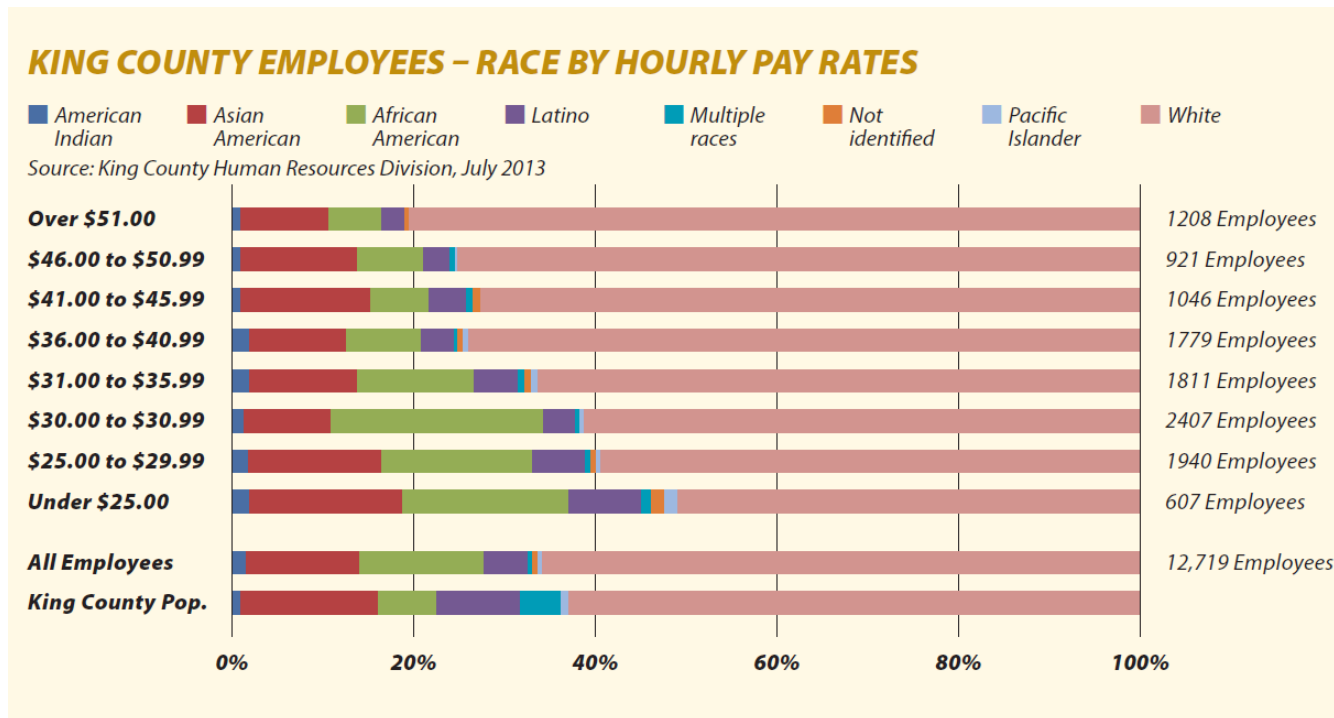
“**Mixed gender executive boards have outperformed** all-male ones **by 26%** over the last six years according to research by Credit Suisse, while global studies have shown that **organizations with diverse and inclusive cultures are 45% more likely to have improved their market share** in the last 12 months, and have **employees who** not only give greater discretionary effort but **are also less likely to leave.**”

(May 2014, [Forbes](#))

“The results demonstrate that **cultural diversity does in fact add value** and, within the proper context, contributes to firm competitive advantage.”

(August 2015, [Academy of Management](#))

King County Employees– *at a glance*



King County government has over 14,000 employees

King County’s workforce roughly reflects the ethnic diversity of our community, but that *diversity decreases going up the pay scale.*

Yet, Cosmetic Diversity is Damaging

“...diversity alone is damaging for individuals and organizations:
[research links difference alone to lower revenue, performance, employee morale and wellbeing](#) , along with slower decision making, increased conflict, absenteeism, missed opportunities and more (expensive) discrimination cases...

[Because **as** **employee dissimilarity increases** then [it] becomes harder as **people feel less known and understood by their colleagues.**”

(May 2014, [Forbes](#))

“Often as a coping strategy, those who are different from the majority will [downplay their differences](#) and even adopt characteristics of the majority in order to fit in...

But **when unique employees move towards the norms** of the homogeneous majority, **that negates the positive impact of having diversity** within the group.”

(June 2014, [Harvard Business Review](#))

Can we go beyond just diversity in our workforce to an **inclusive work culture**?

Are we an organization where *our employees feel like they can have a positive impact* on our communities and society, that they aspire to?

Can we *keep* the employees we hire for their unique **perspectives and ideas**, and benefit from their experience and background, as an organization?

Inclusion, Culture Change Take Time

Like most large organizations, we have real challenges:



still matter

King County Efforts to Create an Inclusive Culture

When we strive to have the Best-Run Government: Employees, we are guided by principles of...



**Examples:
Innovation and effectiveness
through a diverse workforce**



Guru Dorje

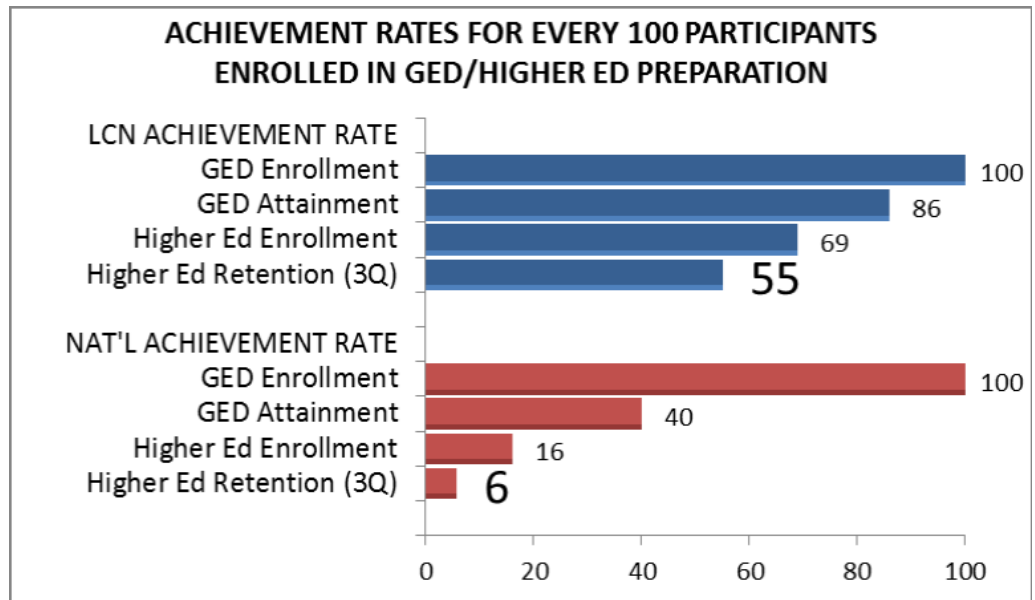
Manager

Learning Center North (LCN)

King County's

Drop-out Re-engagement Program

“When I look at a student, **I don't see an incomplete adult or a broken person**; I see a person who experienced trauma, but not someone who needed to be fixed.”





Sheila Capestany

Strategic Advisor, Children & Youth

King County's

Best Starts for Kids Initiative

Former Executive Director,
Open Arms Perinatal Services

“At Open Arms, we had a unifying issue – support during childbirth.

As a multi-cultural, power-sharing group, we had to recognize the ‘we’. We deeply analyzed our **core values – values that are not changing** – as well as ***what can we change that can change when who ‘we’ are changes.***”

Unplanned C-section rate (2012)

23%

at Open Arms

32-38%

at major Puget Sound hospitals

Babies born prematurely (2012)

2%

babies born w/
Open Arms

12.5%

babies born in the
overall U.S.



PACE Program

Partnership to Achieve
Comprehensive Equity

King County Metro Transit
&
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587

The PACE community remains committed to continuing this important work:

to courageously addressing challenging workplace issues and advancing the **“purposeful inclusion”** necessary to realize the vision of comprehensive equity.

They believe that Transit’s ability to provide great service to our customers depends on it.



...Where we are going

“**What it means to be a diverse and inclusive place is** not simply that you have people who look different, but **that you have created an environment where people feel like**, at the end of the day, **they are who they are, uniquely, and in a way that *integrates* them**, and that they’re not trapped in a box.

...we want to create for people to be able to bring their identities to work and to be, if you will, ***whole people***.”

(January 2011, David Thomas for [Yale Insights](#))

Questions/Comments?

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