



MULTNOMAH COUNTY

FY 2023 Budget Work Session Follow Up – Central Human Resources

Nondepartmental Complaints Investigation Unit – May 25, 2022

Question 1

Commissioner Jayapal (District 2): What are the countywide efforts and response to mitigate issues before they rise to the level of a complaint?

Response:

In Central Human Resources, Organizational Learning current staffing efforts includes two Equity Conflict Resolution Specialists. These positions were funded by initial Workforce Equity Strategic Plan investments in 2019. These roles serve the County by providing conflict resolution, mediation, team building, and restorative work. One of the positions is currently vacant and the recruitment is in progress. This position will serve as a direct resource for issues that are not being investigated. When conflicts arise, managers, employees, HR teams can reach out directly to Organizational Learning via the Service Request Form. An intake is conducted to help match the concern with the right modality of conflict resolution or support- such as team facilitations, mediation, facilitated dialogue, or training.

Organizational Learning provides the following trainings countywide:

- Having Difficult Conversations
- Mediation Skills Trainings For Managers and Supervisors
- Leading W/Race and Equity
- Core Competency Training
- Having Impactful Conversations
- Compassionate Communication
- Impact of Microaggressions

Central HR is completing a Countywide Conflict Resolution gap analysis this summer, which seeks to identify existing resources and needs for conflict resolution within Departments and also in Central HR. Along with creating a roadmap for conflict resolution currently, it will identify what gaps exist and provide recommendations for restructuring or additional resources as necessary.

Organizational Learning will continue to increase the focus on manager competency around conflict resolution and setting the expectation that they will proactively address conflict on their teams, by providing coaching and training.



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It is also important to note that department HR teams and supervisors are important resources to mitigate and resolve issues before it results in a complaint. Central HR supports the HR teams and supervisors through providing advice and consultation, as well as skill development.



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Question 2

Commissioner Stegmann (District 4): If we are seeing the same types of complaints across the County, what is Central HR's response strategy to address?

Response:

Central Human Resources becomes aware of countywide trends through a number of pathways and enacts various strategies as needed to meet the needs of the situation. As the convener of the several countywide committees, such as the twice-monthly Human Resources Senior Partners and Executives meeting, Central HR advises on countywide practice and countywide HR leaders share the issues that they are finding challenging to collectively come up with solutions and consistent practices to address these situations. Central HR also convenes recruiters countywide and learning and training leaders from the departments on a monthly basis to learn of countywide needs.

Internally, our Labor Relations team has managers assigned to serve specific departmental HR teams and provides guidance on specific employee situations and HR questions. This group works collectively to ensure that the guidance they are each providing to departmental questions are being addressed in a consistent manner. When complaints or concerns arise on a specific issue, Central HR is able to work with other County leadership such as the Chief Operating Officer's Office to seek clarity, and improve the guidance Central is providing to HR teams. Central HR will attend department management meetings to discuss current employee issues, strategize together, and provide skill training.

In other aspects of Central HR's work, such as talent acquisition or organizational learning, Central staff are able to work closely with their colleagues across departments to provide training on specific topics that cause confusion or create additional resources to help departments better understand implementation, such as through Workday resources and reference guides.

The 2019 Countywide Employee Survey results showed a strong interest for the County to look into conflict resolution resources and pre-complaint alternatives. Central HR initiated a Countywide Conflict Resolution gap analysis in 2021, which seeks to identify existing resources and needs for conflict resolution within Departments and also in Central HR. This report will also provide recommendations for resources and strategies to address conflicts effectively at the lowest and most restorative levels.