



**Seattle**

**LABOR RELATIONS DIRECTOR**  
City of **Seattle, WA**

Recruitment Services Provided By



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## The Opportunity

This is a rare opportunity to serve as the senior labor relations leader for the City of Seattle at a pivotal moment, shaping citywide labor strategy in one of the nation's most dynamic, complex, and values-driven public-sector environments. As Labor Relations Director, you will operate at the intersection of policy, people, and performance – partnering closely with executive leadership, elected officials, and labor organizations to deliver sustainable, equitable workforce outcomes. This role offers both scope and influence: the chance to lead high-impact negotiations, guide a talented labor relations team, strengthen labor-management partnerships, and ensure that the City's labor practices reflect its commitment to excellence in government, accountability, and racial and social justice.

# About Seattle

Seattle is one of those places that instantly takes your breath away. With mountains framing every sunrise and sunset, it feels like the outdoors is always calling. On any given day, you'll find people sailing on Puget Sound, paddleboarding on Lake Washington, or heading out for a nearby hike to clear their minds. Founded in 1869, the city of Seattle is located in the state of Washington on Puget Sound, 113 miles (182 km) from the U.S.-Canadian border.

Seattle, with a population of over 740,000, is a commercial, cultural, and advanced technology hub of the U.S. Pacific Northwest and a major port city for trans-Pacific and European travel and trade. Surrounded by mountains and water, the Greater Seattle area features picture-perfect views and abundant recreational opportunities year-round. The city is proud of its arts and cultural institutions, its many live theaters, and its professional and collegiate sports. It is proud of its parks, of the central waterfront and the Pike Place Market, and, above all, of the beauty of its surroundings.

Seattle is more than a world-class city — it's a vibrant, evolving community rooted in shared values of sustainability, innovation, and inclusion. As a public employer, the City of Seattle is committed to building a city that works for everyone, where communities thrive, opportunity is accessible, and public service drives real, lasting impact. With more than 12,000 employees across 40+ departments, we're proud to serve the people of Seattle in every aspect of city life, from transportation and utilities to immigrant and refugee affairs, arts and culture, housing, public safety, and environmental stewardship.

At the City of Seattle, public service is more than a job; it's a shared purpose. We don't just serve our community, we strive to be a model of what good government can be: inclusive, innovative, equitable, transparent, collaborative, and visionary. We believe that local leadership, done right, can inspire change far beyond our city limits. Joining the City of Seattle means joining a diverse, dedicated team that believes in the power of community and the possibility of progress. Together, we're building a city where everyone can live, work, and thrive, and showing what's possible when government works for the people it serves! Build your career and community with us!





# Seattle City Government

The City of Seattle operates under a first-class charter with a Mayor-Council form of government – an elected Mayor and a nine-member City Council share responsibility for setting policy, enacting legislation, and approving the city's biennial budget. The Council consists of nine non-partisan members serving four-year terms and plays a central role in shaping priorities across public safety, utilities, transportation, parks, housing, and community services. City departments and offices, established by the Seattle Municipal Code and City Charter, deliver the full scope of municipal services to residents and businesses.

With nearly 14,000 employees, the City provides a wide range of core and specialized services – from police and fire protection to transportation infrastructure, utilities, parks and recreation, housing support, and community development programs that enhance quality of life across diverse neighborhoods. The adopted 2026 budget is approximately \$8.9 billion, funding day-to-day operations, capital improvements, public safety, affordable housing initiatives, and essential services that keep the city functioning and thriving.

# Seattle Human Resources – Labor Relations Division

The Seattle Department of Human Resources (SHR) endeavors to promote an equitable and engaging work environment so employees can do their best work and make a difference for the people and communities we serve. The Department focuses on providing high quality services to all City employees and departments and works collaboratively with department leaders to align policies, practices, and programs citywide to fulfill the vision of workforce equity and excellence.

Within SHR, Labor Relations provides technical and professional services to policy makers and City department managers, to advance effective, respectful and fair labor relations, enhancing the City's delivery of quality public services. Management representatives for the City of Seattle and labor representatives of the majority of unions that represent employees of the City have worked diligently and deliberately to develop a relationship based upon mutual respect, openness, honesty, and accountability for mutual decisions. Labor and management are creating an environment that meets their respective interests, using strategies that build a productive relationship for the future. The parties have established a number of structures and statements of mutual understanding.

The Labor Relations division is staffed with 10 employees, including the Director, a Labor Relations Manager, six negotiators (including a lead), one analyst, and one administrative support. The division operates with an FY 26 budget of \$1.2 million. Additional information regarding the City's labor relations, including bargaining units and its Labor Relations Policy Committee can be found [here](#).

**\$ 1.2M**  
Operating Budget

**10FTE**  
Employees





## The Position

The Labor Relations Director fosters collaborative relationships that advance the City's labor relations strategy in support of excellence in government and equitable treatment of all City employees. Consistent with the City's values of workforce equity and its labor philosophy of collaboration and partnership, the Director is accountable for:

- **Overseeing and coordinating the City's labor relations system** in accordance with [SMC 4.04.120](#), including leadership of the City's collective bargaining process and the development and implementation of labor relations policies, practices, and programs aligned with strategic objectives.
- **Leading the City's Labor Relations Division**, including labor negotiators and analysts, to deliver high-quality labor relations services across all City departments, aligning day-to-day service delivery with citywide strategies, operations, and goals.
- **Fostering a culture of employee engagement and labor relations service quality** by aligning labor relations strategies, programs, and activities to support the work of the city, promote equity, and empower employees to deliver exceptional services and innovate for the people of Seattle.
- **Ensuring consistent, principled engagement with labor partners** during bargaining, in alignment with the City's labor philosophy and parameters established by the Labor Relations Policy Committee (LRPC).
- **Serving as a trusted advisor to City departments**, proactively addressing diverse operational needs; communicating requirements under relevant collective bargaining agreements, labor law, and policies; supporting department leaders and staff; facilitating open, transparent communication with labor partners; and identifying and removing barriers to effective labor relations service delivery.

# Ideal Candidate

The city seeks a seasoned labor relations executive with the judgment, credibility, and mindset to strategically lead complex labor relations in a large, unionized public-sector environment. The ideal candidate must be pragmatic, forward-thinking, and an advocate for collaborative action. Their work history includes experience negotiating, implementing, and interpreting collective bargaining agreements with a deep understanding of employment and labor law. They are a decisive, fair, and diplomatic leader who motivates others, respects diverse perspectives, and ensures equitable and sustainable outcomes. A skilled organizational leader, they facilitate swift issue resolution and maintain high service standards. Consistency, openness, and responsiveness are priorities, and they are recognized as a steady, trusted leader with deep technical expertise paired with strong political and organizational acumen. The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- **Strategic labor relations leadership**, aligning labor strategy with organizational values and long-term operational, fiscal, and workforce priorities.
- **Strong, trust-based partnerships with labor unions**, maintaining constructive relationships while clearly representing the city's interests and boundaries.
- **Deep labor law and collective bargaining expertise**, ensuring legally sound, consistent, and defensible outcomes across a complex organization.

- **Effective relationship management**, engaging department leaders, executives, union partners and stakeholders to support workforce stability and service delivery.
- **Early issue identification and resolution**, proactively addressing emerging labor concerns at the lowest appropriate level to prevent escalation and leading calmly and decisively through high-stakes situations, disputes, and disruptions.
- **Advanced problem solving**, identifies root causes and delivers sustainable solutions with a high level of tact, good judgement, discretion, and diplomacy.
- **Labor relations expertise**, with a history of securing agreements that mitigate risk and balance employee needs with fiscal responsibility and operational sustainability. Leverages data and metrics to drive proactive interventions and innovation.
- **Effective grievance and arbitration oversight**, ensuring fair, consistent, and efficient processes through effective case management, adherence to due process, the use of alternative dispute resolution strategies, and the pursuit of equitable outcomes.





## Qualifications

A successful candidate will be a collaborative, strategic leader with a history of leveraging their technical expertise in labor relations to achieve strategic, sustainable organizational outcomes. They think broadly, are grounded in human resources principles and practice, and communicate tactfully and effectively at all levels. Their professional career reflects a commitment to aligning labor strategy with business objectives and building consensus. They are decisive, keep their commitments, prioritize collaboration, and hold people accountable. As a leader, they value people, prioritize equity, and support an inclusive workplace culture. Their team values their mentorship, support and clear direction. They serve as a trusted partner, known for being a good listener and for their expertise as a lead negotiator.

Well-qualified candidates have managed labor relations or a comparable function in a high-profile and complex environment for a minimum of 10 years. Their work history includes successful labor-management collaboration and union-side experience. They bring a pragmatic mindset that recognizes the requirements and challenges unique to public-sector employment and the business of government. Their work reflects financial, political, and legal acumen and a commitment to public service.

# Salary & Benefits

The salary range for the Labor Relations Director is **\$217,640 – \$272,087**, with placement in the range depending on qualifications. In addition, the City offers an outstanding benefits package which includes:

**Benefits:** The City offers medical, dental and vision insurance to employees and their dependents with very low employee contribution levels, as well as long-term disability insurance, life insurance, and a number of optional coverages.

**Retirement:** The Seattle City Employees' Retirement System (SCERS) is a rich, defined-benefit, retirement plan which offers five-year vesting and formula-based retirement benefits based upon date of hire. Employees hired after 2017 contribute 7% of salary toward retirement. Participation in the city's retirement programs is optional. Additional information on SCERS can be found [here](#). A voluntary deferred compensation (457) plan is offered as well.

**Leave:** A generous leave program is offered which includes vacation, sick leave, paid holidays, and executive leave.

The City of Seattle also offers a number of programs centered on employee wellness, career development, and transit subsidies.



# Application & Selection Process

Interested candidates should **apply immediately**. **The City may close the recruitment at any time once a suitably strong group of candidates has been established.** Submit a comprehensive résumé and compelling cover letter online at:

[www.mosaicpublic.com/careers](http://www.mosaicpublic.com/careers)

This recruitment will be handled with strict confidentiality until finalists have been identified. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established.

#### **CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRIES ARE WELCOMED TO:**

Greg Nelson | [greg@mosaicpublic.com](mailto:greg@mosaicpublic.com) | (916) 581-1426

*This recruitment incorporates existing rules and regulations that govern public sector recruitments in the State of Washington. In accordance with public disclosure/open record laws, information submitted for consideration may be made available to the public upon request by interested parties once candidates become finalists.*

*The City of Seattle values diverse perspectives and life experiences. Applicants will be considered regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, religious or political affiliation, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The City encourages people of all backgrounds to apply, including people of color, immigrants, refugees, women, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, veterans, and those with diverse life experiences.*

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