

Ethics and Elections Commission

Wayne Barnett, Executive Director
Department Information Line: (206) 684-8500
On the Web at: <http://www.seattle.gov/ethics/>



Department Overview

The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC) helps foster public confidence in the integrity of Seattle City government by providing education, training, and enforcement of the City's Ethics Code, Whistleblower Code, and lobbying regulations. The SEEC also promotes informed elections through education, training, and enforcement of the City's Elections Code and Election Pamphlet Code.

In 2011, the SEEC entered into a three-year contract with the Seattle Public Schools to provide an independent and comprehensive ethics and whistleblower protection program to the district. The SEEC's Executive Director is now also serving as the Seattle Public School District's Ethics Officer. Also in 2011, the SEEC executed an agreement with the City of Kirkland to provide an independent ethics investigation program for that city.

The SEEC conducts ethics training for all City employees on request and through the City's New Employee and New Supervisor Orientation programs. It also provides ethics training information for City employees via the City's intranet site.

The SEEC issues advisory opinions regarding interpretations of the Code of Ethics and also investigates and rules upon alleged violations of the Code. Thirty years of formal advisory opinions, organized and searchable by topic, are available on the SEEC's website.

Through the Whistleblower Code, the SEEC helps to protect an employee's right to report improper governmental action and to be free from possible retaliation as a result of such reporting. The SEEC either investigates allegations of improper governmental actions itself or refers allegations to the appropriate agency.

The SEEC fulfills the public's mandate of full campaign disclosure by training every organization required to report contributions and expenditures in proper reporting procedures, auditing every organization that reports, working with those organizations to correct errors, and making all campaign finance information available to the public. Since 1993, the SEEC has made summary reports of campaign financing information available to the public. And since 1995, the SEEC has published campaign financing information on its website.

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The SEEC is charged with administering the City's lobbying regulations. The SEEC collects and posts information so that citizens know who is lobbying and how much they are being paid to lobby. The SEEC also enforces compliance with the lobbying regulations.

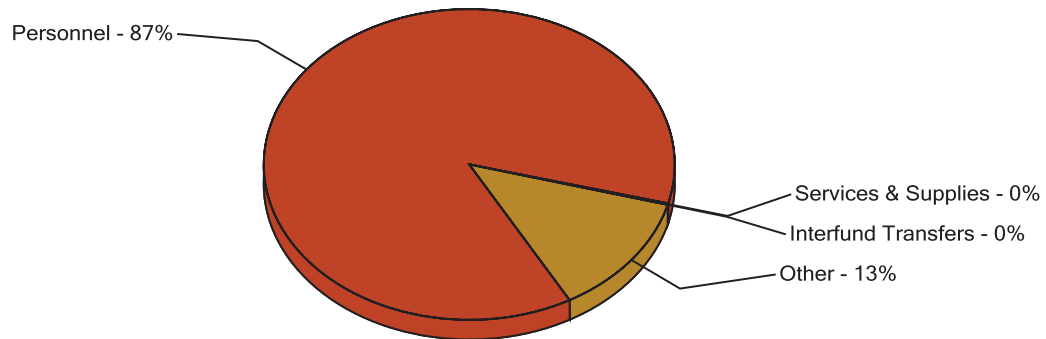
The SEEC produces voters' pamphlets for City elections and ballot measures. It makes these pamphlets available in several languages and produces a video voters' guide with King County in odd-numbered years. The video voters' guide is funded with cable franchise fee revenue.

Budget Snapshot

Department Support	2011 Actual	2012 Adopted	2013 Proposed	2014 Proposed
General Fund Support	\$733,402	\$759,952	\$898,310	\$782,800
Total Operations	\$733,402	\$759,952	\$898,310	\$782,800
Total Appropriations	\$733,402	\$759,952	\$898,310	\$782,800
Full-time Equivalent Total*	5.20	6.20	6.20	6.20

* FTE totals are provided for information purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Personnel Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.

2013 Proposed Budget - Expenditure by Category



Budget Overview

Because of its small size and essential nature, the 2013-2014 Proposed Budget does not recommend any reductions to the Ethics and Elections Commission budget.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2013		2014	
	Budget	FTE	Budget	FTE
Total 2012 Adopted Budget	\$ 759,952	6.20	\$ 759,952	6.20
Baseline Changes				
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 30,951	0.00	\$ 54,923	0.00
School District Contract Adjustment	\$ 0	0.00	-\$ 60,280	0.00
Voter Pamphlet Increase	\$ 78,500	0.00	\$ 0	0.00
Proposed Policy Changes				
Staff Reclassification	\$ 15,000	0.00	\$ 15,432	0.00
Proposed Technical Changes				
Final Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 13,907	0.00	\$ 12,773	0.00
Total Incremental Changes	\$ 138,358	0.00	\$ 22,848	0.00
2013 - 2014 Proposed Budget	\$ 898,310	6.20	\$ 782,800	6.20

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline Changes

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$30,951

Citywide technical adjustments made in the "Baseline Phase" reflect changes due to inflation, central cost allocations, retirement, health care, workers' compensation, and employment costs. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

School District Contract Adjustment

In 2011, the Ethics and Elections Commission and the Seattle Public Schools (SPS) entered into a three-year agreement where City staff will provide ethics and whistleblower training and investigative services to SPS. The end date of this contract is June 2014. The baseline 2014 budget is adjusted to reflect the end of funding for this contract. It is anticipated that the contract will be renewed in 2014 and the budget will be amended through a subsequent ordinance, at that time.

Voter Pamphlet Increase - \$78,500

The cost of producing the voter's pamphlet varies each year. With few ballot items scheduled for 2012, Ethics and Elections offered a one-time reduction. The 2013-2014 Proposed Budget notes an increase to fund a larger voter's pamphlet with many city positions on the ballot.

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Proposed Policy Changes

Staff Reclassification - \$15,000

In 2012, a Senior Training and Education Coordinator was reclassified to a Strategic Advisor 1. This position spends 40% of their time in the service of the Seattle Public Schools (SPS) which will absorb a pro-rated share of the \$35,000 increase.

Proposed Technical Changes

Final Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$13,907

Citywide technical adjustments made in the "Proposed Phase" reflect changes due to inflation, central cost allocations, retirement, health care, workers' compensation, and unemployment costs. These adjustments typically reflect updates to preliminary cost assumptions established in the "Baseline Phase."

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	Summit Code	2011 Actual	2012 Adopted	2013 Proposed	2014 Proposed
Ethics and Elections Budget Control Level	V1T00	733,402	759,952	898,310	782,800
Department Total		733,402	759,952	898,310	782,800
Department Full-time Equivalent Total*		5.20	6.20	6.20	6.20

** FTE totals are provided for information purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Personnel Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.*

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Appropriations By Budget Control Level (BCL) and Program

Ethics and Elections Budget Control Level

The purpose of the Ethics and Elections Budget Control Level is to: 1) audit, investigate, and conduct hearings regarding non-compliance with, or violations of, Commission-administered ordinances; 2) advise all City officials and employees of their obligations under Commission-administered ordinances; 3) publish and broadly distribute information about the City's ethical standards, City election campaigns, campaign financial disclosure statements, and lobbyist disclosure statements; and 4) provide an independent and comprehensive Ethics and Whistleblower Protection program for the Seattle Public Schools.

Program Expenditures	2011 Actual	2012 Adopted	2013 Proposed	2014 Proposed
Ethics and Elections	733,402	759,952	898,310	782,800
Total	733,402	759,952	898,310	782,800
Full-time Equivalents Total*	5.20	6.20	6.20	6.20

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