

Office of the Employee Ombud

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Department Overview

In 2018, the Mayor issued [Executive Order](#) 2018-04 creating the Office of the Employee Ombud (OEO) following the recommendations issued by the Anti-Harassment Inter-departmental Team (AH IDT) on improving the City's workplace culture. The mission of the OEO is to support City employees in all branches of City government in answering their concerns regarding workplace conduct that may be considered inappropriate; may constitute harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; and/or is in conflict with the City's Personnel Rules, Citywide workplace expectations, and other City policies. OEO is the primary conflict management resource for the City.

The OEO provides assistance to City employees through a variety of means, including conflict management and resolution; clarifying the City's processes and systems for reporting and investigations; facilitating discussions to break down miscommunication; providing the contact for represented employees' unions; and understanding what remedies are available through State or Federal agencies. The OEO also supports employees with referrals to the City's contracted Employees Assistance Program (EAP) for appropriate emotional assistance.

In addition to individual employee services, the OEO engages with policy improvements that support the City's continuous effort to provide every City employee a safe and respectful workplace where they can do their best work in serving the residents of Seattle. OEO, as part of its systemic change mission, offers trainings and capacity building to city departments so that practices and behaviors that cause conflict among us can be addressed in a proactive manner. Beginning in 2020, the OEO submits an annual report to the Mayor's Office and City Council that addresses issues extending beyond the experiences of individual employees. The report includes recommendations to clarify the City's Personnel Rules, complaint and investigations systems and trainings, and shared information on patterns of inappropriate workplace conduct at the City.

Budget Snapshot

	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
Department Support			
General Fund Support	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Total Operations	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Total Appropriations	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Full-Time Equivalent Total*	3.00	5.00	4.00

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

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Budget Overview

The City is projecting significant revenue losses due to COVID-19 and the resulting public health crisis. As a result, the budget includes reductions for most departments across the City. The 2021 Proposed Budget reduces staffing capacity for the Office of the Employee Ombud (OEO) data management. OEO is a small department with limited flexibility in its budget, and the department identified a reduction opportunity with a vacancy. The details of the changes to OEO's budget are included in the Incremental Budget Changes section below.

The 2021 Proposed Budget also provides OEO with technical adjustments in the baseline budget, reflecting adjustments for one-time budget changes in 2020 and changes to internal services costs.

Incremental Budget Changes

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	2021 Budget	FTE
Total 2020 Adopted Budget	1,278,671	5.00
Baseline		
Adjustment for One-Time Budget Changes	(364,750)	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(54,281)	-
Baseline Adjustments for Personnel Costs	-	-
Proposed Operating		
MSA Pocket Reduction	(126,342)	(1.00)
Total Incremental Changes	\$(545,373)	(1.00)
Total 2021 Proposed Budget	\$733,298	4.00

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Adjustment for One-Time Budget Changes

Expenditures \$(364,750)

In 2020, the Office of the Employee Ombud moved from a temporary office location in City Hall to a more permanent location in Columbia Tower. This item removes the one-time costs associated with that move from the baseline in 2021.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(54,281)

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle

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Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare, retirement and industrial insurance charges for the department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

Baseline Adjustments for Personnel Costs

Expenditures -

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect an annual wage increase, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of Unions, for personnel costs included in this department's baseline budget. This includes increases to salary, FICA, Medicare, family medical leave, retirement, overtime and temporary labor. There is no increase assumed from 2021 to 2022. This does not include a 2021 salary increase for non-represented Executives, Managers and Strategic Advisors.

Proposed Operating

MSA Pocket Reduction

Expenditures \$(126,342)
 Position Allocation (1.00)

This item abrogates 1.0 FTE Management Systems Analyst (MSA) vacant pocket and decreases appropriation authority by \$126,342. OEO will continue to perform the MSA function by dividing the job requirements among existing staff. OEO will also collaborate with an MSA in the Seattle Department of Human Resources' Human Resources Investigation Unit (HRIU) on various aspects of data management and reporting.

Expenditure Overview

	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
Appropriations			
OEO - BO-EM-V10MB - Office of Employee Ombud			
00100 - General Fund	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Total for BSL: BO-EM-V10MB	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Department Total	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	3.00	5.00	4.00

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Budget Summary by Fund Office of the Employee Ombud

	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Budget Totals for OEO	347,119	1,278,671	733,298

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Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

OEO - BO-EM-V10MB - Office of Employee Ombud

The purpose of the Office of Employee Ombud Budget Summary Level is to assist City of Seattle employees in navigating the City's conflict management system. OEO supports all processes relating to harassment, discrimination, or misconduct and provides recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on policies and procedures that can help create an inclusive workplace environment.

Program Expenditures	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
Employee Ombud Office	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Total	347,119	1,278,671	733,298
Full-time Equivalent Total*	3.00	5.00	4.00

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