

# Ethics and Elections Commission

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<http://www.seattle.gov/ethics/>

## Department Overview

The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission 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 Commission also promotes informed elections through education, training, and enforcement of the City's Elections Code and Election Pamphlet Code. In 2011, the Commission executed an agreement with the City of Kirkland to provide an independent ethics investigation program for that city.

The Commission work on behalf of the City of Seattle centers around four main lines of business:

**Ethics Code:** The Commission conducts ethics training for all City of Seattle employees upon 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 Commission 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 Commission's website.

**Whistleblower Code:** The Commission 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 Commission either investigates allegations of improper governmental actions itself or refers allegations to the appropriate agency.

**Elections Code and Election Pamphlets Code:** The Commission fulfills the public's mandate of full campaign disclosure by:

- training organizations required to report campaign contributions and expenditures in proper reporting procedures;
- auditing every organization that files campaign reports;
- working with organizations to correct errors; and
- making all campaign finance information available to the public.

Since 1993, the Commission has made summary reports of campaign financing information available to the public. And since 1995, the Commission has published campaign financing information on its website. The Commission also 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.

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

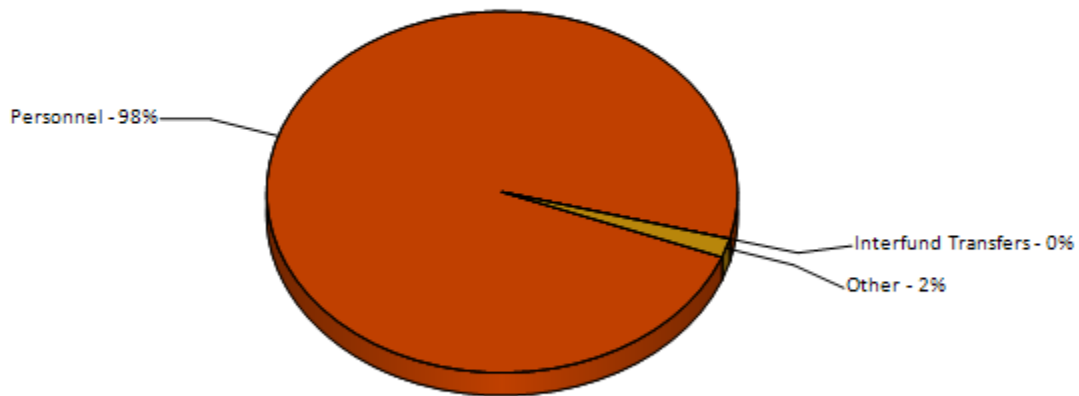
## Ethics and Elections Commission

### Budget Snapshot

| Department Support          | 2014<br>Actuals  | 2015<br>Adopted  | 2016<br>Endorsed | 2016<br>Proposed |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| General Fund Support        | \$894,961        | \$677,070        | \$681,022        | \$654,266        |
| <b>Total Operations</b>     | <b>\$894,961</b> | <b>\$677,070</b> | <b>\$681,022</b> | <b>\$654,266</b> |
| <b>Total Appropriations</b> | <b>\$894,961</b> | <b>\$677,070</b> | <b>\$681,022</b> | <b>\$654,266</b> |
| Full-time Equivalent Total* | 6.20             | 5.20             | 5.20             | 4.90             |

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

### 2016 Proposed Budget - Expenditure by Category



### Budget Overview

The 2016 Proposed Budget aligns the department's expenditures more accurately with operational needs. Changes include staffing increases to accommodate added whistle blower training requirements; decreases to align staffing levels more accurately with departmental needs, as well as staffing levels at other small departments; and added resources to improve the content and usability of the department's website.

# Ethics and Elections Commission

## Incremental Budget Changes

### Ethics and Elections Commission

|  | 2016              |              |
|--|-------------------|--------------|
|  | Budget            | FTE          |
| <b>Total 2016 Endorsed Budget</b>              | <b>\$ 681,022</b> | <b>5.20</b>  |
| <b>Baseline Changes</b>                        |                   |              |
| Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes | -\$ 8,756         | 0.00         |
| <b>Proposed Changes</b>                        |                   |              |
| Align Staffing with Workload                   | -\$ 23,000        | -0.30        |
| Add Funding for Website Support                | \$ 5,000          | 0.00         |
| <b>Total Incremental Changes</b>               | <b>-\$ 26,756</b> | <b>-0.30</b> |
| <b>2016 Proposed Budget</b>                    | <b>\$ 654,266</b> | <b>4.90</b>  |

## Descriptions of Incremental Budget Changes

### Baseline Changes

#### **Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - (\$8,756)**

Citywide technical adjustments made in the initial planning phase reflect changes in the internal services costs, health care rate reduction, retirement contribution rate reduction, and updates to unemployment and industrial insurance charges. There was also an adjustment made to the 2016 base to recoup savings from a higher-than-expected inflation provided in the 2015 Adopted Budget for non-labor expenses. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

### Proposed Changes

#### **Align Staffing with Workload - (\$23,000)/(-.30) FTE**

Staffing adjustments include the reduction of an Admin Spec II from 1.0 to 0.5 FTE, and the increase of a Strategic Advisor I from 0.6 to 0.8. With the 2014 elimination of Seattle Public Schools support position, the Ethics and Elections Commission staff levels are down to three full-time, and two part-time positions. This Admin Spec II reduction more accurately aligns administrative support with the department's need and staffing levels at other small departments.

Additionally, this change increases staffing to support the new Whistleblower Protection Code requirements. All new City employees, as well as existing staff that are promoted to the manager level, must now receive mandatory training within six months.

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## Add Funding for Website Support - \$5,000

This increase allows the department to contract for services to support the website. Some pages on the site have not been updated in years. This ongoing funding will improve the usability and ensure that content is kept up to date and accurate.

## Expenditure Overview

| <b>Appropriations</b>                     | <b>Summit Code</b> | <b>2014 Actuals</b> | <b>2015 Adopted</b> | <b>2016 Endorsed</b> | <b>2016 Proposed</b> |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Ethics and Elections Budget Control Level | V1T00              | 894,961             | 677,070             | 681,022              | 654,266              |
| <b>Department Total</b>                   |                    | <b>894,961</b>      | <b>677,070</b>      | <b>681,022</b>       | <b>654,266</b>       |

|  |             |             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Department Full-time Equivalents Total*</b> | <b>6.20</b> | <b>5.20</b> | <b>5.20</b> | <b>4.90</b> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|

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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; and 3) publish and broadly distribute information about the City's ethical standards, City election campaigns, campaign financial disclosure statements, and lobbyist disclosure statements.

| <b>Program Expenditures</b>  | <b>2014 Actuals</b> | <b>2015 Adopted</b> | <b>2016 Endorsed</b> | <b>2016 Proposed</b> |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Ethics and Elections         | 894,961             | 677,070             | 681,022              | 654,266              |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>894,961</b>      | <b>677,070</b>      | <b>681,022</b>       | <b>654,266</b>       |
| Full-time Equivalents Total* | 6.20                | 5.20                | 5.20                 | 4.90                 |

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