

Ethics and Elections Commission

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<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. It also promotes informed elections through education, training, and enforcement of the City's Elections Code and Election Pamphlet Code. With the passage of [Initiative 122](#) in November 2015, the Commission now administers and funds the Election Voucher program.

The Commission work on behalf of the City of Seattle centers around five 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.

Elections Voucher Program: The Commission administers the Elections Voucher Program which was approved with the passage of I-122 in November 2015. The primary goal of the program is to provide \$100 in vouchers to eligible Seattle residents so that they can contribute to candidates for City office who qualify to participate in the program.

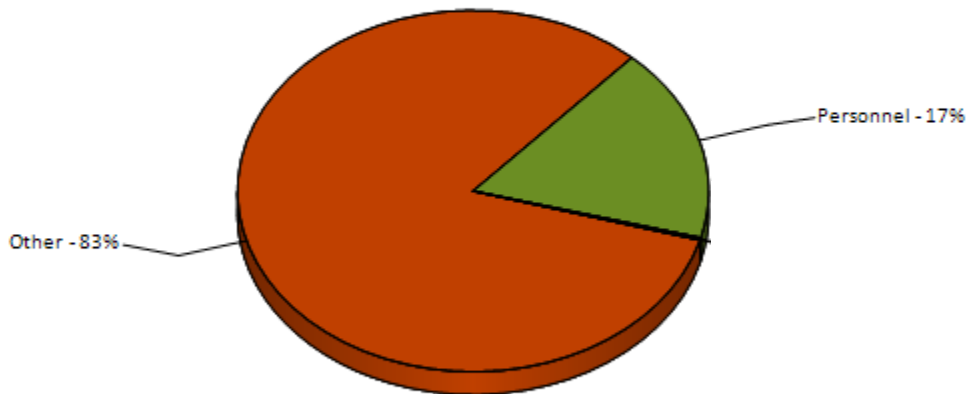
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Budget Snapshot

Department Support	2015 Actual	2016 Adopted	2017 Proposed	2018 Proposed
General Fund Support	\$709,172	\$654,266	\$723,675	\$745,729
Other Funding - Operating	\$0	\$0	\$4,281,316	\$708,622
Total Operations	\$709,172	\$654,266	\$5,004,991	\$1,454,351
Total Appropriations	\$709,172	\$654,266	\$5,004,991	\$1,454,351
Full-time Equivalent Total*	5.20	4.90	5.90	5.90

* 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.

2017 Proposed Budget - Expenditure by Category



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Budget Overview

The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget adds staffing and resources to implement the new Election Voucher program which voters passed in November 2015. The program is funded by a 10-year property tax levy that collects \$3 million annually.

Key elements of the program are that it:

- creates a voluntary program for public campaign financing through \$100 vouchers issued to eligible Seattle residents;
- limits election campaign contributions from entities receiving City contracts totaling \$250,000 or more, or from persons spending \$5,000 or more for lobbying;
- requires 24-hour reporting of electronic contributions;
- requires paid signature gatherer identification; and
- limits lobbying by former City officials.

There were no other significant changes to the SEEC budget.

Incremental Budget Changes

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	2017		2018	
	Budget	FTE	Budget	FTE
Total 2016 Adopted Budget	\$ 654,266	4.90	\$ 654,266	4.90
Baseline Changes				
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 69,409	0.00	\$ 91,463	0.00
Proposed Changes				
Election Voucher Program	\$ 4,281,316	1.00	\$ 708,622	1.00
Total Incremental Changes	\$ 4,350,725	1.00	\$ 800,085	1.00
2017 - 2018 Proposed Budget	\$ 5,004,991	5.90	\$ 1,454,351	5.90

Descriptions of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline Changes

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$69,409

Citywide technical adjustments made in the initial planning phase reflect changes in the internal services costs (excluding Seattle IT), health care, retirement contribution rate, and updates to unemployment and industrial insurance charges. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process. Additionally, this adjustment includes various wage adjustments for labor related costs, including

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the Annual Wage Increases (AWI) from 2015 through 2018.

Proposed Changes

Election Voucher Program - \$4,281,316/1.00 FTE

The proposed budget adds funding to implement the Election Voucher program required by the passage of Initiative 122 in November 2015. The program is funded through a 10-year property tax levy that collects \$3 million annually. The initiative requires several reforms in the election process, the most significant of which is the public financing of campaigns for qualified candidates seeking the office of Mayor, City Attorney, or City Council (the Mayoral election is not eligible until 2021 due to the lack of adequate fund balance during the first election cycle). Eligible voters will receive four \$25 vouchers at the beginning of each election year that can be donated to any qualifying candidates for the offices previously noted that are participating in the program. The primary costs to run the program are staffing and administration; technology costs (the department must establish a secure online system for delivery of Democracy Vouchers no later than the 2019 election cycle); printing, mailing and processing; and candidate voucher payments. Costs will be higher in odd-number years due to expenditures associated with elections. Staffing costs include funding for one full-time Strategic Advisor 3 to manage program implementation. More information on the program is available at the City's [Democracy Voucher program](#) website.

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	Summit Code	2015 Actual	2016 Adopted	2017 Proposed	2018 Proposed
Election Vouchers Budget Control Level	VT123	0	0	4,281,316	708,622
Ethics and Elections Budget Control Level	V1T00	709,172	654,266	723,675	745,729
Department Total		709,172	654,266	5,004,991	1,454,351
Department Full-time Equivalents Total*		5.20	4.90	5.90	5.90

** 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.*

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Revenue Overview

2017 Estimated Revenues

Summit Code	Source	2015 Actual	2016 Adopted	2017 Proposed	2018 Proposed
411100	REAL & PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX	0	0	3,000,000	3,000,000
	Total Property Tax	0	0	3,000,000	3,000,000
	Total Revenues	0	0	3,000,000	3,000,000
379100	Use of (contribution to) Fund Balance	0	0	1,281,316	-2,291,378
	Total Transfers	0	0	1,281,316	-2,291,378
	Total Resources	0	0	4,281,316	708,622

* The Revenue Overview table contains information for the Election Vouchers Fund only. The remainder of the Ethics and Elections revenue comes from the General Fund. Please see the Election Vouchers Fund table below to see fund balance and 2016 revised budget information.

Appropriations By Budget Control Level (BCL) and Program

Election Vouchers Budget Control Level

The purpose of the Election Voucher Budget Control Level is to pay costs associated with implementing, maintaining and funding a program for providing one hundred dollars in vouchers to eligible Seattle residents that they can contribute to candidates for City office who qualify to participate in the Election Voucher program enacted by voters in November 2015.

	2015 Actual	2016 Adopted	2017 Proposed	2018 Proposed
Program Expenditures				
Election Vouchers	0	0	4,281,316	708,622
Total	0	0	4,281,316	708,622
Full-time Equivalents Total*	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00

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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.

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Program Expenditures	Actual	Adopted	Proposed	Proposed
Ethics and Elections	709,172	654,266	723,675	745,729
Total	709,172	654,266	723,675	745,729
Full-time Equivalents Total*	5.20	4.90	4.90	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.

Ethics and Elections Fund Table

Election Vouchers Fund

	2015	2016	2016	2017	2018
	Actuals	Adopted	Revised	Proposed	Proposed
Beginning Fund Balance	0	0	0	1,933,000	651,684
Accounting and Technical Adjustments	0	0	0	0	0
Plus: Actual and Estimated Revenues	0	0	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Less: Actual and Budgeted Expenditures	0	0	1,067,000	4,281,316	708,622
Ending Fund Balance	0	0	1,933,000	651,684	2,943,062
Ending Unreserved Fund Balance	0	0	1,933,000	651,684	2,943,062