

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 Democracy Voucher Program.

The Commission's 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. More than 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 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 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 residents know who is lobbying and how much they are being paid to lobby. The Commission also enforces compliance with the lobbying regulations.

Democracy Voucher Program: The Commission administers the Democracy 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

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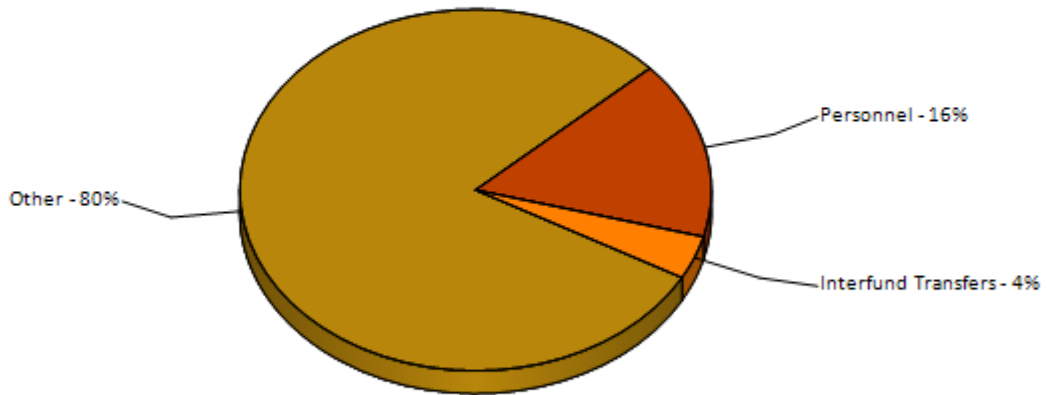
vouchers to eligible Seattle residents so that they can contribute to candidates for City office who qualify to participate in the program.

Budget Snapshot

Department Support	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
General Fund Support	\$758,669	\$1,009,982	\$1,024,683
Other Funding - Operating	\$708,503	\$5,456,062	\$714,172
Total Operations	\$1,467,172	\$6,466,044	\$1,738,855
Total Appropriations	\$1,467,172	\$6,466,044	\$1,738,855
Full-time Equivalent Total*	5.90	5.90	5.90

* 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.

2019 Adopted Budget - Expenditure by Category



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Budget Overview

The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission's 2019 Adopted and 2020 Endorsed Budget contains no changes, however a technical adjustment was made in the baseline phase of the budget to fund the bi-annual democracy voucher payments and mailings required for the 2019 elections.

City Council Changes to the Proposed Budget

The Council made an across-the-board reduction to all General Fund appropriation authority in order to support other priorities. The percentage reduction in 2019 is about 0.07% and in 2020 about 0.1%.

Incremental Budget Changes

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	2019		2020	
	Budget	FTE	Budget	FTE
2018 Adopted Budget	\$ 1,467,172	5.90	\$ 1,467,172	5.90
Baseline Changes				
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 256,561	0.00	\$ 272,770	0.00
Bi-Annual Adjustment for the Democracy Voucher Program	\$ 4,743,000	0.00	\$ 0	0.00
Council Changes				
General Fund Appropriation Reduction	-\$ 689	0.00	-\$ 1,087	0.00
Total Incremental Changes	\$ 4,998,872	0.00	\$ 271,683	0.00
2019 Adopted/2020 Endorsed Budget	\$ 6,466,044	5.90	\$ 1,738,855	5.90

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Descriptions of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline Changes

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$256,561

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, health care, and industrial insurance charges for the department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process. This technical adjustment also transfers internal services costs for Human Resources, Finance and Administrative Services, and Information Technology from Finance General to the department. With this change, department budgets will better reflect support costs. Previously these costs were included in the Finance General budget.

Bi-Annual Adjustment for the Democracy Voucher Program - \$4,743,000

This bi-annual adjustment funds the Democracy Voucher Program. The increases are for voucher payments to eligible candidates participating in the program, printing and mailing costs, and temporary labor costs. Most of this increase, \$4.2 million, is for the voucher payments. This budget varies significantly from year to year due to the fact that elections occur only in odd years. All seven city council districts positions will be on the ballot in 2019. The Democracy Voucher Program receives annual revenues of \$3 million and therefore will also use the fund balance accumulated in non-election years to fund a portion of the 2019 voucher payments.

Council Changes

General Fund Appropriation Reduction - (\$689)

The Council made an across-the-board reduction to all General Fund appropriation authority in order to support other priorities. The percentage reduction in 2019 is about 0.07% and in 2020 about 0.1%.

City Council Provisos

There are no Council provisos.

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Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
Ethics and Elections Budget Summary Level			
General Fund	758,669	1,009,982	1,024,683
Total for BSL: BO-ET-V1T00	758,669	1,009,982	1,024,683
Democracy Vouchers Budget Summary Level			
Election Vouchers Fund	708,503	5,456,062	714,172
Total for BSL: BO-ET-VT123	708,503	5,456,062	714,172
Department Total	1,467,172	6,466,044	1,738,855
Department Full-time Equivalents Total*	5.90	5.90	5.90

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Budget Summary by Fund for Ethics and Elections

	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
12300 - Election Vouchers Fund	708,503	5,456,062	714,172
00100 - General Fund	758,669	1,009,982	1,024,683
Budget Totals for ETH	1,467,172	6,466,044	1,738,855

Revenue Overview

2019 Estimated Revenues

Summit Code	Source	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
411100	Real and Personal Property Tax	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
	Total Taxes	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
379100	Use of (contribution to) Fund Balance	-2,291,497	2,456,062	-2,285,828
	Total Use of (contribution to) Fund Balance	-2,291,497	2,456,062	-2,285,828
Total Resources		708,503	5,456,062	714,172

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Appropriations By Budget Summary Level (BSL) and Program

Ethics and Elections Budget Summary Level

The purpose of the Ethics and Elections Budget Summary 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.

Program Expenditures	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
Ethics and Elections	758,669	1,009,982	1,024,683
Total	758,669	1,009,982	1,024,683
Full-time Equivalents Total*	4.90	4.90	4.90

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Democracy Vouchers Budget Summary Level

The purpose of the Democracy Vouchers Budget Summary 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 Democracy Voucher Program enacted by voters in November 2015.

Program Expenditures	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
Democracy Vouchers	708,503	5,456,062	714,172
Total	708,503	5,456,062	714,172
Full-time Equivalents Total*	1.00	1.00	1.00

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