

Legislative Department

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

Department Overview

The Legislative Department includes three divisions : the Seattle City Council, Central Staff and the Office of the City Clerk. Each division supports various aspects of the Council and works with members of the public and City departments to facilitate and develop effective and responsive public policy. The Legislative Department is part of the legislative branch of government, which also includes the Office of City Auditor, the Office of Hearing Examiner, and the Office of Inspector General for Public Safety.

The Council is composed of two at-large and seven district-elected seats for a total of nine, nonpartisan, elected Councilmembers. In November 2023, seven district Councilmembers were elected to a four-year term beginning in 2024. Two at-large Councilmembers were elected to terms aligning with the election for a four-year term with the Mayor and City Attorney election in 2021. This approach staggers the district and at-large elections two years apart. In 2025, two district positions were appointed to the Council as resignation replacements. One special election will be held in November 2025 to determine the District 2 Councilmember to serve the remainder of the term through 2027, and one special election will be held in November 2026 to determine the District 5 Councilmember to serve the remainder of the term through 2027.

The City Council establishes City laws; creates, evaluates and approves policies, legislation, and regulations; approves the City's annual operating and capital improvement budgets; and provides oversight to the City's executive departments. Each Councilmember has a staff of legislative assistants who assist in this work. The City Council division also includes the Communications and HR/Finance teams. These teams provide services to the entire Legislative department.

Central Staff provides policy and budget analysis for Councilmembers and their staff, as well project management related to City Council consultant contracts. The Office of the City Clerk advances principles of open government and inclusive access through effective facilitation of the legislative process and transparent, accountable stewardship of public information and the official record, including City Council proceedings and legislation. The City Clerk serves as ex-officio elections administrator and filing officer. The office also manages the City's Boards and Commissions Registry Program; coordinates public records disclosure requests; and provides information technology, administrative and operational support to the Legislative Department.

Budget Snapshot

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	21,074,365	22,764,475	23,938,977	23,630,190
Total Operations	21,074,365	22,764,475	23,938,977	23,630,190
Total Appropriations	21,074,365	22,764,475	23,938,977	23,630,190
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	101.50	102.50	102.50	102.50

** 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's 2026 Proposed Budget maintains core services for the Legislative Department. The proposed budget increases the department's budget by 4% from 2025. The budget includes technical adjustments to bring the department's baseline budget into alignment with changes to internal service costs, and changes to bargained annual wage adjustments and SCERS retirement contributions.

Incremental Budget Changes

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	2026 Budget	FTE
Total 2026 Endorsed Budget	23,938,977	102.50
Baseline		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(88,740)	-
Proposed Technical		
Bargained Annual Wage Adjustment to Base Budget	(206,192)	-
SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate Reduction	(13,855)	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$(308,787)	-
Total 2026 Proposed Budget	\$23,630,190	102.50

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(88,740)

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 Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare and other central cost factors. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

Proposed Technical

Bargained Annual Wage Adjustment to Base Budget

Expenditures \$(206,192)

This centrally administered change adjusts base budget appropriations to reflect the proper Annual Wage Increase (AWI) increment for 2026, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of City Unions for personnel costs. AWI increments are determined based on the average change in the local Consumer Price Index (CPI). This change represents a true-up between the forecasted CPI assumption included in the Endorsed Budget and the actual CPI data.

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SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate Reduction

Expenditures \$(13,855)

The City's employee retirement system, the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS) is a defined benefit pension program funded by a combination of salary-based employer (i.e., the City) and employee contributions, and investment earnings. Based on the updated actuarial valuation for 2025, this item reduces the employer contribution rate from the endorsed rate of 15.17% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 15.06%.

Expenditure Overview

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Appropriations				
LEG - BO-LG-G1000 - Legislative Department				
00100 - General Fund	15,438,871	17,744,320	18,656,233	18,361,913
Total for BSL: BO-LG-G1000	15,438,871	17,744,320	18,656,233	18,361,913
LEG - BO-LG-G2000 - Leadership and Administration				
00100 - General Fund	5,635,494	5,020,156	5,282,745	5,268,277
Total for BSL: BO-LG-G2000	5,635,494	5,020,156	5,282,745	5,268,277
Department Total	21,074,365	22,764,475	23,938,977	23,630,190
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	101.50	102.50	102.50	102.50

* 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

Budget Summary by Fund Legislative Department

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	21,074,365	22,764,475	23,938,977	23,630,190
Budget Totals for LEG	21,074,365	22,764,475	23,938,977	23,630,190

Revenue Overview

2026 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
341120	Data Proc-Tech/Operations	812	-	-	-
341900	General Government-Other Rev	6,983,504	7,185,175	7,584,956	7,584,956
360540	Cashiers Overages & Shortages	500	-	-	-
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		6,984,816	7,185,175	7,584,956	7,584,956

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Total LEG Resources	6,984,816	7,185,175	7,584,956	7,584,956
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Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

LEG - BO-LG-G1000 - Legislative Department

The purpose of the Legislative Department Budget Summary Level is to set policy, enact City laws, approve the City's budget, provide oversight of City departments, and support the mission of the Council.

Program Expenditures	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Central Staff	3,854,005	4,431,997	4,661,504	4,589,646
City Clerk	5,149,990	4,521,028	4,757,438	4,678,823
City Council	6,434,875	8,791,295	9,237,291	9,093,445
Total	15,438,871	17,744,320	18,656,233	18,361,913
Full-time Equivalents Total*	95.50	96.50	96.50	96.50

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The following information summarizes the programs in Legislative Department Budget Summary Level:

Central Staff

The purpose of the Central Staff Program is to provide high-quality, objective research and analysis to the Council and its individual members on a variety of policy and budget issues, as well as consultant contract services for the Legislative department.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Central Staff	3,854,005	4,431,997	4,661,504	4,589,646
Full Time Equivalents Total	19.00	19.00	19.00	19.00

City Clerk

The purpose of the City Clerk Program is to support and facilitate the City's legislative process in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act; manage the City's Records Management Program and ensure public access to the City's records; preserve the City's official and historical records in compliance with the Public Records Acts; manage the City's Boards and Commissions Registry; serve as the City's ex officio elections officer; and provide information technology, administrative and operational support to the Legislative Department.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
City Clerk	5,149,990	4,521,028	4,757,438	4,678,823
Full Time Equivalents Total	27.50	28.50	28.50	28.50

City Council

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The purpose of the City Council Program is to set policy; review, consider and determine legislative action; approve the City's budget; and provide oversight of City departments. The goal of the City Council is to be transparent, effective and accountable, as well as to promote diversity and health of all neighborhoods. This program consists of the nine Councilmembers, their Legislative Assistants and the Communications staff.

	2024	2025	2026	2026
Expenditures/FTE	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Proposed
City Council	6,434,875	8,791,295	9,237,291	9,093,445
Full Time Equivalents Total	49.00	49.00	49.00	49.00

LEG - BO-LG-G2000 - Leadership and Administration

The purpose of the Leadership and Administration Budget Summary Level is to provide executive, community, financial, human resource, technology and business support to the department.

Program Expenditures	2024	2025	2026	2026
	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Proposed
Citywide Indirect Costs	4,304,089	3,711,228	3,905,028	3,913,584
Departmental Indirect Costs	1,331,405	1,308,927	1,377,716	1,354,693
Total	5,635,494	5,020,156	5,282,745	5,268,277
Full-time Equivalents Total*	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

**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*

The following information summarizes the programs in Leadership and Administration Budget Summary Level:

Citywide Indirect Costs

The purpose of the Citywide Indirect Costs program is to fund internal services costs originating from outside of the department such as allocated costs from the Department of Finance and Administrative Services and Seattle Information Technology Department.

	2024	2025	2026	2026
Expenditures/FTE	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Proposed
Citywide Indirect Costs	4,304,089	3,711,228	3,905,028	3,913,584

Departmental Indirect Costs

The purpose of the Departmental Indirect Costs program is to fund costs associated with management of the department. This may include personnel costs related to department leadership and administration or other administrative costs such as external rent and operating supplies or services.

	2024	2025	2026	2026
Expenditures/FTE	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Proposed
Departmental Indirect Costs	1,331,405	1,308,927	1,377,716	1,354,693
Full Time Equivalents Total	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00