

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 assessing 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.

The OEO provides assistance to City employees through a variety of means, including 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 support 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 will submit an annual report to the Mayor's Office and City Council that addresses issues extending beyond the experiences of individual employees and have a broader, systemic impact on the City. The report may include recommendations to change the City's Personnel Rules, complaint and investigations systems or trainings, and share information on patterns of inappropriate workplace conduct at the City.

Budget Snapshot

	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Adopted
Department Support				
General Fund Support	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Total Operations	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Total Appropriations	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	-	3.00	3.00	5.00

* 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 2020 Adopted Budget furthers the Mayor's commitment to the Office of the Employee Ombud and the growth necessary to carry out the office's mission. Since the creation of the OEO in the second quarter of 2019, it has received over 80 requests for assistance. In order to be able to keep up with the need, the adopted budget adds two additional positions: one position will serve as an Assistant Ombud, supporting case management, policy development, communications and training; another position will provide administrative support to the director and office. In addition to the two positions, the adopted budget adds one-time relocation costs and an on-going rent adjustment.

The 2020 Adopted Budget also provides for technical adjustments in the baseline budget reflecting agreements with the Coalition of Unions. The agreements include State Paid Family Medical Leave and an Annual Wage Increase. Another technical adjustment corrects the budget to reflect actual director labor costs.

City Council Changes to the Proposed Budget

As part of the adopted budget process, the Council made a reduction of \$135,250 to the one-time \$500,000 relocation cost, providing OEO with \$364,750 to cover costs associated with an office move.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2020 Budget	FTE
Total 2020 Endorsed Budget	561,310	3.00
Baseline		
2020 Coalition and Non-Rep Annual Wage Increase Base Budget	33,770	-
2020 State Paid Family Medical Leave Increase Base Budget	299	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(67,589)	-
Labor Cost Adjustment	57,108	-
Proposed Operating		
Increase Case Management Capacity	288,023	2.00
Relocation of Office and Lease Cost Increase	541,000	-
Council		
Reduction in One-Time Relocation Costs	(135,250)	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$717,361	2.00
Total 2020 Adopted Budget	\$1,278,671	5.00

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

2020 Coalition and Non-Rep Annual Wage Increase Base Budget

Expenditures \$33,770

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect the 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, retirement, overtime and temporary labor.

2020 State Paid Family Medical Leave Increase Base Budget

Expenditures \$299

Starting in January 2020, Washington State will offer paid family and medical leave benefits to all workers in the State of Washington, including City of Seattle employees. In 2020, the agreements with the Coalition of Unions moves a portion of the cost responsibility to the employee in 2020, with the City paying the remainder. This item increases appropriations to account for the City's obligation for all employees.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(67,589)

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including the

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Department of Finance & Administrative Services rates, Information Technology rates and Human Resources rates, health care, retirement and industrial insurance charges for the department. This adjustment also includes a transfer of resources from the department to the Human Resources Investigations Unit (HRIU) as part of the City's efforts to improve investigative processes and practices across the City departments. While the internal service rates are final for 2020, some of the other adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

Labor Cost Adjustment

Expenditures \$57,108

The director position was originally budgeted as a Manager 2 but classified as an Executive 2 per the Mayor's Office and Council requests. This adjustment adds funds to the Office of the Employee Ombud's total budget to account for actual labor costs.

Proposed Operating

Increase Case Management Capacity

Expenditures \$288,023
Position Allocation 2.00

This item provides additional funding to the Office of the Employee Ombud in order to increase case management capacity. This includes funding for two positions:

- 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 2, to support policy, communications, and training development and increase case management capacity; and
- 1.0 FTE Management Systems Analyst, to support the overall office with administrative, data, and budgeting needs.

These positions provide much needed capacity to address the high number of inquiries already received in 2019.

Relocation of Office and Lease Cost Increase

Expenditures \$541,000

The Council reduced this proposal in the adopted budget. Refer to the Council Changes section below. The proposed budget description follows:

This item provides the Office of Employee Ombud with funds to be able to relocate to a larger office space to support their growing staff and operational needs. The increase includes one-time funding for move costs, tenant improvements, and ongoing incremental cost for lease difference.

Council

Reduction in One-Time Relocation Costs

Expenditures \$(135,250)

This item reduces one-time relocation funds for the Office of the Employee Ombud by \$135,250 in 2020. This reduction provides OEO with \$364,750 to cover relocation costs.

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Expenditure Overview

	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Adopted
Appropriations				
OEO - BO-EM-V10MB - Office of Employee Ombud				
00100 - General Fund	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Total for BSL: BO-EM-V10MB	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Department Total	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	-	3.00	3.00	5.00

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Budget Summary by Fund Office of the Employee Ombud

	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Adopted
00100 - General Fund	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Budget Totals for OEO	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671

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	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Adopted
Employee Ombud Office	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Total	-	509,472	561,310	1,278,671
Full-time Equivalents Total*	-	3.00	3.00	5.00

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