

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 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

	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	629,558	1,009,982	1,024,683	1,094,680
Other Funding - Operating	660,534	5,456,062	714,172	742,213
Total Operations	1,290,092	6,466,044	1,738,855	1,836,893
Total Appropriations	1,290,092	6,466,044	1,738,855	1,836,893
 Full-Time Equivalents Total*	 5.90	 5.90	 5.90	 7.40

** 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 Overview

The 2020 Proposed Budget for the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC) maintains investments at current service levels. The only significant change in the SEEC budget is the net-zero conversion of temporary staff to permanent status in the Democracy Voucher program. Having nearly completed two full election cycles, it's become clear that the bodies of work related to public relations (one full-time position) and program administration (one part-time position) are ongoing.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2020 Budget	FTE
Total 2020 Endorsed Budget	1,738,855	5.90
Conversion of Temporary Positions to Permanent Status	-	1.50
Baseline		
2020 Coalition and Non-Rep Annual Wage Increase Base Budget	70,855	-
2020 State Paid Family Medical Leave Increase Base Budget	1,047	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	26,136	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$98,038	1.50
Total 2020 Proposed Budget	\$1,836,893	7.40

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Conversion of Temporary Positions to Permanent Status

Expenditures	-
Position Allocation	1.50

The Democracy Voucher program initially utilized temporary labor during the program's implementation as the staffing needs were unclear. Having almost completed two election cycles, and with the three-year limit on term-limited temporary labor approaching, the program will convert two staff members to permanent status.

A full-time, temporary Public Relations Specialist, Senior will be converted to permanent status. This position addresses the ongoing need to promote awareness of the Democracy Voucher program, develop strategic partnerships with organizations working with underserved communities, and ensure that key program communications are culturally relevant and widely available in multiple languages.

Secondly, the program's half-time Administrative Specialist III position will be made permanent. This body of work, which includes handling program inquiries as well tracking, replacing and processing vouchers, is ongoing.

Baseline

2020 Coalition and Non-Rep Annual Wage Increase Base Budget

Expenditures	\$70,855
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This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect the Annual Wage Increase, as outlined in the tentative agreement 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.

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2020 State Paid Family Medical Leave Increase Base Budget

Expenditures \$1,047

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 tentative agreement 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 \$26,136

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

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Expenditure Overview

	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed
Appropriations				
ETH - BO-ET-V1T00 - Ethics and Elections				
00100 - General Fund	629,558	1,009,982	1,024,683	1,094,680
Total for BSL: BO-ET-V1T00	629,558	1,009,982	1,024,683	1,094,680
ETH - BO-ET-VT123 - Election Vouchers				
12300 - Election Vouchers Fund	660,534	5,456,062	714,172	742,213
Total for BSL: BO-ET-VT123	660,534	5,456,062	714,172	742,213
Department Total	1,290,092	6,466,044	1,738,855	1,836,893
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	5.90	5.90	5.90	7.40

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Budget Summary by Fund Ethics and Elections Commission

	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	629,558	1,009,982	1,024,683	1,094,680
12300 - Election Vouchers Fund	660,534	5,456,062	714,172	742,213
Budget Totals for ETH	1,290,092	6,466,044	1,738,855	1,836,893

Revenue Overview

2020 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed
311010	Real & Personal Property Taxes	2,982,428	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Total Revenues for: 12300 - Election Vouchers Fund		2,982,428	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
400000	Use of/(Contribution to) Fund Balance	-2,321,894	2,456,062	-2,285,828	-2,257,787
Total Resources for: 12300 - Election Vouchers Fund		660,534	5,456,062	714,172	742,213
Total ETH Resources		660,534	5,456,062	714,172	742,213

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Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

ETH - BO-ET-V1T00 - Ethics and Elections

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 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed
Ethics and Elections	629,558	1,009,982	1,024,683	1,094,680
Total	629,558	1,009,982	1,024,683	1,094,680
Full-time Equivalents Total*	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.90

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ETH - BO-ET-VT123 - Election Vouchers

The purpose of the Election Voucher 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 Election Voucher program enacted by voters in November 2015.

Program Expenditures	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed
Election Vouchers	660,534	5,456,062	714,172	742,213
Total	660,534	5,456,062	714,172	742,213
Full-time Equivalents Total*	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.50

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