

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 on improving the City's workplace culture. OEO's mission is to support City employees in all branches of City government by 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. OEO is the primary conflict management resource for the City.

The OEO provides assistance to City employees through a variety of means, including conflict management and resolution, 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 supports 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 submits an annual report to the Mayor's Office and City Council that addresses issues extending beyond the experiences of individual employees. The report includes recommendations to clarify 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

	2020 Actuals	2021 Adopted	2022 Proposed
Department Support			
General Fund Support	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Total Operations	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Total Appropriations	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	5.00	4.00	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.

Office of the Employee Ombud

Budget Overview

The 2022 Proposed 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 department in the second quarter of 2019, it has received over 500 requests for assistance. In order to be able to keep up with the growing need, the proposed budget adds two additional positions: one position will serve as the coordinator for anti-hate crimes and crimes of bias training and development; another position will provide administrative support to the director and office.

The 2022 Proposed Budget also provides for citywide technical adjustments related to space sublease costs, internal services costs, and personnel costs.

Incremental Budget Changes

Office of the Employee Ombud

	Dollars	FTE
2021 Adopted Budget	733,298	4.00
Baseline		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	49,395	-
Baseline Adjustments for Personnel Costs	20,867	-
Proposed Operating		
Increase Anti-Hate Crimes Training Capacity	151,701	1.00
Increase Administrative Support Capacity	87,618	1.00
Proposed Technical		
Space Sublease Costs	49,200	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$358,781	2.00
Total 2022 Proposed Budget	\$1,092,079	6.00

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$49,395

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, retirement and industrial insurance charges for the department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

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Baseline Adjustments for Personnel Costs

Expenditures \$20,867

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to restore the annual wage increase for non-represented Executives, Managers and Strategic Advisors, which was forgone in 2021 due to financial constraints.

Proposed Operating

Increase Anti-Hate Crimes Training Capacity

Expenditures \$151,701

Position Allocation 1.00

This item creates a 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 1, Exempt pocket in the Office of the Employee Ombud (OEO), and increases ongoing appropriation authority by \$151,701 to OEO. The ongoing body of work for this position is training development and coordination related to anti-hate crimes and crimes of bias within City departments. This body of work was created in response to the Mayor's Executive Order 2020-01: Addressing Hate Crimes and Crimes of Bias, as well as Seattle City Council Ordinance 126308.

Increase Administrative Support Capacity

Expenditures \$87,618

Position Allocation 1.00

This item creates a 1.0 FTE Administrative Specialist I pocket in the Office of the Employee Ombud (OEO), and increases ongoing appropriation authority by \$87,618 to OEO. The ongoing body of work for this position is administrative support, including, but not limited to, case intake, scheduling, ordering supplies, and developing marketing materials.

Proposed Technical

Space Sublease Costs

Expenditures \$49,200

This items increases one-time appropriation authority by \$49,200 to the Office of the Employee Ombud (OEO) for office sublease costs in 2022. Through December 31, 2022, OEO will sublease office space from the City Attorney's Office, located in Columbia Tower, at the same rate of OEO's prior office lease costs in Seattle City Hall. Prior office lease costs were included in the standard costs and rates that OEO paid to the Department of Finance & Administrative Services in 2019 and 2020.

Office of the Employee Ombud

Expenditure Overview

	2020 Actuals	2021 Adopted	2022 Proposed
Appropriations			
OEO - BO-EM-V10MB - Office of Employee Ombud			
00100 - General Fund	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Total for BSL: BO-EM-V10MB	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Department Total	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	5.00	4.00	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.*

Budget Summary by Fund Office of the Employee Ombud

	2020 Actuals	2021 Adopted	2022 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Budget Totals for OEO	707,768	733,298	1,092,079

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	2020 Actuals	2021 Adopted	2022 Proposed
Employee Ombud Office	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Total	707,768	733,298	1,092,079
Full-time Equivalents Total*	5.00	4.00	6.00

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