

Office of the Employee Ombud

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<https://www.seattle.gov/ombud>

Department Overview

In 2018 Executive Order 2018-04 created the **Office of Employee Ombud (OEO)** following the recommendations issued by the Anti-Harassment Inter-departmental Team on improving the City's workplace culture. The OEO's mission 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 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.

The OEO 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. 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

	2022 Actuals	2023 Adopted	2024 Endorsed	2024 Adopted
Department Support				
General Fund Support	986,567	1,151,997	1,159,529	1,154,216
Total Operations	986,567	1,151,997	1,159,529	1,154,216
Total Appropriations	986,567	1,151,997	1,159,529	1,154,216

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

Incremental Budget Changes

Office of the Employee Ombud

	2024 Budget	FTE
Total 2024 Endorsed Budget	1,159,529	6.00

Office of the Employee Ombud

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	1,907	-
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Council

SCERS Contribution Rate Change	(7,220)	-
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Total Incremental Changes	\$(5,313)	-
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Total 2024 Adopted Budget	\$1,154,216	6.00
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Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures	\$1,907
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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.

Council

SCERS Contribution Rate Change

Expenditures	\$(7,220)
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The City’s employee retirement system, the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS), of which most non-uniformed City employees are members, is a defined benefit pension program funded by a combination of salary-based employer (i.e., the City) and employee contributions, and investment earnings.

The employer portion of the SCERS contribution is funded through the annual budget process as a percentage of salaries based on several factors including reports from the contracted actuary and the City’s long-range financial forecasts. The Mayor’s 2024 Proposed Mid-Biennial Budget included an employer contribution rate of 16.22%, which was determined prior to the actuary’s recommendation but provided for long-term “smoothing” given the City’s long-term financial challenges.

This item reduces the employer contribution rate from the proposed rate of 16.22% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 15.17%, which was determined to provide sufficient funding to the retirement system to achieve 100% funded status by 2042.

Office of the Employee Ombud

2023-24 Mid-Biennium Adopted Budget Updates - Expenses

Budget Summary Level	Fund	Budget Process Phase Endorsed	Adopted Changes	Grand Total
Office of Employee Ombud	00100 - General Fund	1,159,529	-5,313	1,154,216
Office of Employee Ombud Total		1,159,529	-5,313	1,154,216
Grand Total		1,159,529	-5,313	1,154,216