Legislative Department

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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 2025. This approach staggers the district and at-large elections two years apart. Also in 2025, two district positions were appointed to the Council as resignation replacements. One special election was 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

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	21,158,146	23,710,190	23,604,075	23,957,072
Total Operations	**21,158,146**	**23,710,190**	**23,604,075**	**23,957,072**
Total Appropriations	**21,158,146**	**23,710,190**	**23,604,075**	**23,957,072**
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	102.50	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 2027-2028 Proposed Budget maintains services for the Legislative Department. Technical adjustments have been made to remove a one-time consultant study from 2026 and to bring the proposed budget into alignment with the centrally projected revenue forecast, internal service costs, and retirement contribution rates.

Incremental Budget Changes

Legislative Department

	Dollars	FTE
2026 Adopted Budget	**23,710,190**	**102.50**
Baseline		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	170,523	-
Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate	(196,639)	-
Remove One-Time Funding for Consultant Report on Neighborhood Engagement and Mitigation Plans	(80,000)	-
Proposed Technical		
Align Department Revenues with the August Forecast	-	-
Total Incremental Changes	**$(106,115)**	**-**
Total 2027 Proposed Budget	**$23,604,075**	**102.50**

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures $170,523

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.

Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate

Expenditures $(196,639)

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 2026, this item reduces the employer contribution rate from the endorsed rate of 15.06% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 13.48% for 2027 and 13.52% for 2028.

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Remove One-Time Funding for Consultant Report on Neighborhood Engagement and Mitigation Plans

Expenditures $(80,000)

This removes a one-time item in the 2026 Adopted Budget, LEG-001-B-1, which added $80,000 of General Fund resources to fund a consultant report on neighborhood engagement and mitigation plans related to permanent supportive housing.

Proposed Technical

Align Department Revenues with the August Forecast

Revenues $(671,210)

This is a technical adjustment to capture centrally projected and forecast General Fund revenue increments for this department.

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
LEG - BO-LG-G1000 - Legislative Department				
00100 - General Fund	15,820,273	18,441,913	18,375,180	18,541,233
Total for BSL: BO-LG-G1000	**15,820,273**	**18,441,913**	**18,375,180**	**18,541,233**
LEG - BO-LG-G2000 - Leadership and Administration				
00100 - General Fund	5,337,873	5,268,277	5,228,895	5,415,839
Total for BSL: BO-LG-G2000	**5,337,873**	**5,268,277**	**5,228,895**	**5,415,839**
Department Total	**21,158,146**	**23,710,190**	**23,604,075**	**23,957,072**
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	**102.50**	**102.50**	**102.50**	**102.50**

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Budget Summary by Fund Legislative Department

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	21,158,146	23,710,190	23,604,075	23,957,072
Budget Totals for LEG	**21,158,146**	**23,710,190**	**23,604,075**	**23,957,072**

Legislative Department

Revenue Overview

2027 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
341900	General Government-Other Rev	7,269,935	7,584,956	6,913,746	7,000,537
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		**7,269,935**	**7,584,956**	**6,913,746**	**7,000,537**
Total LEG Resources		**7,269,935**	**7,584,956**	**6,913,746**	**7,000,537**

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	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Central Staff	4,032,196	4,589,646	4,581,351	4,615,904
City Clerk	5,054,378	4,678,823	4,692,164	4,742,437
City Council	6,733,699	9,173,445	9,101,665	9,182,893
Total	**15,820,273**	**18,441,913**	**18,375,180**	**18,541,233**
Full-time Equivalents Total*	96.50	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	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Central Staff	4,032,196	4,589,646	4,581,351	4,615,904
Full Time Equivalents Total	19.00	19.00	19.00	19.00

Legislative Department

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	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
City Clerk	5,054,378	4,678,823	4,692,164	4,742,437
Full Time Equivalents Total	28.50	28.50	28.50	28.50

City Council

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.

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
City Council	6,733,699	9,173,445	9,101,665	9,182,893
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	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Citywide Indirect Costs	3,794,534	3,913,584	3,874,227	4,046,711
Departmental Indirect Costs	1,543,339	1,354,693	1,354,668	1,369,128
Total	**5,337,873**	**5,268,277**	**5,228,895**	**5,415,839**
Full-time Equivalents Total*	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

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

Legislative Department

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.

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Citywide Indirect Costs	3,794,534	3,913,584	3,874,227	4,046,711

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.

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Departmental Indirect Costs	1,543,339	1,354,693	1,354,668	1,369,128
Full Time Equivalents Total	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00