

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 the 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. 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 reviews 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.

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

	2021 Actuals	2022 Adopted	2023 Proposed	2024 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Total Operations	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Total Appropriations	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	4.00	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

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Budget Overview

The 2023-24 Proposed Budget provides OEO with technical adjustments in the baseline budget, reflecting adjustments for the Annual Wage Increase (AWI) and changes to internal services costs. The remainder of the OEO budget maintains the current level of spending and staff. OEO is staffed to an appropriate level for the 2023-24 Proposed Budget and does not require additional resources at this time.

OEO will be absorbing all remaining Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) work. The Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) established an ADR program in 2001, prior to the creation of OEO. Most ADR services have since shifted to OEO, and the 2023-24 Proposed Budget eliminates the remaining components of the ADR program in SDHR and shifts the remaining work to OEO to consolidate and streamline services.

Incremental Budget Changes

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	Dollars	FTE
2022 Adopted Budget	1,092,079	6.00
Baseline		
Appropriations for 2022 Annual Wage Increase (AWI)	33,268	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	26,650	-
Proposed Technical		
General Fund Revenue Adjustment	-	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$59,918	-
Total 2023 Proposed Budget	\$1,151,997	6.00

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Appropriations for 2022 Annual Wage Increase (AWI)

Expenditures \$33,268

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect an annual wage increase in 2022, as outlined in the agreements between certain City unions, for personnel costs included in this department. These agreements were not finalized until after the 2022 budget had been adopted. This change includes ongoing cost increases to salary, FICA, Medicare, retirement, overtime and temporary labor. There is no increase assumed from 2022 to 2023.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$26,650

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

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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.

Proposed Technical

General Fund Revenue Adjustment

Revenues \$157,455

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

Expenditure Overview

	2021 Actuals	2022 Adopted	2023 Proposed	2024 Proposed
Appropriations				
OEO - BO-EM-V10MB - Office of Employee Ombud				
00100 - General Fund	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Total for BSL: BO-EM-V10MB	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Department Total	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	4.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

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Budget Summary by Fund Office of the Employee Ombud

	2021 Actuals	2022 Adopted	2023 Proposed	2024 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Budget Totals for OEO	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529

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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	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Actuals	Adopted	Proposed	Proposed
Employee Ombud Office	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Total	736,755	1,092,079	1,151,997	1,159,529
Full-time Equivalents Total*	4.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

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