

Ethics and Elections Commission

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<http://www.seattle.gov/ethics/>

Department Overview

The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission 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. The Commission also promotes informed elections through education, training, and enforcement of the City's Elections Code and Election Pamphlet Code. In 2011, the Commission executed an agreement with the City of Kirkland to provide an independent ethics investigation program for that city.

The Commission work on behalf of the City of Seattle centers around four 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. 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 possible 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 every organization that files 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 citizens know who is lobbying and how much they are being paid to lobby. The Commission also enforces compliance with the lobbying regulations.

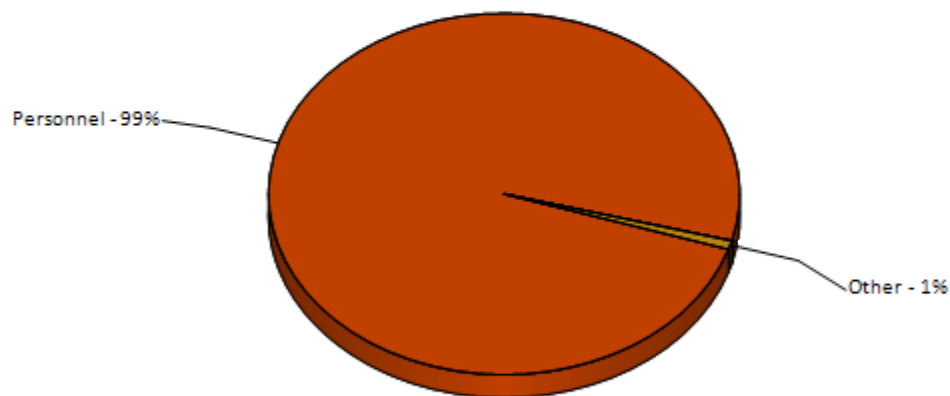
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Budget Snapshot

Department Support	2013 Actual	2014 Adopted	2015 Proposed	2016 Proposed
General Fund Support	\$851,005	\$771,278	\$677,070	\$681,022
Total Operations	\$851,005	\$771,278	\$677,070	\$681,022
 Total Appropriations	 \$851,005	 \$771,278	 \$677,070	 \$681,022
Full-time Equivalent Total*	6.20	6.20	5.20	5.20

* FTE totals are provided for information purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.

2015 Proposed Budget - Expenditure by Category



Budget Overview

The 2015-2016 Proposed Budget is adjusted to reflect the ending of the three-year contract with the Seattle Public Schools to provide an ethics and whistleblower protection program to the District. Another technical change is to transfer the cost of the Voters' Pamphlet from Ethics to a Finance General reserve account. The only other changes to the Ethics and Elections Commission budget are minor technical changes.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2015		2016	
	Budget	FTE	Budget	FTE
Total 2014 Adopted Budget	\$ 771,278	6.20	\$ 771,278	6.20
Baseline Changes				
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 11,405	0.00	\$ 11,405	0.00
Proposed Technical Changes				
Reduce Budget to Reflect End of Seattle Public School Contract	-\$ 60,501	-1.00	-\$ 60,501	-1.00
Transfer Cost of Voters' Pamphlet to Finance General	-\$ 33,331	0.00	-\$ 33,331	0.00
Final Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	-\$ 11,781	0.00	-\$ 7,829	0.00
Total Incremental Changes	-\$ 94,208	-1.00	-\$ 90,256	-1.00
2015 - 2016 Proposed Budget	\$ 677,070	5.20	\$ 681,022	5.20

Descriptions of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline Changes

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$11,405

Citywide technical adjustments made in the "Baseline Phase" reflect changes due to inflation, central cost allocations, retirement, healthcare, workers' compensation, and unemployment costs. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process. This adjustment also reflects movement of funding from Finance General to pay for costs allocated by Department of Information Technology and Finance & Administrative Services. These costs were previously paid directly by Finance General on the department's behalf.

Proposed Technical Changes

Reduce Budget to Reflect End of Seattle Public School Contract - (\$60,501)/(1.00) FTE

In 2011, the Commission entered into a three-year contract with the Seattle Public Schools to provide an independent and comprehensive ethics and whistleblower protection program. The contract ended June 30, 2014 and will not be renewed. This adjustment removes the contract amount and the associated position from the budget.

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Transfer Cost of Voters' Pamphlet to Finance General - (\$33,331)

Currently the cost of the Voters' Pamphlet is budgeted in Ethics and Elections. This item moves the cost of the pamphlet to Finance General where other election costs are budgeted. This expense fluctuates based on the number of items on the ballot and what percentage the Seattle related items are of the total King County voters' pamphlet. Finance General accounts provide more flexibility to handle this varying expense.

Final Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - (\$11,781)

Citywide technical adjustments made in the "Proposed Phase" reflect changes due to inflation, central cost allocation, retirement, healthcare, workers' compensation, and unemployment costs. These adjustments reflect updates to preliminary cost assumptions established in the "Baseline Phase."

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	Summit Code	2013 Actual	2014 Adopted	2015 Proposed	2016 Proposed
Ethics and Elections Budget Control Level	V1T00	851,005	771,278	677,070	681,022
Department Total		851,005	771,278	677,070	681,022

Department Full-time Equivalents Total*	6.20	6.20	5.20	5.20
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Appropriations By Budget Control Level (BCL) and Program

Ethics and Elections Budget Control Level

The purpose of the Ethics and Elections Budget Control 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.

	2013 Actual	2014 Adopted	2015 Proposed	2016 Proposed
Program Expenditures				
Ethics and Elections	851,005	771,278	677,070	681,022
Total	851,005	771,278	677,070	681,022
Full-time Equivalents Total*	6.20	6.20	5.20	5.20

* FTE totals are provided for information purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.