

Legislative Department

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

Department Overview

The Legislative Department is comprised of the Seattle City Council, as well as two primary divisions: 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 Council and Legislative Department are 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 2019, seven district Councilmembers were elected to a four-year term beginning in 2020. Two at-large Councilmembers are elected to align with the election for a four-year term with the Mayor and City Attorney election in 2021. This approach staggers the district and at-large elections two years apart.

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.

Central Staff provides policy and budget analysis for Councilmembers and their staffs, as well as consultant contract services for the Legislative Department. 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 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.

Communications and Human Resources/Finance teams are also a part of the Legislative Department. Communications staff assist Councilmembers and the Council as a whole in communicating values, goals and issues to the public by providing marketing and public relations services, including website and social media management, strategic media relations and public affairs work. Human Resources/Finance staff provide employee relations, talent acquisition, employee development, performance management, benefits administration services, finance, budget, accounting, and payroll for the Legislative Department and Office of City Auditor.

Budget Snapshot

	2022 Actuals	2023 Adopted	2024 Endorsed	2024 Adopted
Department Support				
General Fund Support	19,296,066	20,817,262	21,134,591	21,022,811
Total Operations	19,296,066	20,817,262	21,134,591	21,022,811
Total Appropriations	19,296,066	20,817,262	21,134,591	21,022,811
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	100.50	100.50	100.50	101.50

* 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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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2024 Budget	FTE
Total 2024 Endorsed Budget	21,134,591	100.50
Baseline		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(201,054)	-
Proposed Technical		
Add sunset pocket in 2024 for Council human resource support	-	1.00
Council		
One-time support for Transition of New Councilmembers and staff	200,000	-
SCERS Contribution Rate Change	(110,726)	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$(111,780)	1.00
Total 2024 Adopted Budget	\$21,022,811	101.50

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(201,054)

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.

Proposed Technical

Add sunset pocket in 2024 for Council human resource support

Position Allocation 1.00

This technical item adds to the 2024 budget a sunsetting position that was created through a 2023 supplemental budget change. The role of this position is to support the temporary increase in City Council human resource needs, as many Councilmembers and their staff are transitioning through retirements and an election. This position will sunset in 2024, and is funded through existing budget.

Council

One-time support for Transition of New Councilmembers and staff

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Expenditures \$200,000

This Council Budget Action (CBA) adds one-time funds to support the transition of new Councilmembers elected and appointed in 2023 and 2024, and their staff. Resources may be used for temporary support in Human Resources, Legislative Operations, Information Technology, or Communications, as well as for the training and onboarding of elected officials and their staff. Temporary support will be provided with existing position authority and no new positions are required to complete this work.

SCERS Contribution Rate Change

Expenditures \$(110,726)

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.

2023-24 Mid-Biennium Adopted Budget Updates - Expenses

Budget Summary Level	Fund	Budget Process Phase Endorsed	Adopted Changes	Grand Total
Leadership and Administration	00100 - General Fund	5,341,715	-298,375	5,043,340
Leadership and Administration Total		5,341,715	-298,375	5,043,340
Legislative Department	00100 - General Fund	15,792,875	186,595	15,979,471
Legislative Department Total		15,792,875	186,595	15,979,471
Grand Total		21,134,591	-111,780	21,022,811