Office for Civil Rights

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https://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/

Department Overview

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) envisions a city of thriving and powerful communities that foster shared healing and belonging. The OCR enforces laws against illegal discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, contracting, Title VI, and ADA Title II in the City of Seattle. We also lead the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) which is the City of Seattle's long-term commitment to ending disparities and achieving racial equity in Seattle. OCR's provides leadership to uphold civil rights, and advance racial equity also includes:

- Partnering with communities to inform policy development and community investment strategies;
- Enforcing City, state and federal anti-discrimination laws;
- Providing free civil rights trainings and technical assistance to businesses and community groups;
- Conducting data-driven policy research and analysis;
- Staffing the City of Seattle's Disability, LGBTQ, Human Rights, and Women's commissions; and
- Providing Race and Social Justice training, events, and technical assistance to City of Seattle employees.

Budget Snapshot

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	7,889,348	8,256,536	7,798,171	7,954,172
Other Funding - Operating	-	-	200,000	365,872
Total Operations	**7,889,348**	**8,256,536**	**7,998,171**	**8,320,044**
Total Appropriations	**7,889,348**	**8,256,536**	**7,998,171**	**8,320,044**
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	35.00	35.00	35.00	36.00

** 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*

Budget Overview

The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget maintains core services and staffing for the Office for Civil rights (OCR). OCR's proposed budget is a 3.1% decrease from the 2026 Adopted Budget. The department will continue to invest in programs for civil rights enforcement, policy analysis, city commissions, and the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative.

The General Fund revenue forecast for the City's budget is insufficient to cover all anticipated Citywide costs. To prioritize direct service delivery in OCR while addressing the General Fund's structural deficit the proposed budget removes one vacant position and reduces funding for one grant program and one contract, with limited anticipated impact. Specifically, the proposed budget reduces funding for a consultant contract that supports the Seattle Disability Commission (SDC), preserving enough to continue consultant support at the monthly SDC meetings, and reduces the amount available for OCR's Collective Network grant program. The change in the available funding for the Collective Network Grant program will preserve funding for community-based organizations supporting alternatives to addressing harm created by the criminal legal system. In addition, a vacant communications position and associated budget is removed.

The proposed budget also adds two staff and funding for outreach to OCR's enforcement division to support Council-generated legislation adopted in 2026 but will take effect in 2027. Specifically, this legislation, introduced by Councilmember Foster, aims to mitigate unfair housing practices and adds new protections for homeowners from unwanted solicitation of residential property.

Additionally, in 2027, OCR will continue efforts it began in 2026 to assist displaced queer and trans individuals migrating to the City of Seattle. In 2026, OCR led a Trans & Queer Stabilization Interdepartmental Team (IDT) with membership from the Seattle LGBTQ commission, the Office of the Mayor (MO), the City Attorney's Office, the Seattle City Council, the Human Services Department (HSD), and other city departments. The IDT was tasked with developing budget and policy recommendations to increase the City's support for displaced Trans and Queer individuals migrating to the City of Seattle, including identifying rapid response, support for community-serving organizations, and long-term efforts. In 2026, the City identified $550,000 in rapid relief funding, including $300,000 added via an amendment sponsored by Councilmember Rinck in the 2026 Mid-year Supplemental Budget Ordinance (Ordinance 127496), and $250,000 directed by the Executive within the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA). The Executive directed OCR staff and HSD to collaborate and support this effort. The Mayor's proposed 2027-2028 budget adds $500,000 ongoing funding in HSD to create a Queer and Trans Stabilization Fund, to support organizations that help meet the emergent needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ community members. While no additional budget was added to OCR for this effort, OCR will continue the special project it created on gender justice using existing staffing and budget authority. The budget also makes technical changes, including adjustments to central cost and retirement rates, and removes one-time items added in the 2026 budget.

Incremental Budget Changes

Office for Civil Rights

	Dollars	FTE
2026 Adopted Budget	**8,256,536**	**35.00**
Baseline		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	151,769	-
Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate	(57,001)	-
Remove One Time Funding	(50,000)	-
Proposed Operating		
Reduce Budget for Consultant Contract	(26,500)	-
Remove Vacant Communications Position	(191,634)	(1.00)
Reduce Budget for Collective Network Grant Program	(285,000)	-
Proposed Technical		
Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation	200,000	1.00
Align Department Revenues with August Forecast	-	-
Total Incremental Changes	**$(258,366)**	**-**
Total 2027 Proposed Budget	**$7,998,171**	**35.00**

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures $151,769

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 $(57,001)

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.

Office for Civil Rights

Remove One Time Funding

Expenditures	$(50,000)

This technical item removes one-time Office for Civil Rights General Fund budget that was added to support a one-time housing reparations study.

Proposed Operating

Reduce Budget for Consultant Contract

Expenditures	$(26,500)

This item reduces contracted support for the Seattle Disability Commission (SDC), leaving $26,500 budgeted for this purpose. Contracted services provide technical skills in group facilitation, disabilities and program management. In partnership with the Seattle Office for Civil Rights Commission Division staff, direct support to SDC will continue to be provided at monthly meetings. As a result of this reduction, the consultant may not be able provide services to support the commission at ad hoc external meetings.

Remove Vacant Communications Position

Expenditures	$(191,634)
Position Allocation	(1.00)

This item removes position authority and funding for a vacant 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 1 position. One communications position that supports general internal and external communication efforts will remain in the department.

Reduce Budget for Collective Network Grant Program

Expenditures	$(285,000)

This item reduces the Collective Network: Community Alternatives to Incarceration and Policing grant program, leaving a remaining $285,000 granting budget. The program will continue to provide resources for community-based organizations supporting alternatives to addressing harm created by the criminal legal system. This reduction likely will result in one fewer grant recipient. Initially funded with one-time resources in 2020, each grant cycle has focused on a different theme; past themes include Black, transgender, and gender diverse communities (2021), and community-owned responses to domestic violence (2023-current).

Proposed Technical

Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation

Expenditures	$200,000
Position Allocation	1.00

This change adds ongoing budget and position changes resulting from the standalone legislation in 2026 for the Do Not Solicit Ordinance 127491 passed in August 2026. This ordinance aims to mitigate unfair housing practices and add new protections for homeowners from unwanted solicitation of residential property. This item adds $200,000 JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax in 2027 for: 1.0 FTE Planning and Development Specialist, outreach and engagement to community stakeholders, campaign costs, and technical support for program implementation. In 2028 and ongoing, this item also adds $360,000 and a 1.0 FTE Complaints Investigator for enforcement of this ordinance.

Office for Civil Rights

Align Department Revenues with August Forecast

Revenues	$6,232

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

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
OCR - BO-CR-X1R00 - Civil Rights				
00100 - General Fund	7,889,348	8,256,536	7,798,171	7,954,172
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	-	-	200,000	365,872
Total for BSL: BO-CR-X1R00	**7,889,348**	**8,256,536**	**7,998,171**	**8,320,044**
Department Total	**7,889,348**	**8,256,536**	**7,998,171**	**8,320,044**
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	**35.00**	**35.00**	**35.00**	**36.00**

** 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*

Budget Summary by Fund Office for Civil Rights

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	7,889,348	8,256,536	7,798,171	7,954,172
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	-	-	200,000	365,872
Budget Totals for OCR	**7,889,348**	**8,256,536**	**7,998,171**	**8,320,044**

Revenue Overview

2027 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
341900	General Government-Other Rev	540,784	921,966	928,198	940,202
360590	Program Income	16,600	16,600	16,600	16,600
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		**557,384**	**938,566**	**944,798**	**956,802**
Total OCR Resources		**557,384**	**938,566**	**944,798**	**956,802**

Office for Civil Rights

Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

OCR - BO-CR-X1R00 - Civil Rights

The purpose of the Civil Rights Budget Summary Level is to encourage and promote equal access and opportunity, diverse participation, and social and economic equity in Seattle. OCR works to eliminate discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, contracting, and lending in Seattle through enforcement, and policy and outreach activities. In addition, OCR is responsible for directing the Race and Social Justice Initiative, which leads other City departments to design and implement programs that help eliminate institutionalized racism.

Program Expenditures	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Civil Rights Enforcement	2,147,946	2,089,025	2,339,410	2,527,836
Commissions	681,678	612,996	579,581	579,756
Community Investments	753,863	570,000	285,000	285,000
Leadership and Administration	2,903,632	2,603,964	2,370,888	2,416,901
Policy	879,815	1,126,724	1,110,494	1,175,252
RSJI	522,414	1,253,827	1,312,799	1,335,299
Total	**7,889,348**	**8,256,536**	**7,998,171**	**8,320,044**
Full-time Equivalents Total*	35.00	35.00	35.00	36.00

**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*

The following information summarizes the programs in Civil Rights Budget Summary Level:

Civil Rights Enforcement

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Civil Rights Enforcement	2,147,946	2,089,025	2,339,410	2,527,836
Full Time Equivalents Total	14.00	14.00	15.00	16.00

Commissions

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Commissions	681,678	612,996	579,581	579,756
Full Time Equivalents Total	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Community Investments

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Community Investments	753,863	570,000	285,000	285,000

Office for Civil Rights

Leadership and Administration

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Leadership and Administration	2,903,632	2,603,964	2,370,888	2,416,901
Full Time Equivalents Total	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00

Policy

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Policy	879,815	1,126,724	1,110,494	1,175,252
Full Time Equivalents Total	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

RSJI

Expenditures/FTE	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
RSJI	522,414	1,253,827	1,312,799	1,335,299
Full Time Equivalents Total	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00