

Seattle Office for Civil Rights

Department Overview for the Housing & Human Services Committee

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Seattle
Office for Civil Rights

2/14/2024



City of Seattle

Agenda

- Introductions
- Department Overview
- Budget
- Lines of Business
- Key Projects in 2024
- Questions



Civil Rights Analyst, Mamadou Jawo, tables at a community event with Civil Rights Enforcement Director, Mike Chin.



Vision, Values, & Accountability Statement

- OCR **envisions** a city of thriving and powerful communities that fosters shared healing and belonging.
- We are **accountable** to provide leadership in upholding civil rights and advancing racial equity in the City of Seattle.
- We are a **direct service provider, convener, thought partner, and capacity builder**, with some small and time-limited funding opportunities.

Compassion

Responsibility

Integrity

Imagination

Belonging



Who We Are

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights provides **citywide leadership** in the areas of civil rights and equal opportunity and works to **eliminate discrimination** in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

We also provide civil rights **trainings and education, propose legislation and policies**, oversee the City's **Race & Social Justice Initiative**, and support four commissions.

Civil Rights Enforcement

Policy Development

Race & Social Justice Initiative (RSJI)

Community Investments

Commissions



Responsibilities & Duties Under SMC 3.14

- Enforce the City's civil rights laws
- Oversee policies & programs to ameliorate effects of disparate treatment of the City's protected classes.
- Consider and make recommendations concerning civil rights complaints and problems that may arise in connection with the treatment or services offered by the City of Seattle.
- Provide staff support for four assigned commissions, including:
 - Human Rights Commission
 - Disability Commission
 - LGBTQ+ Commission
 - Women's Commission



OCR staff joined the LGBTQ+ Commission to work an outreach table during a community event.



Lines of Business

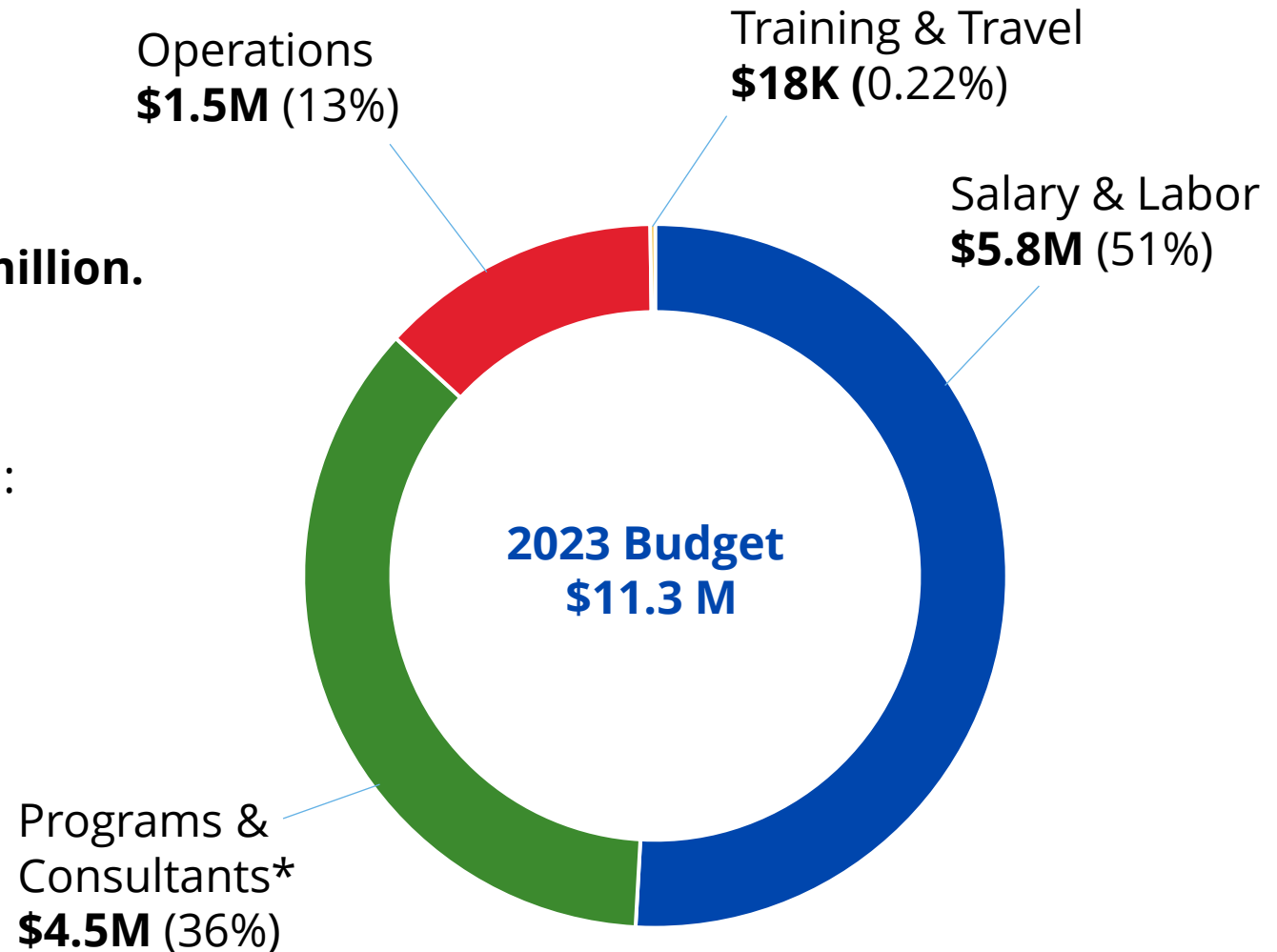


Budget

OCR's annual budget is approximately **\$7.9 million**.

By the Numbers:

- **2023 Budget—Adopted & Supplemental:**
\$11.3 million*
- **Employees:**
30-40
- **Fund Source:**
General Fund



**2023 Budget is higher than annual average due to supplemental funding for the Participatory Budgeting process.*



Civil Rights Enforcement

Ensure equitable access in employment, housing, public places, and contracting by enforcing the City's antidiscrimination and civil rights protections.

Outreach and Community Engagement

- Education
- Outreach
- Intake
- Mediation services

Investigations

- Investigations
- Early resolution
- Trainings

Code Compliance and Testing

- Testing
- Code compliance
- Technical assistance

Citywide Title VI Program

- Compliance
- Trainings
- Coordination



Laws We Enforce

Employment

Fair Employment Practices (SMC 14.04)

Americans with Disability Act – Title I

Age Discrimination in Employment Act

Civil Rights Act – Title VII

Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

Housing

Seattle Open Housing Ordinance (14.08)

Fair Chance Housing and Eviction Records Ordinance (SMC 14.09)

Public Accommodations

Unfair Public Accommodations Practices (SMC 14.06)

Closed Captioning Ordinance (SMC 14.05)

All-gender Restroom Ordinance (SMC 14.07)

Ban on Conversion Therapy on Minors (SMC 14.21)

Americans with Disability Act – Title II and III

Civil Rights Act – Title VI

Contracting

Fair Contracting Practices (SMC 14.10)

Civil Rights Act – Title VI

Note: Federal laws identified in gray



Common Types of Discrimination

Different treatment

based on a Protected Class(es)

Disparate impact

based on a Protected Class(es)

Harassment

based on a Protected Class(es)

Retaliation for asserting a civil right

Failure to provide a **Reasonable Accommodation/Modification**

Protected Classes

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Sex
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Marital Status
- Ancestry
- Political Ideology
- Creed
- Veteran/Military
- Citizenship
- Immigration status
- Parental Status (HO)
- Section 8 or housing subsidy (HO)
- Alternative sources of income (HO)
- Genetic Information (PE)
- Breastfeeding (AC)
- Pregnancy Outcomes
- Caste

HO: Housing only, PE: Employment only, AC: Public Accommodations only

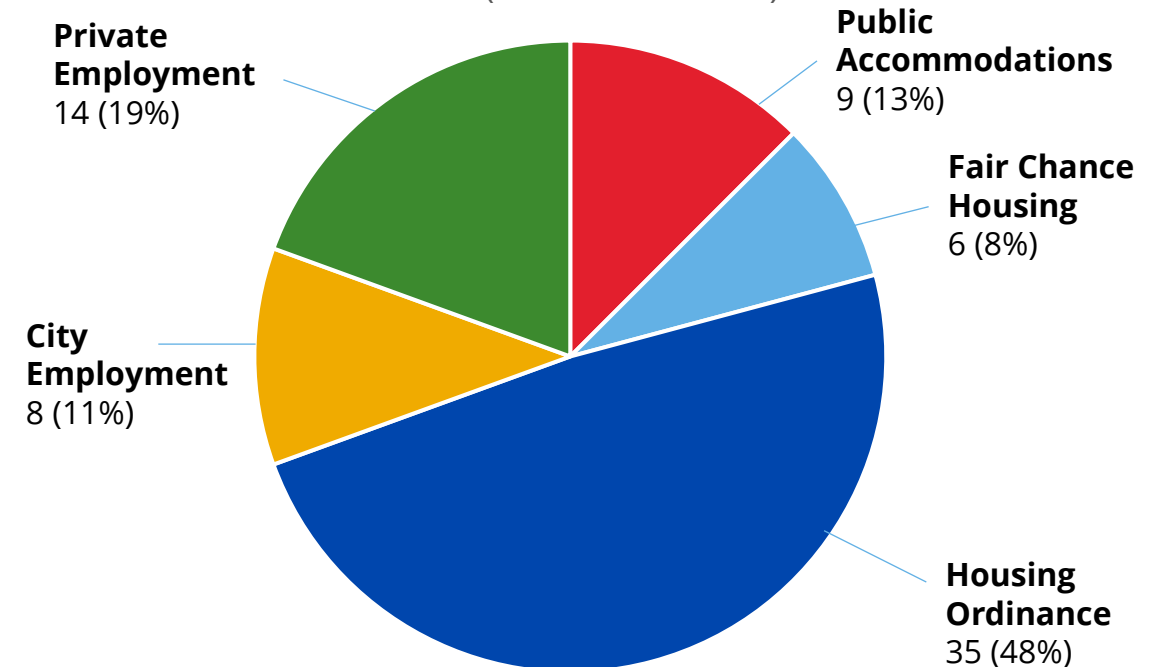


2023 Civil Rights Enforcement Impact

- **Cases filed:** 59
- **Cases resolved:** 72
 - **Settlements:** 10 (14%)
 - **Reasonable Cause:** 9 (13%)
 - **Administrative Closure:** 13 (18%)
 - **No Reasonable Cause:** 40 (55%)
- **Total monetary awards:** \$39,000
- **Average case duration from filing to resolution:** 372 days
- Most claims investigated and resolved by OCR are regarding **housing access** and **private employment**.

Types of Resolved Investigations

Cases (% of 72 total cases)



Civil Rights Outreach & Education

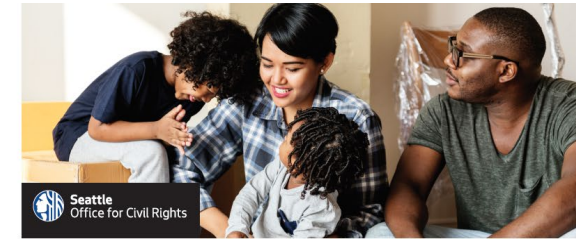
We provide education and conduct community outreach regarding Seattle's antidiscrimination protections to inform residents of their rights and how to get help.

If cases fall outside of our jurisdiction, we refer people to the appropriate agency.

Pictured to the right are samples of past public awareness campaigns.

Everyone deserves a Fair Chance at housing

If you've been denied housing because of criminal history, call 206.684.4500 or visit seattle.gov/fairhousing



DOMESTIC WORKERS IN SEATTLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE FREE OF HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION
Fair Employment Practices Ordinance

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
(206) 684-4500
www.seattle.gov/civilrights



How you pay your rent is your business

If you've been denied housing because you rely on Social Security, vouchers, or some other form of assistance, call 206.684.4500 or visit seattle.gov/fairhousing



YOUTH DON'T NEED FIXING

Seattle has a ban on conversion therapy for minors

- ♥ **REPORT VIOLATIONS** with the Seattle Office for Civil Rights online, in person, or on the phone: 206-684-4500 (seattle.gov/civilrights)
- ♥ **GET SUPPORT** by calling The Northwest Network: 206-568-7777 (nwnetwork.org) (you can report without your parent or guardians consent)

Paid for by




Race and Social Justice Initiative

The Race & Social Justice Initiative represents the City of Seattle's commitment to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities in City government. In 2023, the City passed a [Race and Social Justice Ordinance](#) establishing RSJI as part of the City code.

OCR oversees the following as part our RSJI strategy:

- Supporting departments in **identifying equity-related service gaps**
- **Developing analytical tools** to support the identification of equity impacts of policies, practices, and decision making;
- **Making recommendations** that improve fairness and opportunity in City government
- **Supporting departments'** work with communities
- **Creating guidelines** for outreach, communication, and community engagement
- **Providing forums** for exchange of information on racial equity and social justice
- Guiding **equitable funding analysis and practices** with the City Budget Office



Policy

OCR's Policy division supports innovative community-driven solutions to advance race and social justice and bring about greater equity for all Seattle residents and community members. Policy areas include:

- **Gender justice**
- **Criminal legal system**
- **Housing access**
- **Protecting the rights and interests** of vulnerable communities
- **Legislative review** for the Office of Intergovernmental Relations concerning issues related to civil and human rights impacting Seattle residents



Community Investments

- The Community Investments division oversees the development, implementation, and management of department funding processes, including:
 - The **City's \$27 million Participatory Budgeting (PB) process** focused on community-informed strategies for community health and safety through investments in education, housing, mental health, and economic development.
 - Annual \$1 million **Collective Network (CN) Request for Proposals** funding community-owned responses to domestic violence.



Standalone legislation is being prepared to authorize funding to implement community-led PB projects in Spring 2024.



Commissions

- Commissions are volunteer resident advisory boards created under the Seattle Municipal Code to provide the Mayor, City Council, and City departments with **guidance and policy recommendations**.
- Each commission holds 21 seats with eight members **appointed by** the Mayor, eight members by City Council, and four members of the committee itself.
- Commission events and advocacy in 2023 included:
 - **Pride flag raising** ceremony at City Hall
 - Installation of **wheelchair charging stations** at Seattle Center
 - **Human Rights Day Event** celebrating disability rights leaders in the community
 - Co-sponsorship of a community event celebrating the **504 provision of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act**

OCR provides staff support to the Disability, Human Rights, LGBTQ+, and Women's commissions.



OCR Commissions meet with Dept of State World Affairs Council leaders from Central & South America (top left) and Indonesian delegates (bottom left) to learn and share best practices. The image on the right is of the 2023 Pride flag raising event at City Hall.



Key Projects in 2024

- Enforcement Database
- Commission appointments, outreach, & recruitment
- Participatory budgeting project implementation
- RSJI Summit – 20th Anniversary
- RSJI Learning Cohort
- Develop a community-informed policy agenda



Image depicts an audience listening to a panel discussion at the 2023 RSJI summit on the topic of the RSJI Ordinance.



Questions

