

CITY OF SEATTLE
ORDINANCE 126342
COUNCIL BILL 120000

AN ORDINANCE relating to the organization of the Office for Civil Rights; amending Section 3.14.910 of the Seattle Municipal Code to change the end of the Director’s term and remove an outdated subsection requiring a racial equity toolkit.

WHEREAS, the mission of the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) is to end structural racism through accountable community relationships and anti-racist organizing, policy development, and civil rights enforcement; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, The City of Seattle (“City”) launched a Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), led by SOCR, to implement its longstanding commitments to social justice and ending racism; and

WHEREAS, the goal of RSJI is to end institutional racism within City government, working toward a vision where racial disparities will be eliminated and racial equity achieved; and

WHEREAS, concerns about the ability of SOCR to fulfill its mission while in the Executive branch resulted in Ordinance 125470, providing protections for the SOCR Director, including just cause for removal, and directing SOCR to conduct a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) analysis on the permanent structure, leadership, duties, responsibilities, and functions of SOCR; and

WHEREAS, the team conducting the RET issued a report in October 2019, recommending a variety of actions to strengthen SOCR’s independence and ability to successfully fulfill its mission; and

1 WHEREAS, since the RET analysis began, the City Council and Executive have taken steps
2 towards implementing the recommendations, including adding staff and resources for
3 increased outreach, commission support, and RSJI efforts; and

4 WHEREAS, though these steps have strengthened SOCR, the recent civil rights reckoning and
5 related events of 2020 have made the need to enhance SOCR's ability to advocate for
6 anti-racism in Seattle's government even more urgent; and

7 WHEREAS, during the 2021 budget, the Council passed Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI)
8 OCR-002-A-003, directing the Executive to work with Council to implement the
9 remaining recommendations in the RET report; and

10 WHEREAS, any introduction and potential passage of legislation resulting from the SLI is
11 unlikely to take effect until late 2021 or early 2022, and any structural or functional
12 transition implemented by the legislation will be made easier with the retention of a
13 stable director position; and

14 WHEREAS, one of the indices of increased independence of any office is staggering the terms of
15 office to alternate between when the appointing authority and the appointed director end
16 their terms of office; and

17 WHEREAS, the Council believes that extending the term of the current SOCR Director will
18 create the staggering necessary to enhance independence and ease any transition;

19 NOW, THEREFORE,

20 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**

21 Section 1. Section 3.14.910 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance
22 125470, is amended as follows:

- 1 2. Administer and govern the Office for Civil Rights;
- 2 3. Appoint, remove, and supervise officers and employees in the Office for Civil
- 3 Rights;
- 4 4. Provide staff support for the Seattle Women’s Commission, the Seattle Human
- 5 Rights Commission, the Seattle LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer)
- 6 Commission, and the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities; consult with and report
- 7 regularly to the Seattle Women’s Commission, the Seattle Human Rights Commission, the
- 8 Seattle LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Commission, and the Seattle
- 9 Commission for People with Disabilities on the workings of the Office for Civil Rights; and
- 10 attend, either in person or by designated representative, all regular meetings of the Seattle
- 11 Women’s Commission, the Seattle Human Rights Commission, the Seattle LGBTQ (Lesbian,
- 12 Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Commission, and the Seattle Commission for People with
- 13 Disabilities;
- 14 5. Administer all ordinances pertaining to the Office for Civil Rights and take
- 15 appropriate remedial action where necessary;
- 16 6. Manage the preparation of the proposed annual budget of the Office for Civil
- 17 Rights, and authorize necessary expenditures, and supervise the maintenance of adequate
- 18 accounting systems;
- 19 7. After identifying priority issue areas, develop policies and programs, and seek
- 20 additional funding sources in these areas, which seek to ameliorate the effects of disparate
- 21 treatment and impact upon persons based on race, color, sex, marital status, parental status,
- 22 sexual orientation, gender identity, political ideology, age, creed, honorably discharged veteran
- 23 or military status, genetics information, religion, ancestry, national origin, the presence of any

1 disability, participation in a Section 8 or other subsidy program, right of a mother to breastfeed
2 her child, alternative source of income, or the use of a service animal by a disabled person;

3 8. Make periodic reports and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council
4 concerning the operations of the Seattle Women’s Commission, the Seattle Human Rights
5 Commission, the Seattle LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Commission,
6 the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities, and the Office for Civil Rights;

7 9. Receive, consider, and make recommendations concerning statements, reports,
8 and complaints relative to problems of civil rights including such problems of civil rights as may
9 arise in connection with the treatment, facilities, or services of any office or department of the
10 City;

11 10. Exercise such other and further powers and duties as shall be prescribed by
12 ordinance. ((;

13 ~~11. Partner with a consultant to conduct an RET analysis and provide~~
14 ~~recommendations of the RET to the City Council to define and determine the permanent~~
15 ~~structure, leadership appointment or designation, and duties and responsibilities of the Office for~~
16 ~~Civil Rights. The City Council shall strongly consider legislation implementing the~~
17 ~~recommendations of the RET.))~~

1 Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by
2 the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it
3 shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.

4 Passed by the City Council the 24th day of May, 2021,
5 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 24th day of
6 May, 2021.

7 

8 President Pro Tem of the City Council

9 Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this 28th day of May, 2021.

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11 **Returned Unsigned by Mayor**

12
13 Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

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15 Filed by me this 28th day of May, 2021.

16 

17 Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

18 (Seal)