

Office of Hearing Examiner

Meredith Getches, Hearing Examiner

Contact Information

Department Information Line: (206) 684-0521

City of Seattle General Information: (206) 684-2489 TTY: (206) 615-0476

On the Web at: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/examiner/>

Department Description

The Office of Hearing Examiner is Seattle's forum for reviewing questions of administrative law regarding whether City code provisions have been correctly applied. The Office conducts hearings and decides appeals when citizens disagree with a decision made by a City agency where the City's code has given it such authority. The Hearing Examiner also makes recommendations to the City Council for its use when making decisions on rezone petitions, major institution master plans, and other Council land use actions.

More than 70 sections of the City's code authorize the Hearing Examiner to hold hearings and decide the outcome of appeals filed by citizens regarding decisions and recommendations made by various City agencies. Many of the matters considered by the Hearing Examiner are related to land use and environmental decisions made by the Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use

The Hearing Examiner serves as the City's administrative law judge and regulates the conduct of hearings, preparing decisions and recommendations based upon the hearing record and applicable law. The Hearing Examiner appoints Deputy Hearing Examiners to conduct hearings and to exercise the Hearing Examiner's decision-making authority. The Municipal Code requires all examiners to be attorneys with training and experience in administrative hearings. The Hearing Examiner also appoints an administrative assistant to oversee the administrative areas of the department and paralegals to assist at hearings and provide information to the public.

Policy and Program Changes

The Office of Hearing Examiner eliminates a vacant Deputy Hearing Examiner position, due to a decline in caseload. As a cross-departmental efficiency, the Office also plans to absorb 10-20 Civil Service Commission hearings that were previously heard by contract examiners.

City Council Budget Changes and Provisos

There are no Council changes or provisos.

Resources	Summit Code	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed
Office of Hearing Examiner Budget Control Level					
Appropriation	V1X00	513,178	579,618	483,471	494,169
Department Total		513,178	579,618	483,471	494,169
Department Full-time Equivalents Total*		5.80	5.80	4.70	4.70

**The department FTE total is provided for information only. All authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*

Hearing Examiner

Appeals and Recommendations

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this program is to conduct fair and impartial hearings in all subject areas where the Municipal Code grants authority to do so (there are currently over 50 subject areas) and to issue decisions and recommendations consistent with applicable ordinances.

Program Summary

Eliminate the vacant Deputy Hearing Examiner position, transferring coverage to remaining staff. As a cross-departmental efficiency, the Office also plans to absorb 10-20 Civil Service Commission hearings that were previously heard by contract examiners.

Resources	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed
General Subfund	513,178	579,618	483,471	494,169
Total	513,178	579,618	483,471	494,169
Full-time Equivalent Total*	5.80	5.80	4.70	4.70

**The program FTE total is provided for information only. All authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*