

# Office of Hearing Examiner

Ryan Vancil, Hearing Examiner

(206) 684-0521

[www.seattle.gov/examiner/](http://www.seattle.gov/examiner/)

## Department Overview

The Office of Hearing Examiner is Seattle's quasi-judicial forum for reviewing factual and legal issues raised by the application of City Code requirements to specific people or property. As authorized by the Seattle Municipal Code, the office conducts hearings and decides appeals in cases where members of the public disagree with a decision made by a City agency. Many of the matters appealed to the Hearing Examiner relate to land use and environmental permit decisions and interpretations made by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections. The Hearing Examiner also hears appeals in many other subject areas, and makes recommendations to the City Council on rezone petitions, major institution master plans, and other Council land-use actions.

The Hearing Examiner is appointed by the City Council, and Deputy Hearing Examiners are appointed by the Hearing Examiner. Examiners handle all pre-hearing matters, regulate the conduct of hearings, and prepare decisions and recommendations based upon the hearing record and applicable law. The Seattle Municipal Code requires all examiners to be attorneys with training and experience in administrative hearings. The Hearing Examiner also manages an executive assistant to oversee the administrative areas of the office, a legal assistant to assist with hearings and decision preparation, and an administrative specialist to support all other office positions and provide information to the public.

## Budget Snapshot

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
<b>Department Support</b>				
General Fund Support	1,143,632	1,218,519	1,314,214	1,380,463
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>1,143,632</b>	<b>1,218,519</b>	<b>1,314,214</b>	<b>1,380,463</b>
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>1,143,632</b>	<b>1,218,519</b>	<b>1,314,214</b>	<b>1,380,463</b>
Full-Time Equivalent Total*	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

\* 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 2025 Adopted and 2026 Endorsed budgets maintains support to the Office of Hearing Examiner (HXM) and preserves the services provided by the Hearing Examiner to members of the public and the City Council. Technical adjustments have been made to bring the proposed budget into alignment with an Annual Wage Increase, and other citywide adjustments to internal service costs.

### City Council Changes to the Proposed Budget

The Council made no changes to the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget.

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## Incremental Budget Changes

### Office of Hearing Examiner

	Dollars	FTE
<b>2024 Adopted Budget</b>	<b>1,218,519</b>	<b>5.00</b>
<b>Baseline</b>		
Bargained Annual Wage and Market Wage Increases to Base Budget	110,737	-
<b>Proposed Operating</b>		
Increase Filing Fees Revenue	-	-
<b>Proposed Technical</b>		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(24,353)	-
Final Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(10,689)	-
Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation	20,000	-
<b>Total Incremental Changes</b>	<b>\$95,695</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total 2025 Adopted Budget</b>	<b>\$1,314,214</b>	<b>5.00</b>

## Description of Incremental Budget Changes

### Baseline

#### **Bargained Annual Wage and Market Wage Increases to Base Budget**

Expenditures \$110,737

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect the Annual Wage Increases and Market Adjustments, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of Unions or other standalone Unions, for personnel costs included in this department’s baseline budget. This includes increases to salary, FICA, Medicare, retirement, overtime and temporary labor.

### Proposed Operating

#### **Increase Filing Fees Revenue**

Revenues \$3,500

This item anticipates increased revenues of approximately \$3,500 by raising filing fees from \$85 to \$120 in the Office of Hearing Examiner (HXM) the General Fund Office of Hearing Examiner - Revenue Budget Control Level (00100-BR-HX-REVENUE). Historically, the Hearing Examiner has raised fees at various intervals to support cost recovery and address inflation. The last fee increase was implemented in 2013.

### Proposed Technical

#### **Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes**

Expenditures \$(24,353)

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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. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

### Final Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(10,689)

Citywide technical adjustments made in the proposed 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 for the department. These adjustments reflect final decisions about these costs made during the Proposed Phase of the budget process.

### Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation

Expenditures \$20,000

This change includes ongoing budget and/or position changes resulting from current year legislation in 2024, including the Year End Supplemental Ordinance and contains a technical adjustment to add budget for an ongoing salary increase approved by the City Council with the Hearing Examiner's reappointment to a 4-year term. The salary increase was effective retroactive to March 21, 2023.

# Office of Hearing Examiner

## Expenditure Overview

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
<b>Appropriations</b>				
<b>HXM - BO-HX-V1X00 - Office of the Hearing Examiner</b>				
00100 - General Fund	1,143,632	1,218,519	1,314,214	1,380,463
<b>Total for BSL: BO-HX-V1X00</b>	<b>1,143,632</b>	<b>1,218,519</b>	<b>1,314,214</b>	<b>1,380,463</b>
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>1,143,632</b>	<b>1,218,519</b>	<b>1,314,214</b>	<b>1,380,463</b>
<b>Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>

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## Budget Summary by Fund Office of Hearing Examiner

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
00100 - General Fund	1,143,632	1,218,519	1,314,214	1,380,463
<b>Budget Totals for HXM</b>	<b>1,143,632</b>	<b>1,218,519</b>	<b>1,314,214</b>	<b>1,380,463</b>

## Revenue Overview

### 2025 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
341180	Legal Service Fees	16,623	16,000	16,000	16,000
341900	General Government-Other Rev	4,280	4,000	7,500	7,500
<b>Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund</b>		<b>20,903</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>23,500</b>
<b>Total HXM Resources</b>		<b>20,903</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>23,500</b>

## Office of Hearing Examiner

### Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

#### **HXM - BO-HX-V1X00 - Office of the Hearing Examiner**

The purpose of the Office of Hearing Examiner Budget Summary Level is to conduct fair and impartial hearings in all subject areas where the Seattle Municipal Code grants authority to do so (there are currently more than 75 subject areas) and to issue decisions and recommendations consistent with applicable law.

<b>Program Expenditures</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
	<b>Actuals</b>	<b>Adopted</b>	<b>Adopted</b>	<b>Endorsed</b>
Office of the Hearing Examiner	1,143,632	1,218,519	1,314,214	1,380,463
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,143,632</b>	<b>1,218,519</b>	<b>1,314,214</b>	<b>1,380,463</b>
Full-time Equivalents Total*	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

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