

Office of Hearings Administration 2023 Budget Supplemental Questions

Please answer the following questions in a word document and return to Council. The answers to these questions will be provided to council as supplemental information. While not part of the physical budget presentation to Council, departments should be prepared to answer questions Council may have on these supplemental questions. If you feel that you have provided an answer in a previous question, please don't repeat your answer, simply refer to the earlier question/answer.

Strategic Goals

- 1. Provide your 2023 strategic goals; how are they different from 2022? In what way, if at all, are your strategic changes demonstrated in your budget request?**

The primary 2023 goals are: (1) conduct hybrid Hearing Examiner hearings with improved audio/visual quality in the Stillaguamish Room and (2) continued process improvement on the import and processing of petitions to the Board of Equalization. Additional budget authority is not needed to accomplish these two goals. The difference between 2022 and 2023 is that IT has improved the audio/visual quality in the Stillaguamish Room for hybrid hearings. After some adjustments and hardware/software corrections, we believe we are now able to offer the public the ability to participate in the manner most convenient to them, whether in-person or remotely.

National, state, and local landscape:

- 1. What are the federal, state, and local issues facing your work? What risks or opportunities does that create for you in 2023 and beyond? What is your plan to leverage the opportunity or mitigate the risk? What support do you need?**

OHA does not foresee any federal, state, or local issues or risks that will be directed specifically at the functions of the office.

- 2. What, if any, new mandates do you have impacting your work? Are they funded or unfunded? What is the plan for accomplishing the work?**

OHA does not have any new mandates.

Programs

- 1. List programs, projects and services within your department funded through federal COVID/ARPA funds. What, if any, of those programs are you recommending ongoing funding for and what is the source of ongoing funding?**

OHA does not have any programs funded through federal COVID/ARPA funds.

- 2. What new programs are you launching for 2023? What need or efficiency is that new program addressing? How is that program funded for sustainability? What metrics are in place to determine effectiveness?**

OHA does not have any new programs for 2023.

- 3. If different than #2, what are your areas of significant investment? What are you not doing because of that investment?**

Internal Operations

- 1. What is your department doing to streamline processes or deliver services in a new way? How do your budget allocation requests play into these innovations? Are there ways which a different budget approach, e.g., several departments sharing a resource, could achieve the same or better results in a more cost-effective way?**

- a. Our office worked closely with IT, Superior Court and the Planning and Development Services department to share existing resources to improve the audio and visual system in the Stillaguamish Hearing room. The project is now complete however, we continue working to make our hearings as accessible as possible for both in person and virtual attendees.

- b. Implementation of the Aumentum software by the Assessor's Office over the next few years may provide the opportunity to automate the Board of Equalization petition process more than it is now.

- 2. What, if any, hiring challenges are you experiencing? How is that affecting your level of service or internal operations? How are you mitigating those operational challenges and/or what is your plan for recruitment?**

During the past budget year, a clerk resigned to relocate, and we recruited a new clerk—Hannah Iverson—who is a terrific addition to our team. In previous recruitments, we received over 100 applications. This recruitment resulted in approximately 30 applications. We do not anticipate needing to recruit in the 2023 budget year.

We recruited a new pro tem hearing examiner because the contract with the previous pro tem expired, and he relocated to Massachusetts. Only one person responded to the request for proposals, and we were pleased to recommend the appointment of Phil Olbrechts to Council. The last two pro tem RFP cycles have resulted in only one or two applications. The hearing examiner pool in Washington state is small and we expect continued minimal response in future pro tem recruitment cycles.

- 3. Please provide a list of all vacant position titles, position codes, date vacated, and date first posted. This should be a separate page or spreadsheet attachment.**

See attached

- 4. What effect has the increase of inflation and/or supply chain issues had on your department? What, if any, services, or projects have you had to adjust to accommodate for this? (i.e., moving to outside contracted services, delaying of project starts and/or purchasing, redistribution of workload, etc.)**

Inflation and supply chain issues have had not had a significant impact on delivery of services. The largest was a delay in obtaining and installation of audio/visual upgrades for the Stillaguamish Room.

Successes

- 1. Take this opportunity to share one significant success in your department over this past year. What made it a success?**

Our success is the successful implementation of technology in the Stillaguamish Room to conduct hybrid hearings -- hearings held simultaneously in person and on the internet. Learning to conduct hearings virtually on Zoom was the pandemic's silver lining. We resolved to conduct hearings simultaneously in-person and on the internet when the pandemic abated. After experimenting, we realized that we needed a technology solution to obtain adequate sound quality on the electronic record of both participants in the Stillaguamish Room and remote participants. Working with IT and the Superior Court, and impatiently waiting for the arrival of parts, we recently completed our first hearing with the new sound mixer. We believe we now have the technology infrastructure to maximize community participation in hearings, whether the curious merely want to watch or people wish to comment. People with mobility, work, or childcare issues no longer need to travel to the county campus to watch or speak—they need only to connect to the internet with a smart phone or computer.

Attachments:

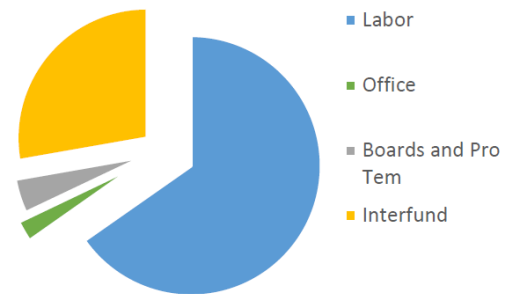
OHA 2023 Vacant Positions			
Position Title	Position Code	FTE	Date Vacated
Administrative Hearings Clerk	OHA6120R	0.75	2021

Expense Category	2022	2023	+/-	%
Labor	560,824	562,152	\$ 1,328.00	0%
Office	22,900	22,900	\$ -	0%
Boards and Pro Tem	36,874	36,874	\$ -	0%
Interfund	231,883	239,238	\$ 7,355.00	3%
Total	852,481	861,164	\$ 8,683.00	1%

2023*		
Labor	\$ 562,152.00	65%
Office	\$ 22,900.00	3%
Boards and Pro Tem	\$ 36,874.00	4%
Interfund	\$ 239,238.00	28%
Total	\$ 861,164.00	100%

Budgetary Trends	
2016	999,892.00
2017	942,985.00
2018	878,495.00
2019	853,566.00
2020	856,642.00
2021	816,442.00
2022	852,481.00
2023	861,164.00

OHA 2023 Budget



Seven Year Budgetary Trend

