

Office of the Public Advocate 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 2022 strategic goals; how are they different from 2022? In what way, if at all, are your strategic changes demonstrated in your budget request?**

The single, overarching goal for the Office of the Public Advocate is to provide independent, impartial, and confidential services to assist the people of Snohomish County with their complaints and concerns involving the operation of Snohomish County government.

Our strategic objectives are:

- a. To investigate complaints to ensure that individuals are receiving fair and just treatment in the administrative action of the departments or offices of Snohomish County government.
- b. To share an understanding of the governing regulations and to educate when necessary.
- c. To identify and advise county governmental entities when the need for efficiencies and other adjustments are identified.
- d. To promote fairness, justice and equity in administrative action while safeguarding the rights of individuals in their dealings with county government.

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?**

I do not foresee any federal, state or local issues/risks that will be directed specifically at the functions of the Public Advocate office. However, the office is certainly impacted anytime there are uncertainties faced by government entities.

- 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?**

The Office of the Public Advocate 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?**

Our office 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?**

Our office 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?**

Over the past year, our office has been working closely with IT and Operational Excellence (OpEx) to develop and implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool which will be used by various county departments. The CRM is intended to streamline communication between Snohomish County residents and the various departments and offices they are working with.

- 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?**

None

- 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.**

Our office does not currently have any vacant positions.

- 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 has not created an impact on this office.

Successes

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

Over the last full year, our small but mighty office of 1.5 FTE's has continued to provide outstanding customer service to the residents of this county while actively participating as the Project Owner of the development of the new Customer Relationship Management System (CRM).

In this role, we met with the Development Team and OpEx multiple times a week to provide leadership, direction and to help resolve any barriers or challenges that came up during this intensive process of taking an "out of the box" system geared towards business and developing it into a functional, user friendly system for governmental use.

I am very pleased that the first phase of the CRM is complete, and it has been rolled out to the first few departments to start receiving and responding to customer inquiries. This product has the potential to become a powerful tool for the entire enterprise in providing an efficient and effective customer service for the residents of this county.