



2022
2023

ANNUAL REPORT



Seattle
Office for Civil Rights



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report provides an overview of the Seattle Office for Civil Rights' (SOCR) work to advance racial equity, social justice, and civil rights in 2022 and 2023. Data on department impact is included where available. Unless otherwise stated, the quantitative data presented represents the outcome of both years combined. Visit seattle.gov/civilrights to view additional reports.

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VISION

A city of thriving and powerful communities that fosters shared healing and belonging.

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

To provide leadership in upholding civil rights and advancing racial equity in the City of Seattle.

OUR VALUES

Compassion

We lead with compassion and center one another's humanity. We recognize that we each hold intersecting identities. We work to always see the whole person as we create an inclusive world.

Responsibility

We take responsibility for our actions and hold ourselves accountable to the communities we serve and the City we represent.

Integrity

We act with integrity, which requires honesty, truthfulness, and transparency to build enduring relationships.

Imagination

We recognize the importance of imagination to envision a future where everyone can thrive. Progress demands boldness and we will use imagination to build equity.

Belonging

We strive to create space for people to bring their authentic self, because a fully inclusive, equitable, and thriving city is one where everyone belongs.

For media inquiries and other questions about this report, please contact ocr_admin.service@seattle.gov.

This report was designed by Teysia Parks of Studio T Designs. Please visit teysiaparks.com for inquiries.

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A LETTER FROM **DIRECTOR WHEELER-SMITH**

In 2022 and 2023, the United States' civil rights landscape was marked by federal legislation that hampered momentum toward equity and opportunity. Decades of progress were undone with the reversal of federal rights to affirmative action and abortion, while hundreds of new bills targeting LGBTQ+ rights were introduced. Amid these setbacks, the City of Seattle passed historic legislation that codified the Race & Social Justice Initiative into law and added pregnancy outcomes and caste to an expansive list of protected classes. These actions represent a commitment to creating a future in which everyone in Seattle is included and has what they need to thrive.

The work of SOCR is reflected not only in these promising new laws, but also in our everyday efforts to cultivate belonging through outreach, education, trainings, and advocacy. Despite ongoing challenges of a multi-year pandemic, we found new ways to connect with and serve communities through methods grounded in compassion and restorative practices. We hosted convenings that built capacity of City employees to organize for racial equity and invested in new ways of sharing power with communities most impacted by racism, discrimination, and injustice.

This period in time was also shaped by transitions in staff and leadership. We came together to update our guiding principles to better align with our current vision for the future, while honoring the contributions of prior staff who laid the foundation of our work today. This strategic visioning process resulted in a new mission, vision, and values statement to chart our path forward.

SOCR's focus in the years to come is on building systems that increase access and opportunity for communities most impacted by discrimination and injustice. We'll accomplish this by proposing new legislation that promotes equity and fair treatment, and building capacity of City staff to apply racial justice principles in their work. We are equally invested in expanding our institutional and community partnerships to support youth civic engagement and increase awareness of civil rights protections.

As a department entrusted to provide leadership and guidance on matters of civil rights and racial equity, SOCR influences work happening within the City and with communities we serve. Let this report illustrate how we can work together to build systems and structures big enough to hold each of us in our full humanity.

In partnership,

Derrick Wheeler-Smith

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022 and 2023, SOCR's Enforcement Division worked to expand strategies to proactively educate people about their rights and bring businesses into compliance with laws. As COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, staff returned to in-person outreach while continuing to build upon lessons learned about how to reach communities in virtual and hybrid environments. SOCR distributed civil rights resources at nearly 35 community events ranging from resource fairs, back to school functions, and events hosted by housing providers.

The Enforcement Division also focused on facilitating trauma-informed investigations and mediation using restorative principles. A total of 140 complaints of illegal discrimination were investigated, with over \$125,000 in monetary settlements awarded to customers in addition to commitments from business owners to correct illegal discriminatory behavior. Of those who tried mediation in 2023, 63% of customers were able to reach a resolution. SOCR's outreach strategy and investigations grew to include new caste and pregnancy outcome protections.

The Race & Social Justice Division was a driving force in drafting legislation that cemented RSJI's powerful work over the last 19 years into law. Despite pandemic restrictions, SOCR hosted annual RSJI summits in virtual and hybrid formats. These gatherings brought hundreds of City employees together to learn from each other, amplify Black and Indigenous voices, build capacity to organize for racial equity, and envision ways to work toward a future where everyone in Seattle can thrive.

SOCR facilitated the City's \$27.25 million participatory budgeting process in response to community demands following the murder of George Floyd and movements for racial justice. With support from the Participatory Budgeting Project, those historically excluded from decision making processes gathered to design, develop, and vote on proposals for community-driven approaches to community safety and wellbeing. The process resulted in six winning projects that will progress toward implementation in 2024. Seattle's participatory budgeting process represents the largest in the nation to date.



OCR staff Mike, John, and MiKayle share civil rights resources at a Juneteenth celebration.

The Policy Division continued to lift the voices of those most affected by racism and other forms of oppression by advising on City policies and programs to keep racial equity and social justice at the forefront. SOCR also took steps to be implement community task force recommendations to explore and invest in community-driven responses to domestic violence outside the criminal legal system.

Last but not least, SOCR's four commissions brought people together to connect, share experiences, and advocate for equitable policies for a better Seattle. Panel discussions and celebratory events were hosted to uplift voices of those most affected by racism and other forms of oppression and celebrate the richness of Seattle's diverse communities. And, through a collaborative partnership with Seattle Center and Studio Pacifica, the Seattle Disability Commission secured two new wheelchair charging stations at Seattle Center Armory as part of their ongoing work to expand accessibility in public spaces.

HIGHLIGHTS

Distributed civil rights resources at

35 COMMUNITY EVENTS

63%

OF CUSTOMERS who tried mediation in 2023 reached a resolution

Two Race & Social Justice Initiative summits, with about

540

ATTENDEES IN 2022

140

COMPLAINTS of Illegal Discrimination Investigated

SOCR commissions HOSTED MORE THAN 10 PANEL DISCUSSIONS and community events

\$125,000+

in monetary settlements awarded, in addition to commitments to change illegal discriminatory behavior

RSJI

CODIFIED INTO LAW by ordinance

Seattle Disability Commission advocacy resulted in TWO NEW WHEELCHAIR CHARGING STATIONS AT SEATTLE CENTER

4,000+

COMMUNITY VOTES for participatory budgeting proposals, with 6 winning projects identified



DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

SOCR is comprised of nearly 40 employees organized by five divisions including Enforcement, Race & Social Justice, Policy, Commissions, and Community Investments. The department's work areas function together to uphold civil rights in City policies and programs and make incremental steps toward transformative institutional change.

SOCR's responsibilities under the Seattle Municipal Code include:

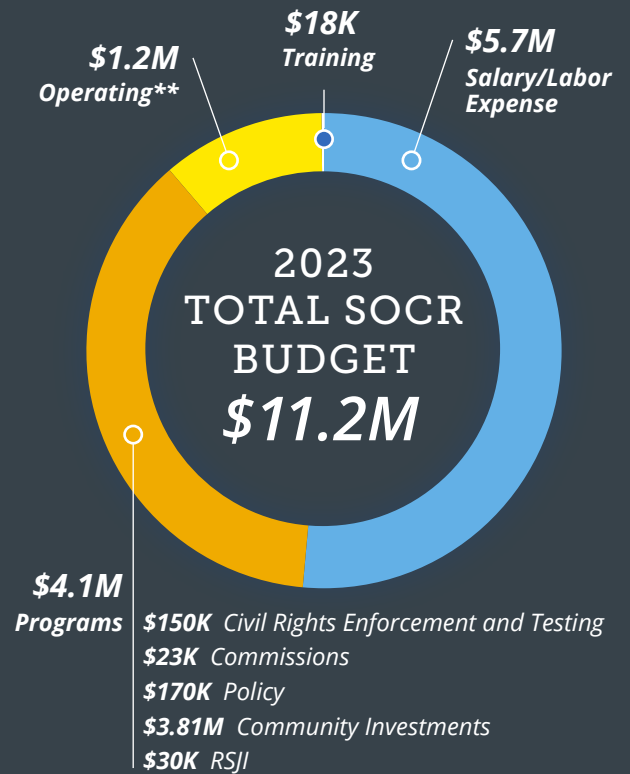
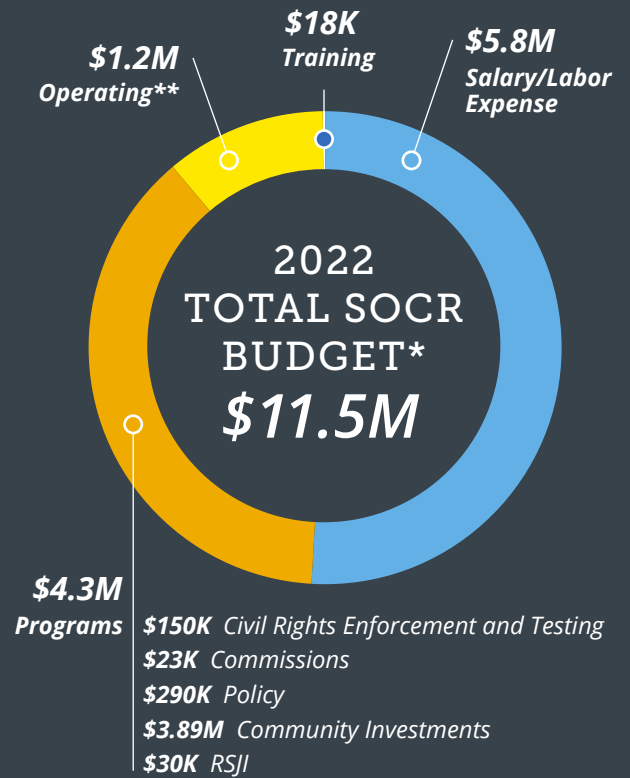
- Promoting equal access to services within the City of Seattle
- Working to eliminate discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations for Seattle residents
- Making recommendations to city government and proposing legislation for matters affecting civil rights and equal opportunity of all people
- Raising awareness through public education and outreach
- Providing staff support for the Disability Commission, Human Rights Commission, LGBTQ Commission, and Women's Commission

BUDGET OVERVIEW AND FUND SOURCES

In 2022 and 2023, SOCR's total operating budget was more than \$11 million from the City's general fund, which includes one-time funding to facilitate the participatory budgeting process. The majority of department funding is expended on salaries and wages needed to administer services and programs.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

by investment area*



*This financial summary represents SOCR's adopted budget for 2022 and 2023.
**SOCR operating expenses includes City of Seattle rates for occupancy, human resources, finance and administration, and IT services.

CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT

SOCR's Enforcement Division is working toward a future where all people in Seattle have equitable access to housing, employment, public places, and contracting.

The division works to accomplish this by educating people about their rights, bringing businesses into compliance with laws through testing and technical assistance, enforcing civil rights laws through investigations, and facilitating mediation and settlements.

Outreach and Engagement

Providing education about civil rights laws is critical to proactively preventing discrimination in the workplace, housing, and public spaces. Enforcement staff focused on deepening relationships with organizations who serve communities most impacted by discrimination, and attended nearly 35 community events to share information about civil rights protections.

Training and Technical Assistance

Trainings and technical assistance are additional strategies SOCR uses to help business owners and City departments understand their legal obligations to tenants, employees, and members of the public. In 2022 and 2023, the Enforcement Division hosted 25 trainings and 216 technical assistance contacts to businesses, City departments, and community organizations. Trainings on Seattle's Fair Chance Housing Ordinance included information collected from SOCR's testing program on how unconscious bias and microaggressions can lead to different treatment.

SOCR is also responsible for monitoring and overseeing the City's compliance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal funds. To this end, SOCR manages the City's Title VI Plan, website, complaint process, and provides annual training for City departments.

Mediation

SOCR's mediation services focus on restorative principles that empowers people to speak truth to harm that occurred, define resolution for themselves, and decide what is best for their situation. This innovative service was introduced in 2019 in response to community requests for restorative approaches to resolution. Customers may engage in mediation before a charge is filed or at any point during an investigation.

Of customers who tried mediation, the percentage of those who reached a resolution was

40% | **&** | **63%**
in 2022 | | in 2023

MEDIATION HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** An unhoused person alleged that shelter staff failed to accommodate their disability by refusing to allow their use of a service animal. The parties met online and ultimately reached an agreement. The case was withdrawn without a need for further investigation.
- 2** A prospective tenant alleged that a housing provider violated Seattle's first-in-time provisions, which require landlords to provide notice of their screening criteria to applicants and offer tenancy to the first qualified applicant who provides a completed application. The parties chose to mediate by text and email. In the process, the prospective tenant learned more about the law and the housing provider acknowledged they caused confusion by posting one set of criteria and distributing another. The inquiry was withdrawn before a charge was filed.

CASE INVESTIGATIONS

SOCR investigates complaints of illegal discrimination to enforce civil rights laws supporting equitable access to housing, employment, public places, contracting, and City services.

LAWS WE ENFORCE

EMPLOYMENT

- Fair Employment Practices
- Americans with Disabilities Act—Title I*
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act*
- Civil Rights Act—Title VII*
- Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act*
- Pregnant Workers Fairness Act*

HOUSING

- Open Housing Ordinance
- Fair Chance Housing and Eviction Records Ordinance

PUBLIC PLACES

- Unfair Public Accommodations Practices
- Closed Captioning Ordinance
- All-Gender Restroom Ordinance
- Americans with Disabilities Act—Title II and III*
- Civil Rights Act—Title VI*

CONTRACTING

- Fair Contracting Practices
- Civil Rights Act—Title VI

ADDITIONAL

- Ban on Conversion Therapy for Minors

**Federal laws*

In 2022 and 2023 combined, SOCR investigated more than 140 complaints from people who believe they experienced discrimination or a violation of a civil rights law. Most complaints of illegal discrimination are filed in the areas of housing and private employment. How parties reach a resolution varies and may include a combination of mediation and monetary settlements.

The rate in which SOCR found proof—or “reasonable cause”—of illegal discrimination was 13%. Investigators helped more than 18% of charging parties to obtain a monetary settlement in 2022 and 2023, with awards exceeding \$125,000 across both years. The remainder of investigations are closed with no reasonable cause findings or administrative closure—meaning SOCR was either unable to find proof of illegal discrimination, or the charging party stopped responding or chose not to pursue further action.

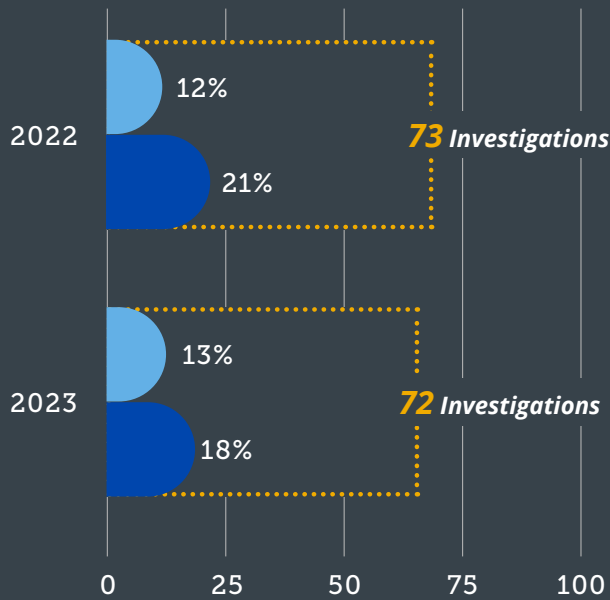
MONETARY COMPENSATION

OVER \$125,000



INVESTIGATION RESULTS

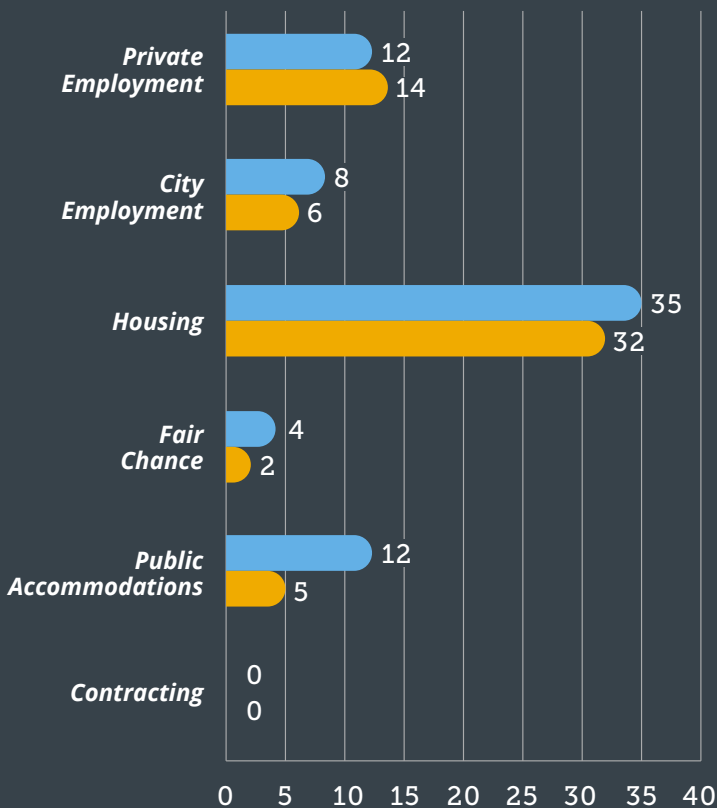
- Reasonable Cause Rate %
- Settlement Rate %
- Investigations



FILED INVESTIGATIONS

by case type

- 2022
- 2023



CASE INVESTIGATION HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 A worker alleged sexual harassment by their manager and a failure of the employer to correct the behavior. The employer agreed to review their sexual harassment policies with all staff and pay the worker \$15,000. The worker agreed to write a letter that conveyed the impact of the sexual harassment to be used by the employer to improve its response to sexual harassment allegations.
- 2 A Black woman alleged her housing provider subjected her to different identity verification to enter her unit when she did not have her keys compared to non-Black male tenants. The housing provider agreed to pay \$12,600 to the tenant, attend fair housing training, and post an equal opportunity housing poster.
- 3 A nonbinary customer alleged that a credit union representative asked questions about their gender identity that were unnecessary to provide services. The credit union agreed to donate \$2,500 to a nonprofit organization that expands resources and safe space for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, two-spirit, and allied community. It also agreed to have its representative write an apology.

TESTING

SOCR partners with the Council on American-Islamic Relations Washington (CAIR-WA) to administer the testing program and raise awareness about civil rights. Trained actors engage with employers, housing providers, and business owners to uncover civil rights violations that would otherwise be difficult to observe. If a test observes illegal behavior, the business owner will receive training and resources to help them change their policies and comply with the law.

In 2022 and 2023, tests focused on the use of criminal and eviction history under Seattle's Fair Chance Housing and Eviction Records Ordinance and disability status. Tests observed the following prohibited practices and incorrect standards:

- Barriers to housing and adverse action for those with prior criminal history
- Different treatment and automatic denials for individuals with eviction history, in addition to increased barriers to housing including increased deposits and shortened lease terms
- Barriers to people with disabilities who use service animals, including restrictive pet policies, deposits, breed restrictions, and denials to property access

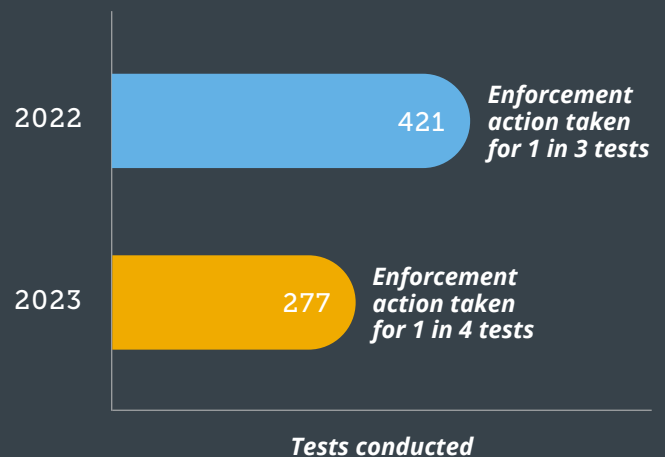
CAIR-WA promotes justice for Muslim communities through legal counseling, civil rights advocacy, civic engagement, educational campaigns, and community building.

Housing is a human right. In Seattle, there is a huge amount of housing inequality impacting our diverse Muslim communities and additional communities of color. Because discriminatory practices often fly under the radar, city governments must have mechanisms in place to observe real world experiences Black and brown people often endure. Our testing partnership accomplishes this," **said Imraan Siddiqi, Executive Director of CAIR-WA.**

WHAT DOES DISCRIMINATION LOOK LIKE?

- Refusing to work with a person with a disability who uses relay service
- Restricts the use of a service animal for person with a disability
- Makes a discriminatory statement or advertising
- Provide different terms that discriminate against a person with an eviction record

TESTING RESULTS



Imraan Siddiqi (He/Him)
Executive Director, CAIR-WA

RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE



The Race & Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is the City's long-term commitment to ending racism and achieving social justice. The program was established in 2004, making Seattle the first U.S. city to explicitly confront racism within municipal programs and policies. RSJI builds upon decades of grassroots civil rights organizing and centers those most harmed by systemic and institutional racism. RSJI supports City departments to build shared language and understanding of racism through trainings, technical assistance for using Racial Equity Toolkits to assess racial equity outcomes in programs and policies, hands-on facilitation, and events. Guidance and centralized support are also provided to department Equity Change Teams who work to sustain transformational change and incorporate social justice principles into everyday work.

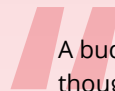
Race & Social Justice Ordinance

Since its inception, RSJI was maintained by non-binding resolutions and executive orders that resulted in an inconsistent adherence to RSJI principles across departments. In 2022, the RSJ Division worked diligently to incorporate RSJI into Seattle law, as recommended by a Racial Equity Toolkit analysis of SOCR. The ordinance strengthened the City's commitment to racial equity by accomplishing the following:

- Permanently establishes RSJI within SOCR
- Directs City departments to create or continue supporting Change Teams
- Authorizes SOCR to develop guidance and tools to assess equity impacts of policies and programs, and improve equitable practices within budget processes
- Gives SOCR authority to partner with other departments to define, advise upon, and create racial equity and social justice trainings for employees
- Charges SOCR, in partnership with the Council and Mayor, to celebrate exemplary RSJI practices

Equitable Budgeting

For nearly 20 years, SOCR and the City Budget Office have worked closely to develop systems for equitable budgeting within the City of Seattle. Their work in 2022 included the launch of a new budgeting rubric departments can use to evaluate and adjust how resources are directed to achieve racially equitable outcomes.



A budget that reflects racial equality has intentional thought to where and who is served in the City to reduce disparate racial outcomes. The equitable budgeting rubric we've developed in partnership with RSJI helps departments define progress, provide clarity in the process, and break it into manageable components," **said Jeanette Blankenship, Deputy Director of the City Budget Office.** "We have a lot of energy around this work, and offering departments high level training and technical assistance to advance our shared racial equity goals."



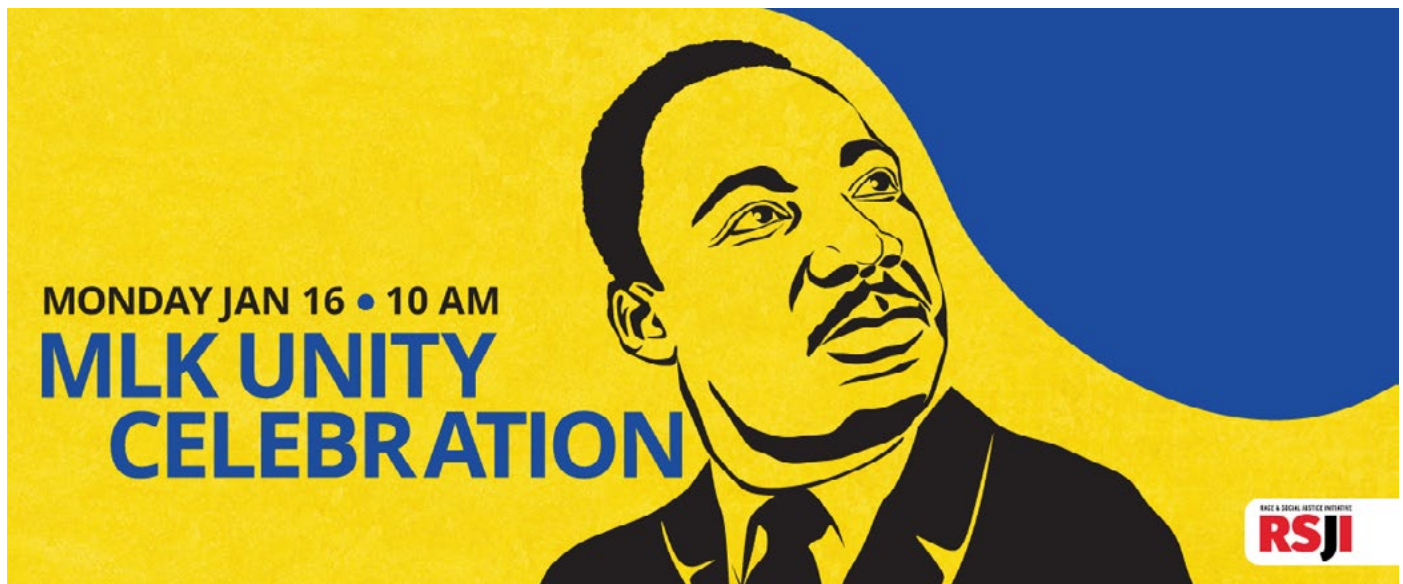
Jeanette Blankenship (She/Her)
Deputy Director, City Budget Office

RSJI SUMMITS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Each year, RSJI hosts a multi-day summit bringing City employees together to increase collective capacity for race and social justice work and connect with community organizing.

2022 RSJI Summit: A Time for Transformative Justice, Decolonization, and Collective Care

The 2022 summit was hosted virtually during the week of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and centered the work of Black leaders and community visions for healing and change. Approximately 540 people tuned in online over three days to attend workshops on transformative justice, budgeting for racial equity, a forum with Black city directors, and solidarity across Asian and Black communities.



2023 MLK Unity Day | 2023 RSJI Summit: Healing, Belonging, & Unity

In 2023, SOCR hosted a virtual celebration to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and recognize those working to continue his vision in our community today. The event kicked off a campaign leading up to the 2023 Summit with remarks from Mayor Bruce Harrell, Councilmember Tammy Morales (District 2), and SOCR Director Derrick Wheeler-Smith.

In March, the summit was hosted in a hybrid format for the first time, offering in-person and virtual events focused on how belonging can foster thriving and powerful communities as Seattle recovers from the pandemic. The event amplified the voices of local artists and activists, and youth representing Young Women Empowered (Y-WE). Dr. Ben Danielson, Pediatrician and Clinical Professor of UW's School of Medicine, and Dr. Gilda Sheppard, Director of Since I Been Down, were among many dynamic speakers. The event drew more than 900 registrants over two days for discussions spanning food sovereignty, assessing attacks on anti-racism, and the importance of Seattle's Racial Equity Toolkits.

//

The summit was a great opportunity to introduce myself to other City of Seattle employees, listen to what they were doing in their work units to advance race & social justice, and hear the struggles they are encountering in outreach efforts to the community."

*- RSJI Summit Attendee
and City of Seattle Employee*



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The summit was a safe space to be really honest about where we are with race in this country and in this city."

- RSJI Summit Attendee



(Top) Derrick Wheeler-Smith, Director of SOCR; Dr. Gilda Sheppard, Filmmaker and Director of "Since I Been Down"; and Dr. Benjamin Danielson, pediatrician and clinical Professor of Pediatrics at Washington School of Medicine.

(Middle) Summit attendees listen to a panel discussion about the future of RSJI.

(Bottom) A crowd claps for a speaker at the 2023 summit.

POLICY

SOCR's Policy Division helps center racial equity in City decision-making processes and proposes new policies that create greater agency and protections for prevented and persecuted communities. The division provides feedback and policy recommendations to Mayor's Office, City Departments, and City Council that is informed by research, community engagement, data sharing, and evaluation. The division also works to build awareness about criminal legal system issues and gender justice.

Policy Development and Guidance

In 2022 and 2023, the Policy Division advised the City of Seattle and regional government institutions on policy changes to mitigate the harms of the criminal legal system (CLS). SOCR's policy work amplifies community-driven solutions developed by those with lived experience with the CLS. In 2022, the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) requested SOCR's help to achieve robust policy language ensuring all transgender and gender non-conforming people in custody would be treated with dignity and respect consistent with their civil rights under the law. As a result, DAJD policies were updated to ensure the full spectrum of gender expansive people—regardless of gender expression—have access to protective policies such as gender-affirming compression garments.

In 2023, SOCR provided racial equity analyses and recommendations to uphold civil rights protections in City ordinances. As part of this work, SOCR helped protect rights to bodily autonomy in interactions with fire department personnel through an amendment to Seattle City Council Bill 126814 relating to the crime of obstructing a public officer. The amended ordinance, passed May 2023, now states that individuals who refuse their own medical care from fire department personnel are not in violation of this ordinance.

Community Task Force on Criminal Legal System Realignment

Ongoing work by the CLS Realignment Task Force culminated in an event to share recommendations from their 2021 report on preventing carceral involvement and harm. Recommendations included, but were not limited to, ending reliance on incarceration to address behaviors arising from unmet needs or behavioral health crises, and evaluating diversion programs for their ability to cause harm.

I joined the task force to address issues of incarceration and housing access impacting my community, and support folks who are not getting a fair shake coming out of the criminal legal system. We connected with young people about the obstacles that come with being involved with the system and what it's like to support loved ones on the inside," **said KL Shannon, Community Organizer and member of SOCR's Community Task Force on Criminal Legal System Realignment.** "When the report was complete, our community came together to hear youth tell the story of our work and engage in a powerful dialogue. It was a gift to work alongside incredible community organizers to brainstorm our vision for change."



KL Shannon (She/Her)

Community Organizer and member of SOCR's Community Task Force on Criminal Legal System Realignment

The Policy Division took actionable steps to implement their recommendation to explore a community-informed framework for responding to domestic violence. A report titled Transformation Is Possible was released in result and proposes a framework for community-driven approaches to healing, justice, and accountability.

In late 2023, SOCR took steps to implement these recommendations by releasing a \$1 million request for proposals to fund community-owned responses to domestic violence. Winning proposals will expand community-based alternatives to criminal legal system responses to domestic violence that center healing for people on both sides of harm. Awards will be announced in 2024.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

SOCR's Community Investments Division facilitates innovative budgeting and grant processes that reimagine how the City shares power with communities. By partnering with communities disproportionately impacted by systemic racism, policing, and incarceration, this team works to collaboratively develop funding processes that contribute to transformational institutional change.

OVER 4,000
community votes for participatory
budgeting proposals, with
6 winning projects identified

Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a process that brings people together to design, ideate, and vote upon how to spend a portion of a public budget. It is a tool to center the voices of those often excluded from decision-making processes in the development of new initiatives to better serve their communities.

Seattle's \$27.25 million PB process originated in 2020 in response to community demands following the murder of George Floyd and uprisings for racial justice. The allocation was part of an initial \$100 million commitment by the City to explore and invest in new approaches to public safety and community well-being designed by Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

In 2022, the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) was approved for funding to engage communities, support them to develop project proposals, and administer a voting process. PBP assembled teams to advise on the process and facilitate community engagement. Outreach engaged key groups focused on people historically excluded from government budgeting processes including including Black, Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, youth, people with disabilities, unhoused people, and additional communities of color. Community members determined what would be placed on the PB ballot,

resulting in a total of 18 proposals encompassing housing, youth programs, mental health, crisis response, and economic development. Over 4,000 votes were cast, which identified six winning projects:

- **Native Youth: Past, Present, and Future (\$7.2M):** Funding for a Duwamish-centered community center offering recreational, educational, and cultural programs that foster community engagement, promotes well-being, and supports cultural preservation
- **People Not Police Crisis Response Team (\$2M):** Invests in mental health professionals trained to serve as first responders to mental health crises
- **Housing Support (\$2M):** Provides housing navigation and assistance services for people experiencing homelessness or housing instability
- **Public Restrooms (\$7.2M):** Funds staffing and maintenance of public restrooms and hygiene facilities
- **Urban Farming and Food Equity (\$7M):** Leases green spaces to increase access to fresh food, local businesses ownership, and training for small-scale farmers
- **Housing Support for Youth (\$1.85M):** Connect youth and young adults with supportive housing or rental assistance, while also convening and compensating a youth committee to oversee outreach efforts and resource connections

The winning projects reflect community visions for a healthy, safe, and thriving Seattle. SOCR will collaborate with other City departments and community members to prepare the projects for next steps toward implementation in 2024.



Community members attend a participatory budgeting meeting.

COMMISSIONS

SOCR's Commissions Team provides staff support to four volunteer advisory boards including the Disability, Human Rights, LGBTQ, and Women's commissions. The commissions advocate for their communities by providing guidance and policy recommendations to the Mayor, City Council, and City departments. Their work also includes raising public awareness about social justice issues and promoting equitable policies.

Community Events & Advocacy

In 2022 and 2023, the commissions hosted panel discussions on domestic violence, affordable childcare, housing access, human rights, and disability rights. These gatherings amplified community voices to raise awareness of struggles for justice and highlighted work being done to push for a more equitable and inclusive world.

The Seattle Women's Commission's panel on housing access brought housing providers, development organizations, and legislative representatives together to discuss the state of housing. Community members learned about the key issues in the housing space and progress on state bills for greater access and affordability.

Keeping with tradition, the commissions continued to host and attend celebratory events to uplift their communities. The LGBTQ Commission organized annual Pride flag raising ceremonies at City Hall in partnership with Mayor Harrell and City councilmembers. They also

Youth ages 18-29 are invited to join Seattle boards and commissions through the Get Engaged program offered in partnership with the Seattle YMCA. Sarah Liu first joined the Seattle Women's Commission as a Get Engaged member and has since become a co-chair.

Gender equity is an important issue area that I've been involved in since my college days in the male-dominated field of computer engineering. The Get Engaged program introduced me to the world of civic engagement and helped me learn that my voice as a young person is powerful," **said Sarah Liu, Co-chair of the Seattle Women's Commission.** "I joined the Seattle Women's Commission to expand the scope of my advocacy to uplift women more holistically, and it's given me the opportunity to work with incredible ladies who are similarly passionate about empowering women in our communities."



linked arms with community at Seattle Pride, Trans Pride, and attended Seattle Public Libraries' Legendary Children events, which celebrates the artistry of queer and transgender Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

The Human Rights Commission hosted annual Human Rights Day events. In 2023, this event united disability rights with human rights and honored community members for their leadership in creating a more inclusive city for people with disabilities. The event was co-hosted by Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) in partnership with all four commissions, the UW Center for Human Rights, and Town Hall Seattle.

Years of advocacy for inclusive public spaces by the Seattle Disability Commission resulted in an exciting addition of two new public wheelchair stations at the Seattle Center Armory. This win was made possible by a close partnership with Seattle Center, Studio Pacifica, and City of Seattle Finance and Administrative Services.



Sarah Liu (She/Her)
Co-chair, Seattle Women's Commission
Product Manager, Microsoft

Building International Relationships

In partnership with the World Affairs Council, co-chairs representing each SOCR commission met with civil rights delegates from North America and South America to learn and share about each other's work. In addition, the Disability Commission hosted delegates from Indonesia to exchange best practices for inclusive workplaces and disability rights on a city, state, and federal level. Last but not least, the the LGBTQ Commission met with Kazakhstan delegates and issued statements regarding human rights violations occurring in Ghana.



(Left) In 2023, the Human Rights Commission partnered with the Disability Commission to bring awareness to how disability rights intersect with human rights.

(Top) In partnership with the World Affairs Council, SOCR commissions met with women civil rights delegates from North and South America to learn from each other's work.

(Middle) The Seattle LGBTQ Commission helped organize and march in the 2022 Seattle Pride Parade.

(Bottom) In November 2022, the Seattle Women's Commission joined community members to demand justice, freedom, and equality for women following the murder of Mahsa Amini.

PARTNERSHIPS

This report highlights only a few of many partnerships that play a vital role in raising awareness about civil rights protections, promoting equitable policies, and advancing racial equity within the City of Seattle. SOCR's community and institutional partners in 2022 and 2023 are listed below. We are thankful to all for their partnership.

City Budget Office

Academy for Creating Excellence (ACE)

Accountable Communities Consortium

Be:Seattle

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-WA)

Center for Dialog and Resolution

CIRC Senior Affordable Housing

Community Task Force on Criminal Legal System Realignment

Department of Construction and Inspections

Dispute Resolution Center of King County

Empower Initiative

Fair Employment Practices Agencies (WSHRC, Tacoma, Alaska, Anchorage, Oregon, Montana, Idaho)

City of Seattle Finance and Administrative Services

King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention

Lavender Rights Project

National Association of Property Management—King County

Neighborhood House

Seattle Office of Housing

Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Seattle Office of Labor Standards

Participatory budgeting steering committee, budget delegates, youth fellows, workgroup participants, and community members

Participatory Budgeting Project

Rental Housing Association of Washington (RHWA)

Seattle Department of Human Resources

Seattle Center

Seattle Department of Transportation

Seattle Housing Authority

Seattle Municipal Court

Tribal Employment Rights Offices

University of Washington Center for Human Rights

Urban Family

Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

Washington State Bar Association, including the Washington Access to Justice Board

Wing Luke Museum

World Affairs Council—Seattle

The following photos were captured at a back to school event hosted in partnership by SOCR.



(Top) Urban Family

(Middle - Right) Willie Seals III, Senior Director of Programs, Academy for Creating Excellence.

(Middle - Left) SOCR leadership. From L-to-R: Caedmon Magboo Cahill, Policy Director; Fahima Mohamed, Deputy Director; John Page, Director of Community Investments; Mike Chin, Director of Enforcement.

(Bottom) From L-to-R: Derrick Wheeler Smith, Director of SOCR; Greg Lewis, Executive Director of the YMCA of Greater Seattle; C. Davis of C. Davis Texas BBQ.



Seattle
Office for Civil Rights