

February 12, 2019

To: Gender Equity, Safe Communities, New Americans and Education Committee
(GESCNA-Ed) Members

From: Greg Doss, Central Staff

Subject: Proposed \$15,000 Signing Bonus for Certain Police Officers (CB 119461)

Summary: CB 119461 would authorize the Seattle Police Department (SPD) to offer a \$15,000 signing bonus for experienced (lateral hire) officers.

Central Staff have worked with Executive staff to provide the information and data below. The data is compiled from the SPD Q1 staffing report that was transmitted on January 25, 2019 in response to Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) 38-6-A-2. This staffing information is intended to inform Councilmember decisions on CB 119461.

Finally, the memo tees up potential issues for the Council’s consideration, including whether the legislation should:

1. Include a sunset date or temporary authorization for the proposed incentive program; and
2. Allow the hiring incentives to be received by new recruits as well as lateral hires, and
3. Contain accountability provisions that measure progress as well as ensuring that a long-term commitment is made by officers that accept the hiring incentive.

Background: In 2018, the SPD experienced difficulty hiring new officers while also realizing a higher-than-normal separation rate of existing officers. These challenges led to a net decrease (41) in the number of officers employed by SPD. The table below provides a picture of hiring and attrition at SPD over the last seven years as well as SPD’s forecast for 2019 and 2020.

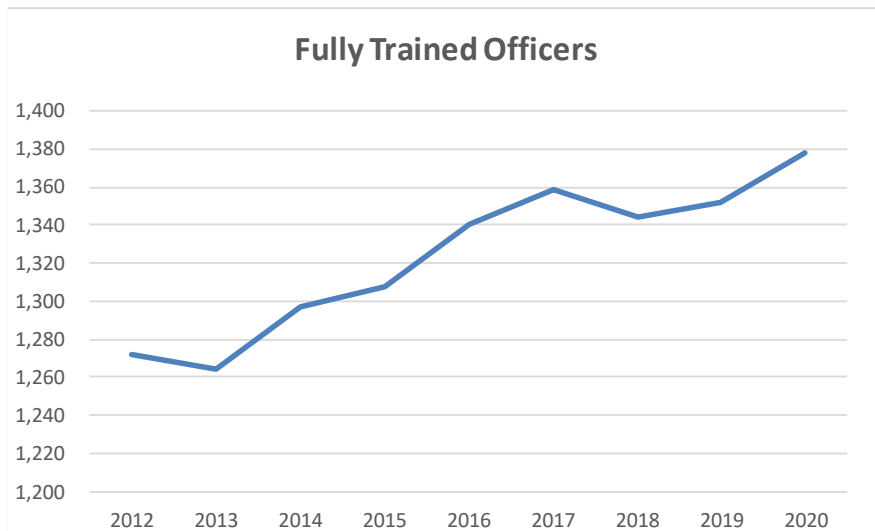
Table 1: SPD Police Officers Hired and Separated

Year	Number of Recruit Hires	Number of Lateral Hires	Separations (incl. dropouts)	Net New Hires
2012	25	7	-36	-4
2013	72	13	-39	46
2014	69	12	-59	22
2015	76	20	-72	24
2016	85	22	-67	40
2017	77	25	-79	23
2018	59	9	-109	-41
2019	84	20	-90	14
2020	84	20	-91	13

The SPD has indicated that the higher number of separations and difficulty recruiting in 2018 has resulted from a combination of factors, including a national shortage in police recruit applications, incentives offered by other local jurisdictions (up to \$15k for an officer to lateral out of SPD), higher housing costs in the Seattle area and commute times, historically low unemployment, negative perceptions of policing and that starting officer wages have remained relatively flat since January 2014¹. The separation forecasts (e.g., -90 and -91 respectively for 2019 and 2020) remains higher-than-normal because SPD expects several of these trends to continue.

Projected Sworn Strength in 2019 and 2020: Fully trained officers are individuals who have successfully completed the Criminal Justice Training Academy (Academy) and Phase II Field Training, which consists of answering calls in conjunction with an assigned training officer. Fully trained officers can be deployed through the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system as individual 9-1-1 responders or serve other specialty functions in the department. As Chart 1 illustrates, in 2018 there was a decrease in the number of fully trained officers at SPD. This dip is a result of officer separations outpacing new hires and lateral hires. The SPD is projecting that its number of fully trained officers will return to prior highs by the middle of 2020.

Chart 1: Fully Trained Officers in 2018



1) Fully Trained Officers: total count of sworn personnel who have successfully completed Phase II-Field Training

Impacts on Patrol Staffing: When confronting staffing situations where the separation rate outpaces hires, the department has historically attempted to ensure that its Patrol force (officers that are responsible for responding to 9-1-1 calls and other interactions with the public) is prioritized above other departmental functions such as investigations or specialty units such as the Canine Unit.

¹ The new Seattle Police Guild contract was signed and adopted by the City Council in November of 2018. Wages were adjusted to be the highest in the State of Washington.

The department's quarterly point-in-time count of 9-1-1 responders, a good measure of Patrol strength, was approximately 561 officers in August of 2018 and 601 officers at the end of 2018. This trend occurred despite the 2018 dip in fully trained officers. It is, however, possible that Patrol numbers may eventually be negatively impacted as the department fully realizes the 2018 staffing shortfall / deficit. Particularly if the pipeline of Academy graduates is not refreshed with additional recruit hires.

2019-20 Lateral Hire Recruitment Strategy: The SPD has indicated that it intends to use four out-of-state recruitment and testing trips to increase the number of lateral officers on the force. SPD staff have indicated that the out-of-state trips and signing bonuses were considered when the department developed the staffing plan that is currently before the Council.

This staffing plan shows an increase in lateral hires from 9 in 2018 to 20 in 2019. SPD staff is closely evaluating the out-of-state recruitment efforts. The department recognizes that there is an opportunity cost to out-of-state recruiting insofar as the efforts could have been spent recruiting inside of the state of Washington.

Use of Salary Savings for the Lateral Hire Incentive Program: The department has indicated that there are 1,457 funded officer positions and 1,388 Sworn Officers² in SPD. It should be noted that the department has always used some of its sworn position funding to pay for recruits that are in the academy but have not yet taken the sworn oath. Consequently, the number of sworn officers and funded positions will never be a precise match. When necessary, the department also diverts some sworn position funding to overtime funding for the purpose of providing additional, temporary staffing or emphasis patrols at the precincts. Finally, some of the sworn position funding that is realized as salary savings may be cut or repurposed for another use. This latter category includes the \$1.4 million salary savings cut that Council made to the 2019 Adopted Budget³.

The department has indicated that it currently possesses enough salary savings to fund the \$300,000 that is needed for the lateral hire incentive program. Central Staff have asked the Executive whether there is enough salary / vacancy savings to expand the hiring incentive as contemplated in the options appearing in Table 2 below.

2019-2020 New Recruit Strategy: As shown in Table 1, the SPD has projected that it will hire 84 new recruits in 2019. This is a 42 percent increase over the 59 new recruits that were hired in 2018. The department has in the past used a \$5,000 signing bonus for new recruits, but it has not explored this idea recently. SPD staff have indicated that there is an effort being made to recruit new (recruit) hires during the out-of-state lateral testing trips. SPD staff will hold recruit tests in the out-of-state locations as well.

² Not all sworn officers are fully trained. Recruits that take the officer oath are sworn officers, but they still must undergo Phase II ride-along training.

³ Green Sheet 38-7-B-1 indicates that funding will be restored if the department is able to hire 10 net new officers in 2019 and 30 net new officers in 2020, as proposed by the Mayor's 2019-20 Proposed Budget.

During the Council's deliberations on the 2019-20 Adopted Budget, several Councilmembers asked about the strategies that SPD is using to increase the number of recruit hires. In the past, the department focused on direct connections with communities historically underrepresented in policing and explicitly aimed at recruiting officers who reflect the diversity of Seattle. This effort is consistent with a new Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC) rule that will allocate additional test points for multi-lingual candidates that sit for the police exam. It is also the focus of a [2017 report](#) on recruiting made by the Community Police Commission, which contained nine recommendations that emphasized more connection with the community.

SPD performs a multitude of recruitment activities that include attending special events, community meetings and career fairs. The department also recruits through youth employment, the SPD Explorers, and with advertising targeted to specific ethnic media outlets. The department has indicated that it is planning on providing an overview of some of these strategies at the February 13, 2019 GESCNA-Ed Committee meeting.

Executive Workgroup: The Executive is currently convening a workgroup comprised of staff from the Innovation & Performance team, SPD, the City Budget Office, Council Central Staff, Legislative Aides and others to perform a deep dive into the issue of staffing at SPD. The Executive has indicated that the workgroup will be tasked with looking at national best practices and studying SPD's performance using data analytics, and then developing long-term strategies to improve recruiting and retention at the department. The Executive has indicated that the workgroup will publish its recommendations in September of 2019. Central Staff and Executive staff will keep the Council apprised of the progress made by the workgroup, as well as the success (or failures) that come from the immediate steps being taken to increase recruiting.

Issue Identification:

The GESCNA-Ed Chair has identified the following issues for further exploration:

- 1. Program Costs** – The Chair would like the department to indicate the various cost components that are supporting the \$450,000 fiscal note estimate, which is characterized as a ceiling of all potential costs for the incentive. To ensure that the department is transparent about all the costs of the overall hiring effort, she has also asked that the department provide an estimate of the costs for the out-of-state recruiting and testing trips.
- 2. Renewal language** – The Chair is interested in exploring language that would ensure that the hiring incentive strategy can be tracked and measured in a way that would support a long-term commitment by the Council. In the meantime, the GESCNA-Ed Committee could explore ways to provide a temporary authorization or sunset clause that requires the Executive to report back on progress made in 2019, potentially as part of the quarterly reports that are provided pursuant to SLI 38-6-A-2.
- 3. Retention** – The Chair is interested in exploring how the department could ensure that officers that accept the lateral hire signing bonus make a substantial time commitment to SPD.

- 4. Expanding the use of the incentive to recruits** – The Chair is interested in knowing if the department has the financial ability to extend at some level the signing bonus to recruits, and whether the department thinks this would be helpful.

Council Bill 119461 has a title that will not accommodate the expansion of the incentive program to new recruits. The Council could accomplish this by introducing a new piece of legislation with a revised title that specifies new recruit hires as well as lateral hires.

While the Council could pass a new bill that authorizes an expanded incentives program, the implementation of such a program would be at the discretion of the Executive. Below is a table that shows the costs of expanding the hiring incentive to recruits at two different levels (\$5,000 and \$7,500). The table also shows costs for the incentive if SPD were to increase its recruit and lateral pools by five percent (88 recruits and 21 laterals). The department’s fiscal note indicates that costs for the lateral hire incentive could reach \$450,000 per year, depending on the number of lateral hires over the course of implementation. It is possible that the fiscal note includes costs beyond the \$15,000 incentives provided to the lateral hires, but there is no indication that this is the case or what those costs might be.

Table 2: Hiring Incentive Options and Costs

		Recruit Hires (84)	Laterals (20)	Total Cost	Total Cost 88 Recruits 21 Laterals
Option 1	Lateral Hires @ \$15,000	NA	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$315,000
Option 2	Recruit Hires @ \$5,000	\$420,000	NA	\$420,000	\$441,000
Option 3	Recruit Hires @ \$7,500	\$630,000	NA	\$630,000	\$661,500
Option 4	Both @ \$15,000 and \$5,000	\$420,000	\$300,000	\$720,000	\$756,000
Option 5	Both @ \$15,000 and \$7,500	\$630,000	\$300,000	\$930,000	\$976,500

For questions on this memo, please contact Greg Doss at 206-256-6225 or greg.doss@seattle.gov.

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