



September 16, 2019

Hiring Incentives Report to Council

The Seattle Police Department (“SPD”) is providing this report on the department’s entry-level and lateral hiring incentive in response to Council s. In general, police officer hiring remains very competitive in Washington State and nationally, driven by low unemployment, a demographic bubble driving officer retirements, and jurisdictions aggressively adding staff. Eighty percent of Washington’s 25 largest police forces have budgeted for growth in their sworn ranks in the last five years, outpacing population growth by 17%. In response to these challenges, regional police agencies are offering or increasing hiring incentives.

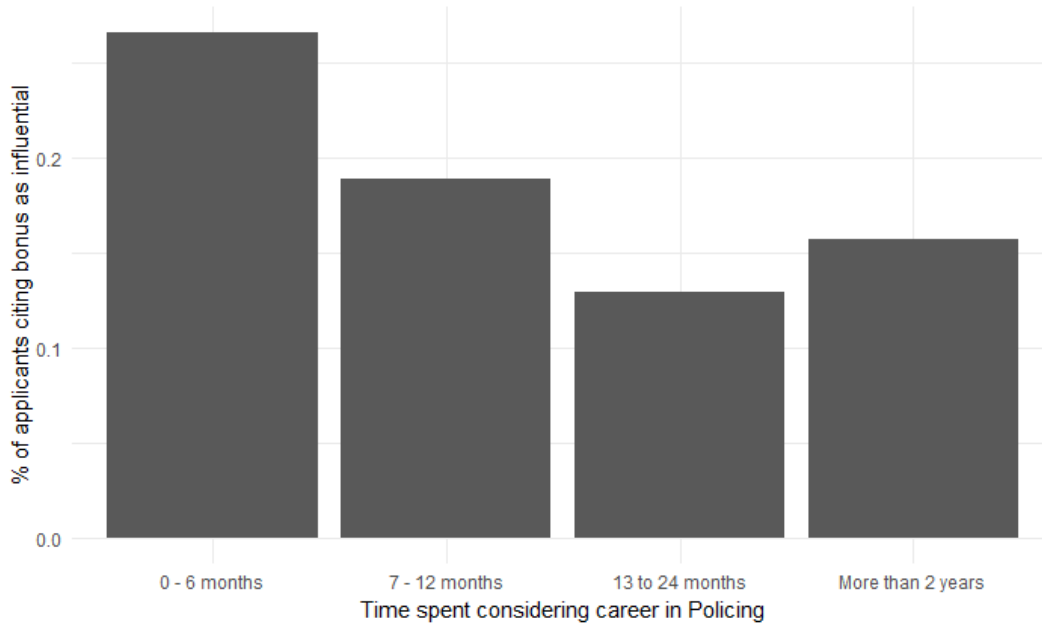
The Seattle City Council authorized hiring incentives of \$7,500 for entry-level applicants and \$15,000 for lateral applicants in March 2019. Other jurisdictions continue to provide incentives with some jurisdictions, such as Everett, increasing their incentive to \$20,000 for lateral applicants.

Table 1. Hiring Incentives of other forces.

Jurisdiction	Salary (Annual)	Hiring Incentive
Seattle	Entry Level: \$81,444 - \$106,632 Lateral: Starting \$91,308	Entry: Up to \$7,500 Laterals: \$15,000
Bellevue	Entry Level: \$74,868 - \$95,883	Entry: Up to \$2,000 Laterals: \$16,000
Everett	Entry Level: \$72,192 - \$94,620 Lateral: \$94,620	Laterals: \$15,000 - \$20,000
Kent	Lateral: \$68,520 - \$89,208	Laterals: \$10,000
Renton	Entry Level: \$67,976 - \$96,672	Laterals: \$10,000, 40-hour sick leave and 40-hour personal leave banks
King County Sheriff’s Office	Entry level: \$62,462 - \$87,464	

Since the inception of hiring incentives in April 2019, SPD has conducted one entry-level test and one lateral test. Due to the resulting small sample size, a complete analysis of the incentives is premature. However, initial indications are positive. Approximately 18% of SPD applicants (20% among applicants of color and 19% among female-identifying applicants) cited the incentive as an “important factor” in their decision to apply with those who more recently started exploring a career in policing showing a more pronounced effect.

Chart 1. Applicants citing bonus as influential

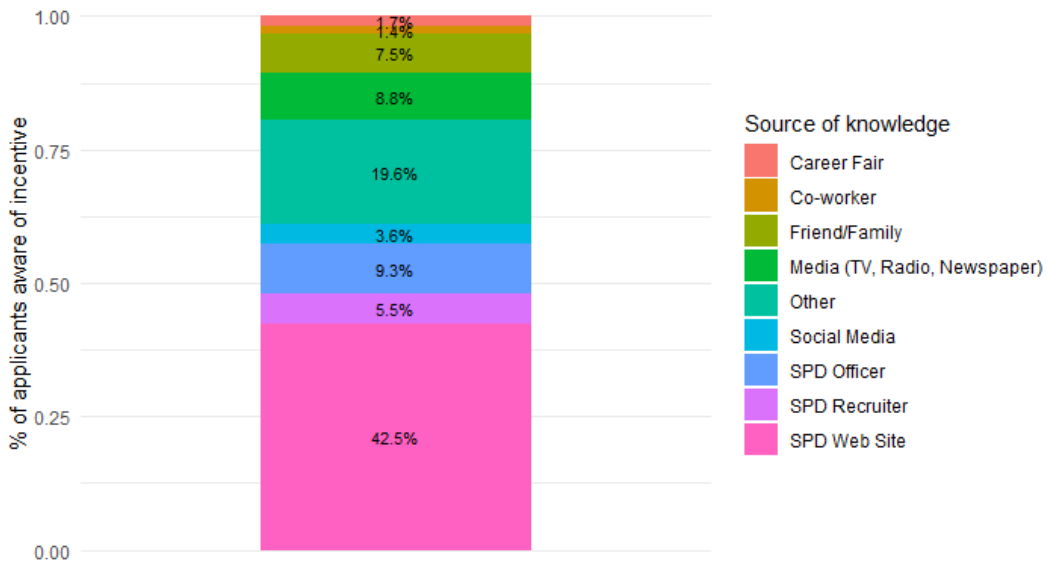


Source: SDHR hiring data

Surveying also indicated that SPD draws applicants from across the state, resulting in competition with other agencies. For example, only 14% of recent applicants have a Seattle home address. Similarly, 52% of entry-level applicants (51% applicants of color and 52% female-identifying applicants) reported applying to other law enforcement agencies when they applied to SPD.

Applicants learned of the hiring incentives from a variety of sources, as shown below.

Chart 2. How applicants find out about the incentive.



Source: SDHR hiring data

To date SPD has paid a total of 36 entry-level and 6 lateral incentives. Of those receiving the incentive, 40.5% were people of color (16.7% Asian, 9.5% Black or African American, 7.1% Hispanic or Latino, 7.1% identifying as two or more races, and 59.5% White) and 21.4% identified as female (with 78.6% identifying as male).

Due to nearly one-fifth of recent applicants citing the incentive as an “important factor” in their decision to apply with SPD, the department recommends the continuation of the incentive program at this time. Additional testing cycles will provide more applicant data and allow for better insight into the impact of the incentives.