Seattle City Council Select Budget Committee

Councilmember Budget Proposals| Thursday, October 30, 2025

Seattle Fire Department (SFD)

Number	Title	Sponsor	Packet Page
SFD-030-A-1	Increase SFD by $572,000 GF and 2.0 FTE Firefighters for expansion of Health One, increase HSD by $153,000 GF and 1.0 FTE Sr. Counselor for a case manager for Health One expansion in SFD	Strauss	2
SFD-101-A-1	Increase SFD by $2.3 million GF and 10.0 FTE Firefighters for one 24-7 aid car	Nelson	4
SFD-102-A-1	Increase SFD by $1.4 million GF and 5.0 FTE Firefighters for one 12-hour, peak time aid car	Rinck	6
SFD-103S-A-1	Request SFD to report on strategies for strengthening the City's response to firefighter injury claims	Rinck	8

2026 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

V1

SFD-030-A

Increase SFD by $572,000 GF and 2.0 FTE Firefighters for expansion of Health One, increase HSD by $153,000 GF and 1.0 FTE Sr. Counselor for a case manager for Health One expansion in SFD

SPONSORS

Dan Strauss, Robert Kettle, Alexis Mercedes Rinck

BALANCING SUMMARY

Fund	2026 Increase (Decrease)	2027 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund	$(725,031)	
Total Budget Balance Effect	$(725,031)	

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Council Budget Action (CBA) would increase appropriations in the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) by $572,000 GF and 2.0 FTE for expansion of the Mobile Integrated Health Program Health One activities by one unit. Funding would be used to support necessary staff, operations, and vehicle costs for this expansion in SFD. Staff costs in SFD would be a combination of the addition of 2.0 FTE Firefighter Administrative positions, and the use of overtime to transfer existing firefighters to the Mobile Integrated Health Program until new hires proposed elsewhere in the budget come on board. Overtime costs in SFD may be necessary to implement this expansion, beyond those funds currently identified in this CBA.

This CBA would also increase appropriations to the Human Services Department (HSD) by 153,000 GF and 1.0 FTE for an additional case manager in HSD to support expansion of SFD's Health One program.

ATTACHMENT: No

TRANSACTIONS - ONGOING

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
HSD	Promoting Public Health	00100-BO-HS-H7000	2026		$153,031
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2026		$572,000

POSITIONS

Dept	BCL	Year	Position Title	Positions	FTE
HSD	00100-BO-HS-H7000	2026	Counselor,Senior	1	1.0

2026 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

SFD	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2026	Firefighter Administrative-80 Hrs	2	2.0

2026 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

V1

SFD-101-A

Increase SFD by $2.3 million GF and 10.0 FTE Firefighters for one 24-7 aid car

SPONSORS

Sara Nelson, Rob Saka, Maritza Rivera

BALANCING SUMMARY

Fund	2026 Increase (Decrease)	2027 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund	$(2,344,000)	
Total Budget Balance Effect	$(2,344,000)	

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Council Budget Action (CBA) would increase proposed appropriations to the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) by $2.3 million GF and add 10.0 FTE Firefighters for the addition of a 24-7 aid car.

This CBA would add $784,000 GF one-time to provide overtime funding to staff the aid car between July-December 2026, $1.0 million GF to fund 10 firefighter recruits in the July recruit class, $520,000 GF one-time to add a vehicle, and add 10.0 FTE Firefighter positions to provide ongoing staffing for the aid car. In 2027, the cost to fund the new FTE will increase to $1.5 million GF.

Background: SFD has seven aid cars: five available for deployment 24-7 and two 12-hour cars deployed during peak 911 call hours. If an aid car is not available for deployment, SFD will provide Basic Life Support (BLS) services by deploying an engine or ladder company. The department prefers to deploy aid cars whenever feasible as deployment of engines and ladders for BLS calls is inefficient, costly, and reduces the resources available for fire-related deployments.

The number of 911 medical calls that could receive an aid car response has generally increased in recent years. SFD needs additional aid cars to ensure the most efficient use of resources when answering BLS medical calls.

ATTACHMENT: No

TRANSACTIONS - ONGOING

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2026		$1,040,000

TRANSACTIONS - ONE-TIME

2026 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2026		$1,304,000

POSITIONS

Dept	BCL	Year	Position Title	Positions	FTE
SFD	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2026	Firefighter-80 Hrs	10	10.0

2026 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

V1

SFD-102-A

Increase SFD by $1.4 million GF and 5.0 FTE Firefighters for one 12-hour, peak time aid car

SPONSORS

Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Rob Saka, Sara Nelson

BALANCING SUMMARY

Fund	2026 Increase (Decrease)	2027 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund	$(1,447,000)	
Total Budget Balance Effect	$(1,447,000)	

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Council Budget Action (CBA) would increase proposed appropriations to the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) by $1.4 million GF and add 5.0 FTE Firefighters for the addition of a 12-hour, peak time aid car.

This CBA would add $392,000 GF one-time to provide overtime funding to staff the aid car between July-December 2026, $535,000 GF to fund five firefighter recruits in the July recruit class, $520,000 GF one-time to add a vehicle, and add 5.0 FTE Firefighter positions to provide ongoing staffing for the aid car. In 2027, the cost to fund the new FTE will increase to $766,000 GF.

Background: SFD has seven aid cars: five available for deployment 24/7 and two 12-hour cars deployed during peak 911 call hours. If an aid car is not available for deployment, SFD will provide Basic Life Support (BLS) services by deploying an engine or ladder company. The department prefers to deploy aid cars whenever feasible as deployment of engines and ladders for BLS calls is inefficient, costly, and reduces the resources available for fire-related deployments.

The number of 911 medical calls that could receive an aid car response has generally increased in recent years. SFD needs additional aid cars to ensure the most efficient use of resources when answering BLS medical calls.

ATTACHMENT: No

TRANSACTIONS - ONGOING

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2026		$535,000

TRANSACTIONS - ONE-TIME

2026 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2026		$912,000

POSITIONS

Dept	BCL	Year	Position Title	Positions	FTE
SFD	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2026	Firefighter-80 Hrs	5	5.0

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

2026 STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT

V1

SFD-103S-A

Request SFD to report on strategies for strengthening the City's response to firefighter injury claims

SPONSORS

Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Dan Strauss, Robert Kettle

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) would request the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), in consultation with the Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR), union partners, and other relevant entities, to report on strategies for strengthening the City's response to firefighter injury claims with the objective of returning injured employees to work sooner, improving employee health outcomes, and achieving cost savings.

Firefighter absences due to injury and related claims have a significant impact on SFD's operations and budget. In 2024, the City spent approximately $17.7 million on SFD claims. Of this amount, SFD reimbursed $14.2 million in workers' compensation claim costs to the City's self-insured claims fund and separately incurred an additional $7.3 million for associated labor costs (e.g., backfill overtime costs when firefighters are on occupational leave). Trends show that such costs are rising due to an increase in claims related to injuries and exposures covered by a recent expansion of the state presumptive coverage law, economic trends (e.g., recession, inflation), COVID-19 treatment delays in 2020 through 2022 that complicated recovery and extended claim duration, an aging workforce, and claim specific factors.

Additionally, firefighters report that musculoskeletal injuries can be especially problematic for time loss due to difficulty obtaining quick access to medical care (e.g., scheduling doctor appointments and procedures) and navigating insurance requirements. Musculoskeletal injuries (e.g., strains and sprains, spinal injuries, fractures and dislocations) are typically the most common injury among firefighters.

SFD continues to experience a high vacancy rate and firefighter absences due to injury reduce the department's ability to meet minimum staffing levels. In turn, this can lead to unit outages and increased overtime costs. The majority of SFD's overtime is to maintain minimum staffing levels due to unfilled positions or firefighters out on leave (e.g., sickness, vacation, paid parental leave, military, disability). Returning injured firefighters to work sooner would decrease these costs and help the department meet minimum staffing levels.

This SLI requests SFD to collaborate with internal and external partners to consider the challenges that injury claims present for firefighters, SFD, and SDHR's administration of the City's workers' compensation program. SFD is encouraged to consider a wide variety of program enhancements that could comprise a comprehensive approach to strengthening the City's response to injury claims for the overall benefit of City operations and the community.

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

2026 STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT

Responsible Council Committee(s):

DUE DATE: May 4, 2026