

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE

Department:	Dept. Contact:	CBO Contact:
Mayor’s Office	Sarah Smith	Geoffrey Detweiler

1. BILL SUMMARY

Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE related to recruitment and retention of police officers in the Seattle Police Department; making permanent a hiring incentives program in the Seattle Police Department; and amending Ordinance 126654.

Summary and Background of the Legislation:

The number of Seattle police officers fully trained and available for deployment was 930 at the end of July 2024, among the lowest numbers since at least 1991, the first year the number of “in-service” officers was reported.

While the Seattle Police Department has one of the highest starting salaries in the state and region, recruitment of new police officers has become increasingly difficult in Seattle and across the United States, and police agencies now offer hiring incentives to attract applicants; in the Seattle region the cities of Auburn, Bellevue, Everett, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kent, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Renton, and Tacoma, and the King County Sheriff’s Office, offer incentives ranging from \$1,000 to \$40,000.

Agency	Incentives Recruits	Incentives Lateral	Incentives Recruits	Incentives Lateral
	2022		2024	
1. Redmond			None	None
2. Kent	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$25,000
3. Bellevue	\$2,000	\$16,000	\$2,000	\$16,000
4. Everett	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$30,000
5. Edmonds			None	\$25,000
6. Bothell			None	None
7. Tukwila			None	\$25,000
8. Auburn	None	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$20,000
9. Lynnwood			\$5,000	\$25,000
10. Port of Seattle	None	None	None	\$10,000
11. Bellingham			\$2,000	None
12. Renton	\$1,000	\$20,000	\$1,000	\$20,000
13. King County	\$7,500	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$15,000
14. Pierce County			\$10,000	\$25,000

15. Seattle	\$7,500	\$30,000	\$7,500	\$30,000
16. Federal Way	\$3,000	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$30,000
17. Tacoma	None	\$25,000	None	\$25,000
18. Lakewood			None	None
19. WA State Patrol			\$10,000	\$20,000
20. Des Moines			Not available	\$40,000
21. Mercer Island			Not available	\$40,000

In July 2022, the Mayor and Council approved the creation of a hiring incentives pilot program in the Seattle Police Department that expires at the end of 2024. Since that time SPD has welcomed 100 new hires, 7 lateral hires, and 2 re-hires of employees who had been gone for more than 2 years.

Benchmarking data shows that 18 out of 21 local agencies, offer lateral or new hire incentives. Given SPD’s staffing challenges, the relatively low cost, and the fact that other competing jurisdictions continue to provide the incentive, the City is extending the hiring incentive program and increases the lateral hire incentive from \$30,000 to \$50,000 per lateral hire. These additional costs will be covered by the existing budget.

Incentives provided to lateral police officer hires and to officers who are reinstated to SPD after two years or more shall be paid one incentive per employee, which shall not exceed \$50,000 per hire, and which will be paid out in two installments. Incentives paid to new recruit hires shall be one-time per employee, shall not exceed \$7,500 per hire, and will be paid out in two installments.

For the overall hiring incentive program, the first installment will be paid in the officer’s first paycheck and the second half on completion of any probationary period established by the PSCSC rules. Hiring incentives paid to individuals who leave Seattle Police Department employment before five years of completed services must be paid back to the City. Failure to meet the five-year commitment will result in the recruit or lateral hire having to pay back the hiring incentive on a pro rata basis as calculated against the five-year commitment.

The annual estimated cost for the hiring incentive award program is \$1.5 million and is included in the Mayor’s 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. This incentive program shall continue until the designated budget is exhausted or Council passes a separate ordinance terminating the program, whichever comes first.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? Yes No

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City? Yes No

3.a. Appropriations

- This legislation adds, changes, or deletes appropriations.

Appropriations Notes: The appropriations needed to support the hiring incentive program are included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget.

3.d. Other Impacts

Does the legislation have other financial impacts to The City of Seattle, including direct or indirect, one-time or ongoing costs, that are not included in Sections 3.a through 3.c? If so, please describe these financial impacts.

No.

If the legislation has costs, but they can be absorbed within existing operations, please describe how those costs can be absorbed. The description should clearly describe if the absorbed costs are achievable because the department had excess resources within their existing budget or if by absorbing these costs the department is deprioritizing other work that would have used these resources.

Please describe any financial costs or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation.
N/A

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- a. Please describe how this legislation may affect any departments besides the originating department.**

This program primarily impacts the Seattle Police Department.

- b. Does this legislation affect a piece of property? If yes, please attach a map and explain any impacts on the property. Please attach any Environmental Impact Statements, Determinations of Non-Significance, or other reports generated for this property.**

No.

- c. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative.**

- i. How does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you arrive at this conclusion? In your response please consider impacts within City government (employees, internal programs) as well as in the broader community.**

Public Safety is a core Charter obligation of the City of Seattle. All residents deserve public safety, and all communities and neighborhoods benefit from a safe city. This legislation is designed to increase the number of officers who can respond to calls for help from residents in a timely manner.

ii. **Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses in the development and/or assessment of the legislation.**

iii. **What is the Language Access Plan for any communications to the public?**

d. Climate Change Implications

i. **Emissions: How is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way? Please attach any studies or other materials that were used to inform this response.**

N/A

ii. **Resiliency: Will the action(s) proposed by this legislation increase or decrease Seattle's resiliency (or ability to adapt) to climate change in a material way? If so, explain. If it is likely to decrease resiliency in a material way, describe what will or could be done to mitigate the effects.**

N/A

e. **If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program's desired goal(s)? What mechanisms will be used to measure progress towards meeting those goals?**

N/A

5. CHECKLIST

Is a public hearing required?

Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required?

If this legislation changes spending and/or revenues for a fund, have you reviewed the relevant fund policies and determined that this legislation complies?

Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP project that involves a shared financial commitment with a non-City partner agency or organization?

6. ATTACHMENTS

Summary Attachments: None.