

**CITY OF SEATTLE**  
**ORDINANCE** 127026  
**COUNCIL BILL** 120766

AN ORDINANCE relating to recruitment and retention of police officers in the Seattle Police Department (SPD); transferring positions from Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) to SPD; creating in SPD a recruitment and retention program; amending Ordinance 126955, which adopted the 2024 Budget; changing appropriations to various departments and budget control levels, and from various funds in the Budget; amending Section 4.08.070 of the Seattle Municipal Code; and ratifying and confirming certain prior acts.

WHEREAS, Seattle Police Department (SPD) officers work to protect the community, are tasked with upholding the rule of law and protecting life and property and put themselves in harm's way to fight crime, get drugs off our streets, and protect Seattle residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, since the summer of 2020, SPD separation surveys show that some departing officers have indicated that a perceived lack of support from the community and Seattle's elected representatives have contributed to the largest number of officer resignations in recent history, resulting in a net reduction of 337 Fully Trained Officers and 368 Deployable Officers;<sup>1</sup> and

WHEREAS, SPD and other large local law enforcement agencies continue to struggle to meet annual hiring goals, and Seattle elected officials wish to create a welcoming environment that attracts quality officer candidates; and

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<sup>1</sup> SPD 2023 Year End Staff Report - The difference between 2019 year-end data and 2023 year-end data as a net of incoming new officers and outgoing officers who retired or separated from service.

1 WHEREAS, the Council has since 2021 fully funded SPD’s recruitment plans and supports the  
2 department’s efforts to add by the end of the year a net of 15 new officers, representing a  
3 combination of 120 new hires and 105 separations; and

4 WHEREAS, the Council passed in May 2022 Resolution 32050 calling for the establishment of a  
5 hiring incentive program to provide bonuses for entry level and lateral police officer  
6 hires, funded by salary and benefits savings from vacant SPD positions to better compete  
7 against regional jurisdictions offering the same; and

8 WHEREAS, the City passed in August 2022 Ordinance 126654, which authorized funding for  
9 police officer hiring bonuses, allocated \$1.6 million towards the recruitment and retention  
10 of SPD officers, and created in the Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR)  
11 three new recruitment positions and one new police officer testing position; and

12 WHEREAS, the 2023 and 2024 Adopted Budgets each included: (1) full funding for police  
13 hiring bonuses, and (2) \$2.9 million per year for an Executive-led recruitment and  
14 retention program; and

15 WHEREAS, Council investments in SPD recruitment have in the last two years yielded  
16 approximately half of the department’s annual hiring targets, reaching a high of only 61  
17 hires out of 1,948 applications in 2023, a conversion rate of three percent; and

18 WHEREAS, the Executive has transferred into SPD two of the three recruitment positions that  
19 were created in Ordinance 126654, and has entered into ~~((an))~~ a Memorandum of  
20 Understanding that repurposes the third position, a Manager 2 position, for other duties at  
21 the Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC); and

22 WHEREAS, the PSCSC is statutorily responsible for civil service examinations for sworn  
23 positions in the public safety civil service system, including entry level and lateral police

1 officer positions, creation of an eligibility register and the certification of names of  
2 persons who pass civil service examinations; and

3 WHEREAS, the officer hiring process at a majority of regional jurisdictions is shorter than  
4 Seattle's minimum of six months and includes best practices such as timely personal  
5 acknowledgement of application receipt and successful test completion; and

6 WHEREAS, the PSCSC does not have the staffing resources to certify passing police officer  
7 candidate names more than seven times per year, or to make personal contact with  
8 candidates before or after an exam; and

9 WHEREAS, the PSCSC does not currently use a public safety civil service exam that is  
10 compatible with Seattle's neighboring law enforcement agencies; and

11 WHEREAS, the Council is committed to a process of regularly re-examining the City's budget  
12 to determine how to best allocate resources and seeks to improve the recruitment and  
13 retention initiative in a manner that focuses staffing resources and eliminates potential  
14 barriers that impede the hiring process; and

15 WHEREAS the Council, the Executive, and PSCSC share a goal of continuous improvement and  
16 are already engaged in updates to the SPD recruitment and retention initiative and  
17 PSCSC processes to speed up the publication of eligibility certifications, including the  
18 addition of PSCSC personnel resources necessary to achieve this end, and the Council  
19 seeks to codify these process changes; NOW, THEREFORE,

20 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**

21 Section 1. There is created in the Seattle Police Department (SPD) a Recruitment and  
22 Retention Program to be staffed by City personnel who are responsible for increasing the number  
23 of sworn officers in SPD. The program shall be led by the Manager 2, General Government

1 position, transferred in Section 3 of this ordinance. The Manager 2 position shall have the  
2 responsibility for developing and implementing recruitment strategies, in consultation with  
3 contracted marketing or media consultants, and ensuring that a personal contact is made  
4 available to all police officer applicants for the public safety test. The Manager 2 position shall  
5 be committed to continuous improvement and shall ensure that recruitment strategies reflect best  
6 practices both nationwide and regionally.

7 Section 2. Beginning on July 15, 2024, and occurring at least semiannually thereafter, the  
8 Seattle Police Department, in coordination with the Public Safety Civil Service Commission, will  
9 provide a written report to the Mayor and City Council on the City's efforts to recruit and retain  
10 sworn officers. Elements of the report shall include:

11 A. Metrics on the number of personal contacts made by civilians or sworn staff to  
12 candidates who have registered for or completed a public safety exam. The data should be  
13 broken down by the type of contact made, disaggregating contacts made for test reminders or  
14 notification of a passing exam score from those that result in personal contact with an SPD  
15 recruiter.

16 B. Seattle's (~~((measures on industry standards))~~) civil service exam metrics such as:

17 1. The number of entry applicants per day;

18 2. The apply-to-eligible rate;

19 3. The number of applicants who participate in the exam and the percentage of  
20 applicants who participate in the exam by type of applicant; and

21 4. The ((the)) exam pass rates by type of applicant ((, the number of applicants who  
22 sit for an exam, the entry applications per day, and the apply to-eligible rate, and a measure of  
23 applicants who end up on the Register)).

1 Seattle's (~~rates on these standards~~) metrics shall be displayed alongside (~~similar rates~~)  
2 available data for competing law enforcement organizations both regionally and nationally and  
3 any available industry standards. These law enforcement organizations shall include without  
4 limitation, to the extent that the referenced data is available, the Cities of Portland (Oregon) and  
5 San Francisco, Long Beach, Oakland, San Diego, San Jose, and Sacramento (California).

6 C. Information and metrics on new and innovative programs that are designed to increase  
7 diversity within the department, to include an increase in female candidates, consistent with  
8 SPD's "30 by 30" campaign, including, but not limited to, recruitment and retention strategies  
9 and messaging that reflect SPD's efforts to:

10 1. Show organizational support in various areas including: promotional opportunities,  
11 family or maternity-leave policies, childcare and scheduling flexibility for caretaker  
12 responsibilities, and redress for gender discrimination or sexual harassment;

13 2. Address negative attitudes with respect to women taking on leadership roles within  
14 SPD;

15 3. Ensure that women have an equal opportunity to become officers and will receive  
16 equal opportunities and treatment throughout their career as officers;

17 4. Support women to perceive policing as a career in which they have a meaningful  
18 place;

19 5. Ensure equitable access to specialty assignments and professional development  
20 including leadership training; and

21 6. Increase the retention rates of women officers to allow them to have a greater  
22 impact on department culture, create a healthier workplace environment, and make SPD more  
23 efficient.

1           In addition to the information and metrics provided in the annual written report required  
2 by this section, the Seattle Police Department shall provide to the Mayor and Council quarterly  
3 updates on this items in this subsection.

4           D. Pre-exam and post-exam survey data that is used to guide~~((ing))~~ marketing campaigns,  
5 ensure that more candidates sit for the exam, and provide an opportunity for continuous  
6 improvement on messaging and outreach strategies.

7           E. The average time necessary to complete the backgrounding process, as compared with  
8 historical backgrounding timelines and regional competitors.

9           F. Officer exit interviews and surveys that can inform retention strategies.

10           Section 3. The following positions are transferred from the Seattle Department of Human  
11 Resources (SDHR) to the Seattle Police Department:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Position Numbers</b>	<b>Number</b>
3.1	Seattle Department of Human Resources	Manager 2, General Government	10007452	(1.0)
	Seattle Police Department	Manager 2, General Government	10007452	1.0
	Seattle Department of Human Resources	Personnel Specialist	10007453	(1.0)
	Seattle Police Department	Personnel Specialist	10007453	1.0
	Seattle Department of Human Resources	Personnel Specialist	10007454	(1.0)
	Seattle Police Department	Personnel Specialist	10007454	1.0

12           The Chief of Police is authorized to fill any of the positions subject to Seattle Municipal  
13 Code Title 4, the City’s Personnel Rules, and applicable employment laws.

14  
15           Section 4. It is the City’s policy that the public safety civil service exam required for  
16 entry level and lateral Police Officer positions in the Seattle Police Department shall be offered  
17 continuously online to be taken at the applicant’s discretion, and also offered at approved testing

1 centers, provided that any such exam is consistent with the goals and requirements of the  
2 Consent Decree and the City’s Accountability Ordinance (Ordinance 125315).

3 Section ((4)) 5. Positions transferred in Section 3 of this ordinance shall be solely  
4 dedicated to recruiting new sworn employees and retaining existing sworn employees for the  
5 Seattle Police Department (SPD). Salary and benefits for eight months of funding for 1.0 full-  
6 time employee (FTE) Manager 2, General Government, and 2.0 FTE Personnel Specialist are  
7 transferred from SDHR to SPD in Section 7 of this ordinance.

8 Section ((5)) 6. The following new position is created in the Seattle Department of  
9 Human Resources:

<b>Department</b>	<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Position Status</b>	<b>Number</b>
Seattle Department of Human Resources	Personnel Analyst, Sr	Full-time	1.0

10 The Director of the Department of Human Resources may fill this position subject to  
11 Seattle Municipal Code Title 4, the City’s Personnel Rules, and applicable employment laws.

12 Section ((6)) 7. The position created in Section 5 of this ordinance shall assist Public  
13 Safety Civil Service Commission staff as they endeavor to increase ~~((entry and lateral police  
14 register))~~ publication of the open-graded register for Police Officer from seven times a year to  
15 every two weeks (26 times a year), and to endeavor to transition to a continuous examination  
16 process for Entry and Lateral Police officers. The position will also assist Commission staff as  
17 they endeavor to do the following as it relates to the Seattle Police Department:

18 A. Pre-exam. Personally contacting and supporting each candidate by acknowledging  
19 their application, offering support with exam scheduling, addressing equipment challenges,  
20 providing exam reminders, assisting with test preparation and facilitating contact with SPD  
21 recruiters.

1 B. Post-exam. Personally contacting and supporting each candidate who passes the exam  
2 with notification of next steps and facilitating contact with SPD recruiters, and contacting  
3 candidates who do not pass the exam to encourage re-application,

4 Section ((7)) 8. The appropriations for the following items in the 2024 Budget are  
5 modified as follows:

Item	Department	Fund	Budget Summary Level	Amount
5.1	Seattle Police Department	General Fund (00100)	Leadership and Administration (00100-BO- SP-P1600)	\$310,000
	Seattle Human Resources Department	General Fund (00100)	HR Services (00100-BO-HR- N6000)	(\$310,000)
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$0</b>

6 Section ((8)) 9. Section 4.08.070 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by  
7 Ordinance 125315, is amended as follows:

8 **4.08.070 Powers and duties of Commission**

9 The Commission shall:

10 \* \* \*

11 C. With the support of the Seattle Human Resources Director pursuant to Section  
12 4.04.040, prepare and administer examinations, which shall be graded and open to all who meet  
13 appropriate job-related qualifications; provided that the Commission may, by rule, designate  
14 other methods of examination based on merit when in the Commission's judgment graded  
15 examination is not practicable. Such examinations may include tests of physical fitness and/or  
16 manual skill. The Commission may designate a suitable number of persons to be examiners to  
17 conduct such examinations. A Commissioner may act as examiner.

18 When preparing or administering exams for entry level police officer candidates, the  
19 Commission should seek to use a public safety testing service ~~((that is also used by law  
20 enforcement agencies operating in King County, and geographically contiguous counties, and~~



1 ~~that provides greater access to candidates who wish to make multiple applications with such~~  
2 ~~local law enforcement agencies))~~ that conforms to the extent possible to all City of Seattle  
3 policies that address recruiting, hiring, and retention; provided that any such exam is consistent  
4 with the goals and requirements of the Consent Decree ((~~or~~)) and the City's Accountability  
5 Ordinance (Ordinance 125315).

6 D. With the support of the Seattle Human Resources Director, examinations for all  
7 classes shall be timely prepared and administered by the Commission so as to provide at all times  
8 current registers for all classifications. The Commission is encouraged to keep ((~~entry level~~  
9 ~~police officer position registers~~)) the open-graded register for Police Officer current by  
10 endeavoring to provide an updated register every two weeks if there are police officer vacancies.  
11 Eligible registers shall remain in effect for a time determined by the Commission; provided, that  
12 no eligible register shall remain in effect for more than two years.

13 E. With the support of the Seattle Human Resources Director, provide notice of the time,  
14 place and general scope of every examination not less than ten days preceding such examination,  
15 and for promotional exams by posting in the Commission office and in Police and Fire  
16 Department offices for not less than 90 days, and by other notice deemed reasonable or necessary  
17 by the Commission.

18 F. Endeavor to personally contact ((~~entry level and lateral exam~~)) police officer  
19 applicants for the Seattle Police Department within two business days of application submittal to  
20 offer assistance and support for completing the exam. Commission staff shall also endeavor to  
21 personally contact, within two business days of their completion of the exam, candidates who  
22 have successfully completed the exam, to discuss next steps and answer questions. The goal of  
23 the personal contacts should be to improve the candidate experience and to facilitate contact with

1 Seattle Police Department recruiters, so that Seattle Police Department recruitment personnel  
2 may contact candidates in a manner that is consistent, equitable and that conforms with  
3 employment law.

4 G.

5 1. With the support of the Seattle Human Resources Director, prepare a register  
6 for each class of positions in this system from the returns or reports of the examiners of the  
7 persons whose standing upon examination for such class is not less than the minimum  
8 established by the Commission. Persons, when graded, shall take rank upon the register as  
9 candidates in the order of their relative excellence as determined by competitive examination.

10 a. Veteran's preference. Veteran's preference in examination and  
11 appointment shall be granted as required by federal and state law including RCW 41.04.010;  
12 provided, a person shall be entitled to use such preference only once to successfully attain an  
13 appointment or promotion to a position.

14 b. Language preference. An applicant for a Seattle Police Department  
15 (SPD) position deemed fluent in a language other than English may be entitled to have 10  
16 percent credit added to the applicant's examination score for initial hiring or promotion. To  
17 receive such credit on the examination score, the applicant's fluency will be verified by the  
18 hiring authority based on a measure to be established by the Department.

19 c. Community service/work experience preference. An applicant for an  
20 SPD position who has completed service in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, or other verified  
21 equivalent work experience or community service of two years or more, may be entitled to have  
22 10 percent credit added to the examination score. An applicant seeking credit for service in the  
23 Peace Corps must present a Peace Corps Description of Service (DOS) certifying completion of

1 their service in the Peace Corps. To receive such credit on the examination score, an applicant's  
2 equivalent work experience or community service will be assessed by the hiring authority based  
3 on standards to be established by the SPD. For example, equivalent work experience or  
4 community service might include professional or volunteer experience providing domestic  
5 violence counseling, mental health care, or social services. The equivalent work experience or  
6 community service must be confirmed through regular SPD background verification processes.

7           2. No applicant for an SPD position may receive more than a single 10 percent  
8 credit, which may be either for veteran's preference, language preference, or community  
9 service/work experience preference.

10           H. When an entry level position is to be filled, certify to the appointing authority the  
11 names of candidates in the top 25 percent of the eligible register or the top six candidates,  
12 whichever number is larger. When a vacant position other than entry level is to be filled, certify  
13 to the appointing authority to names of the top five candidates. In either circumstance, where  
14 more than one position in a class is to be filled, certify one additional name of the person  
15 standing next highest on the register for each additional position. The appointing authority shall  
16 fill such positions by appointment only from the persons certified by the Commission.

17           I. If there are no registers for a class, authorize temporary, provisional appointment to the  
18 vacant position. A provisional appointment shall not continue for a period longer than four  
19 months, and no person shall receive more than one (1) provisional appointment or serve more  
20 than four months as provisional appointee in any 12 month period.

21           J. Make investigations concerning the enforcement and effect of this chapter and the rules  
22 prescribed hereunder; and inspect all offices, places, positions and employments affected by this  
23 chapter and ascertain whether this chapter and all such rules are being obeyed. Such

1 investigations may be made by the Commission, or by any Commissioner or agent designated by  
2 the Commission for that purpose. Like investigation may be made on written petition of a person  
3 duly verified stating that irregularities or abuses exist, setting forth in concise language the  
4 necessity and grounds for such investigation. In the course of such investigation, the  
5 Commission shall have the power to administer oaths, subpoena and require the attendance of  
6 witnesses and the production of books and papers relevant to such investigation. Alternatively,  
7 investigation or hearing may be conducted by a delegated agent of the Commission, whose  
8 investigation may be aided by subpoenas issued by the Commission.

9 K. To hear and determine appeals or complaints respecting the administration of this  
10 chapter.

11 L. With the support of the Seattle Human Resources Director, maintain a roster of  
12 employees of this system, and other records as may be necessary for proper administration of this  
13 chapter, and provide all necessary records to the Seattle Human Resources Director for inclusion  
14 in the City's personnel management information records system.

15 M. Recommend from time to time such City legislation as the Commission may deem  
16 advisable for the betterment of this system and/or its administration.

17 N. Comply with the procedures regarding the promotions of police officers and sergeants  
18 set forth in the effective collective bargaining agreement between the City and the exclusive  
19 bargaining agent of such employees, as approved by ordinance, to the extent such procedures are  
20 inconsistent with those set forth herein.

21 O. Jointly with the Civil Service Commission, supervise the Executive Director.

22 \* \* \*

1           Section ~~((9))~~ 10. The City acknowledges that some aspects of this ordinance may be  
2 subject to bargaining with its union partners and the City intends to do so in good faith.

3           Section ~~((40))~~ 11. Any action consistent with the authority of Sections 3 through 10 of  
4 this ordinance taken prior to its effective date is ratified and confirmed.

5           Section ~~((44))~~ 12. The provisions of this ordinance are declared to be separate and  
6 severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, subsection, or  
7 portion of this ordinance, or the invalidity of its application to any person or circumstance, does  
8 not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance or the validity of its application to other  
9 persons or circumstances.

10

1 Section ((12)) 13. This ordinance shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code  
2 Sections 1.04.020 and 1.04.070.

3 Passed by the City Council the 21st day of May, 2024,  
4 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 21st day of  
5 May, 2024.

6 


7 President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

Approved /  returned unsigned /  vetoed this 29th day of May, 2024.

8 

9 Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

10 Filed by me this 29th day of May, 2024.

11 

12 Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

13 (Seal)

14 Attachments: