

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE 127112

COUNCIL BILL 120862

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.

WHEREAS, the Seattle Police Department strives to maintain a highly qualified, diverse, and professional police service to meet the complex public safety demands of Seattle neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Police Department has successfully increased the hiring of people of color from 22 percent in 2014 to 64 percent in 2024 year-to-date through the end of July; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle and the Seattle Police Department have recognized the need to urgently hire additional officers to meet minimum staffing levels and community expectations; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Police Department faces increased competition for qualified applicants for the position of police officer due, in part, to regional and national hiring incentives at law enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, Seattle police response times to 9-1-1 Priority 1 dispatches have a median measure of 7.8 minutes in the first two quarters of 2024, longer than the desired seven minutes; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 32050, adopted in 2022, established the intent of the Council to pass legislation allowing the Seattle Police Department's development of a staffing incentives

1 program to enhance its provision of an adequate number of fully trained, deployable
2 officers to prevent, respond to, and investigate crime in Seattle; and

3 WHEREAS, Ordinance 126654, adopted in 2022, authorized the creation of a hiring incentives
4 pilot program in the Seattle Police Department; and

5 WHEREAS, Ordinance 127026, adopted in 2024, created a dedicated Recruitment and Retention
6 Program in the Seattle Police Department responsible for increasing the number of sworn
7 officers; and

8 WHEREAS, the number of Seattle police officers fully trained and available for deployment was
9 930 at the end of July 2024, among the lowest numbers since at least 1991, the first year
10 the number of “in-service” officers was reported; and

11 WHEREAS, the City conducted a mandatory Hiring, Recruitment, and Retention Survey to all
12 new recruits during the Before the Badge program, which examined potential reasons for
13 interest in police work and joining SPD, and from November 2022 through October
14 2023, the City received 60 non-duplicated responses, and all but two hires selected
15 incentive pay as having some level of importance in their decision to become a police
16 officer. Of these respondents, 23 percent ranked incentive pay first or second in
17 importance, 41 percent ranked it as third, and 36 percent ranked it as fourth or fifth; and

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

1 WHEREAS, the City of Seattle's goal is to increase the number of Seattle police officers who are
2 fully trained and deployable to 1,450; and

3 WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council wish to extend the hiring incentives program to bolster the
4 number of officers in Seattle; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

6 Section 1. Section 6 of Ordinance 126654 is amended as follows:

7 Section 6. ~~((From July 13, 2022, to December 31, 2024, t))~~The Seattle Police
8 Department may offer certain police officer candidates, including new recruit((s))
9 candidates, ((and)) new lateral officer((s)) candidates, and former officers reinstated
10 under Rule 10.03 of the Public Safety Civil Service Commission Rules of Practice and
11 Procedure, a hiring incentive to be paid after beginning or restarting employment with
12 The City of Seattle. ~~((Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC) Rule 10.03~~
13 ~~describes the process by which former officers may request and receive reinstatement to a~~
14 ~~sworn SPD position with the approval of the Chief of Police and the Executive Director~~
15 ~~of the PSCSC, and officers so appointed are neither new recruits nor new lateral~~
16 ~~officers)). The Council recognizes that lateral officers and former officers who are
17 reinstated or re((-)hired by SPD require minimal training and can immediately bolster
18 the department's 9-1-1 response ability or provision of investigative services. The
19 Council also recognizes that the Seattle Police Officers Guild collective bargaining
20 agreement provides that former officers who leave SPD and are re((-)hired in the same
21 classification within the next two years return to their previous salary step and benefit
22 accrual rates ~~((and that this return constitutes an economic benefit))~~. This provision in the
23 collective bargaining agreement provides an economic benefit to officers who are rehired~~

1 within two years of their departure from SPD. For these reasons, eligibility for the hiring
2 incentive shall be extended to former officers who are reinstated or rehired to SPD after
3 two years or more or who do not otherwise receive the economic benefit of a return to
4 their previous salary step and benefit accrual rates.

5 A. Incentives provided to lateral police officer hires and to officers who are
6 reinstated or rehired to SPD after two years or more shall be paid one incentive per
7 employee, ~~((and be based on market demand,))~~ which shall not exceed \$~~((30,000))~~50,000
8 per hire. Incentives paid to new recruit hires shall be one-time per employee, ~~((and be~~
9 ~~based on market demand))~~ not to exceed \$7,500 per hire. If an employee who has
10 received this incentive leaves the department, that person may not receive an incentive to
11 return.

12 B. Half of the hiring incentive will be paid in the first paycheck and the second
13 half upon completion of any probationary period ~~((established))~~ required by the Public
14 Safety Civil Service Rules.

15 C. Hiring incentives paid to new recruits, lateral transfers, and reinstated or
16 rehired officers who leave Seattle Police Department employment before five years of
17 completed services must be paid back to the City on a pro rata basis as calculated against
18 the five-year commitment.

19 D. Current City employees, with the exception of recruiters in the Seattle
20 Department of Human Resources, recruiters in the Seattle Police Department, and
21 employees of the Public Safety Civil Service Commission, who ~~((make a referral of))~~
22 refer to the City a lateral hire or new recruit hire are eligible to receive a referral incentive

1 of up to \$1,000, payable when the applicant graduates from the state police academy and
2 begins police officer field training with SPD.

3 E. Beginning October 1, 2022, and occurring every three months thereafter for the
4 duration of this program, the Seattle Police Department will provide a quarterly report to
5 the Mayor and City Council on the use of hiring incentives. The report shall include the
6 number and amount of new, lateral, and reinstated or rehired incentives paid as well as
7 the number and amount of new and lateral incentives pending completion of the
8 requirements of subsection 6.B of this ordinance. ~~((The Seattle Police Department and the
9 City Budget Office Innovation and Performance Team shall also conduct an evaluation of
10 the city's use of hiring incentives authorized in subsection 6.A of this ordinance that shall
11 include, but not be limited to, the following information:~~

12 ~~1. How the incentive compares with similar incentives offered by other
13 local and state law enforcement agencies;~~

14 ~~2. Responses to survey questions that specifically identify:~~

15 ~~a. Whether the hiring incentive contributed to a new recruit's
16 decision to work in policing versus another profession;~~

17 ~~b. Whether the incentive resulted in a new recruit's or lateral
18 officer's decision to work for the Seattle Police Department versus another local or state
19 law enforcement agency;~~

20 ~~c. How the recruit or lateral officer learned about the hiring
21 incentive; and~~

1 ~~d. Whether the incentive was effective than other recruitment~~
2 ~~tactics, such as being contacted by a member of the Seattle Police Department or meeting~~
3 ~~Department representatives at a career fair or other event;~~

4 ~~3. A demographic and race and social justice analysis of the information~~
5 ~~collected pursuant to subsection E; and~~

6 ~~4. An analysis of costs and benefits of the City's use of hiring incentives~~
7 ~~and a recommendation about whether the City should continue the use of incentives as an~~
8 ~~ongoing recruitment strategy.~~

9 ~~The Seattle Police Department shall begin collecting data required for the~~
10 ~~evaluation at the same time that it begins providing the hiring incentives authorized in~~
11 ~~subsection 6.A of this ordinance and will endeavor to analyze and disclose one full year~~
12 ~~of data in the evaluation. The evaluation shall be transmitted to the City Clerk; the Chair~~
13 ~~of the Public Safety and Human Services Committee or successor committee, and the~~
14 ~~Central Staff Director no later than 15 months after the Department begins to offer the~~
15 ~~hiring incentives.))~~

1 Section 2. 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 8th day of October, 2024,
4 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 8th day of
5 October, 2024.

6 

7 President _____ of the City Council

Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this 11th day of October, 2024.

8 

9 Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

10 Filed by me this 11th day of October, 2024.

11 

12 Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

13 (Seal)