



Legislation Text

---

File #: CB 120766, Version: 1

---

**CITY OF SEATTLE**

**ORDINANCE \_\_\_\_\_**

**COUNCIL BILL \_\_\_\_\_**

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; 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

WHEREAS, the Council has since 2021 fully funded SPD's recruitment plans and supports the department's

efforts to add by the end of the year a net of 15 new officers, representing a combination of 120 new hires and 105 separations; and

WHEREAS, the Council passed in May 2022 Resolution 32050 calling for the establishment of a hiring

incentive program to provide bonuses for entry level and lateral police officer hires, funded by salary and benefits savings from vacant SPD positions to better compete against regional jurisdictions offering the same; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the PSCSC is statutorily responsible civil service examinations for sworn positions in the public safety civil service system, including entry level and lateral police officer positions, creation of an eligibility register and the certification of names of persons who pass civil service examinations; and

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

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

and

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

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

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

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

Section 1. There is created in the Seattle Police Department (SPD) a Recruitment and Retention Program to be staffed by City personnel who are responsible for increasing the number of sworn officers in SPD. The program shall be led by the Manager 2, General Government position, transferred in Section 3 of this ordinance. The Manager 2 position shall have the responsibility for developing and implementing recruitment strategies, in consultation with contracted marketing or media consultants, and ensuring that a personal contact is made available to all police officer applicants for the public safety test. The Manager 2 position shall be committed to continuous improvement and shall ensure that recruitment strategies reflect best practices both nationwide and regionally.

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

A. Metrics on the number of personal contacts made by civilians or sworn staff to candidates who have

registered for or completed a public safety exam. The data should be broken down by the type of contact made, disaggregating contacts made for test reminders or notification of a passing exam score from those that result in personal contact with an SPD recruiter.

B. Seattle’s measures on industry standards such as the exam pass rate, the number of applicants who sit for an exam, the entry applications per day, and the apply-to-eligible rate, and a measure of applicants who end up on the Register. Seattle’s rates on these standards shall be displayed alongside similar rates for competing law enforcement organizations both regionally and nationally.

C. Information and metrics on new and innovative programs that are designed to increase diversity within the department, to include an increase in female candidates, consistent with SPD’s “30 by 30” campaign.

D. Pre-exam and post-exam survey data that is used guiding marketing campaigns, ensure that more candidates sit for the exam, and provide an opportunity for continuous improvement on messaging and outreach strategies.

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

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

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

Item	Department	Position Title	Position Numbers	Number
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
--	---------------------------	----------------------	----------	-----

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

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

Section 5. The following new position is created in the Seattle Department of Human Resources:

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

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

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

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

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

Section 7. The appropriations for the following items in the 2024 Budget are 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>

Section 8. Section 4.08.070 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 125315, is amended as follows:

**4.08.070 Powers and duties of Commission**

The Commission shall:

\* \* \*

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

When preparing or administering exams for entry level police officer candidates, the Commission should seek to use a public safety testing service that is also used by law enforcement agencies operating in King County, and geographically contiguous counties, and that provides greater access to candidates who wish to make multiple applications with such local law enforcement agencies; provided that any such exam is consistent with the goals of the Consent Decree or the City's Accountability Ordinance (Ordinance 125315).

D. With the support of the Seattle Human Resources Director, examinations for all classes shall be timely prepared and administered by the Commission so as to provide at all times current registers for all

classifications. The Commission is encouraged to keep entry level police officer position registers current by endeavoring to provide an updated register every two weeks. Eligible registers shall remain in effect for a time determined by the Commission; provided, that no eligible register shall remain in effect for more than two years.

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

F. Endeavor to personally contact entry level and lateral exam police officer applicants for the Seattle Police Department within two business days of application submittal to offer assistance and support for completing the exam. Commission staff also endeavor to personally contact, within two business days of their completion of the exam, candidates who have successfully completed the exam, to discuss next steps and answer questions. The goal of the personal contacts should be to improve the candidate experience and to facilitate contact with Seattle Police Department recruiters, so that Seattle Police Department recruitment personnel may contact candidates in a manner that is consistent, equitable and that conforms with employment law.

((F)) G.

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

a. Veteran's preference. Veteran's preference in examination and appointment shall be granted as required by federal and state law including RCW 41.04.010; provided, a person shall be entitled to

use such preference only once to successfully attain an appointment or promotion to a position.

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

c. Community service/work experience preference. An applicant for an SPD position who has completed service in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, or other verified equivalent work experience or community service of two years or more, may be entitled to have 10 percent credit added to the examination score. An applicant seeking credit for service in the Peace Corps must present a Peace Corps Description of Service (DOS) certifying completion of their service in the Peace Corps. To receive such credit on ~~((his or her))~~ the examination score, an applicant's equivalent work experience or community service will be assessed by the hiring authority based on standards to be established by the SPD. For example, equivalent work experience or community service might include professional or volunteer experience providing domestic violence counseling, mental health care, or social services. The equivalent work experience or community service must be confirmed through regular SPD background verification processes.

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

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

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

((I)) J. Make investigations concerning the enforcement and effect of this chapter and the rules prescribed hereunder; and inspect all offices, places, positions and employments affected by this chapter and ascertain whether this chapter and all such rules are being obeyed. Such investigations may be made by the Commission, or by any Commissioner or agent designated by the Commission for that purpose. Like investigation may be made on written petition of a person duly verified stating that irregularities or abuses exist, setting forth in concise language the necessity and grounds for such investigation. In the course of such investigation, the Commission shall have the power to administer oaths, subpoena and require the attendance of witnesses and the production of books and papers relevant to such investigation. Alternatively, investigation or hearing may be conducted by a delegated agent of the Commission, whose investigation may be aided by subpoenas issued by the Commission.

((J)) K. To hear and determine appeals or complaints respecting the administration of this chapter.

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

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

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

~~(N)~~ O. Jointly with the Civil Service Commission, supervise the Executive Director.

\* \* \*

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

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

Section 11. The provisions of this ordinance are declared to be separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, subsection, or portion of this ordinance, or the invalidity of its application to any person or circumstance, does not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances.

Section 12. This ordinance shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Sections 1.04.020 and 1.04.070.

Passed by the City Council the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

---

Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Filed by me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

---

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

(Seal)

Attachments: