



# City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2023**

**FROM: HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: REVISIONS TO THE MASTER FRINGE BENEFITS AND SALARY PLAN TO IMPLEMENT A HIRING INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR THE POLICE OFFICER AND PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCHER II LATERAL CLASSIFICATIONS; REVISE SECTION 24 RELOCATION ALLOWANCE TO INCLUDE MANAGEMENT AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS**

**ISSUE:**

Approve revisions to the Citywide Master Fringe Benefits and Salary Plan to implement a hiring incentive program for the Police Officer and Public Safety Dispatcher II Lateral classifications; revise Section 24, Relocation allowance, to include Management and Senior Management classifications in addition to Executive classifications.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council

1. Approve the Hiring Incentive Program for the Police Officer and Public Safety Dispatcher II Lateral classifications;
2. Approve the revisions to the Relocation allowance provision to include Management and Senior Management classifications; and
3. Adopt the attached Resolution amending the Master Fringe Benefits and Salary Plan to implement a hiring incentive program for the Police Officer and Public Safety Dispatcher II Lateral classifications; revise Section 24, Relocation allowance, to include Management and Senior Management classifications in addition to Executive classifications.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Hiring Incentive Program**

The Riverside Police Department (RPD), like many surrounding law enforcement agencies, has been experiencing challenges in recruitment and retention of qualified candidates to fill vacancies in the Police Officer and Public Safety Dispatcher classifications. With a continued reduction in number of interested and qualified applicants, it has become more challenging to

recruit and retain qualified personnel due to the high level of competition among local agencies for those positions. Recently enacted legislation in the State of California that will become effective in 2025 is likely to exacerbate these challenges by creating additional requirements for entry-level Officers, and significantly extending the training period required before they can join the ranks in the patrol division. Due to the stringent and necessary pre-employment recruitment requirements for law enforcement personnel, which include a written and physical agility test, oral interview, extensive background check, polygraph, and psychological and medical screening process, the percentage of applicants that receive an employment offer is on average about 1% of the initial group of applicants.

Several external factors provide additional challenges for the recruitment and retention of Police Officers and Public Safety Dispatchers. Qualified candidates who apply and enter the recruitment process with the City of Riverside are almost always processing with other local agencies simultaneously and may elect to take another agency's job offer instead. Even after the successful recruitment and training of a new Officer or Dispatcher, many candidates are still exploring other opportunities during their first few years on the job. The challenges in attracting qualified recruits also apply to retaining them. Prospective and newer employees often shop around to look for the best opportunity, with factors such as compensation, retirement, fringe benefits, location, cost of living, and working conditions.

Some of those factors, such as location and cost of living, are beyond the City's control. While the Riverside Police Department enjoys a reputation as a premier law enforcement agency with excellent working conditions, RPD is still in competition with other agencies over factors such as compensation and benefits. Many local agencies have implemented hiring incentives to recruit and retain qualified employees. Many of those agencies have discovered that it is far more cost-effective to attract a fully trained employee away from another agency than to recruit and train a new employee.

Other California law-enforcement agencies have begun to capitalize on opportunities to recruit trained lateral officers and dispatchers by offering incentives to attract them away from other agencies. While the City of Riverside already receives some applications from lateral officers and dispatchers, the background process eliminates many from consideration because they are not ideal candidates. While the City currently receives lateral applications solely due to our reputation in the profession, offering a hiring incentive program could attract far more qualified pool of lateral candidate if the City were competitive with other agencies' incentives. Below are a several examples of Southern California agencies currently offering hiring incentives for Lateral Police Officers:

- City of Colton - \$15,000
- City of San Diego - \$15,000 with a referral bonus of up to \$4,000
- City of Palm Springs - \$30,000
- City of Oceanside - \$15,000 plus \$5,000 for residents and \$2,000 for moving expenses
- City of Long Beach - \$6,000
- City of Pasadena - \$8,000
- City of Pomona - \$25,000

Note: The program amounts are provided in multiple installments at the completion of training and probationary periods. In addition, some agencies are also offering comparable incentives for lateral dispatchers.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Human Resources Department, in collaboration with the Riverside Police Department is proposing a Hiring Incentive Program for Lateral Police Officers and Public Safety Dispatchers. The goal is to recruit fully trained and qualified employees to join the City of Riverside. Generally, tenured employees are often hesitant to do so without a significant incentive. Tenured employees who lateral to another agency are essentially starting over, forfeiting professional seniority, employment stability, and accumulated leave banks. The program is presented for consideration and approval by City Council to authorize the City Manager or designee to modify, suspend, or terminate the program partially or in its entirety at any time should such incentives no longer be required, subject to the availability of funds.

The program will consist of the following hiring incentives that will be applied specifically to newly-hired lateral employees, hired in the Police Officer (job code 2240) and Public Safety Dispatcher II (job codes 2493 and 2496) positions designated as "Difficult to Recruit," consistent with the program objectives and eligibility criteria outlined in the hiring incentive document. The comprehensive hiring incentive document can be found in Exhibit A.

- \$5,000 upon completion of the Training Program; and an additional
- \$5,000 upon successful completion of the probationary period with a minimum "meets standards" rating; and
- Newly hired Lateral Police Officers and Lateral Public Safety Dispatchers shall receive an initial frontload of Forty (40) vacation hours added to their vacation leave bank upon hire. The vacation hours may be utilized at any time provided it is approved by the department; hours have no expiration date.
- Public Safety Dispatchers who complete two years of consecutive employment with the City of Riverside will receive \$2,500. The two-year period will commence upon completion of probation by newly-hired dispatchers. The two-year period for existing dispatchers, currently eligible for the retention bonus, will continue based upon their existing eligibility date.
- Finder's Fee - \$1,000 will be paid to a City of Riverside employee who refer a candidate not currently employed by the City for employment into an eligible classification as outlined in the hiring incentive document. Incentive payments for such referrals will be made only after the candidate is hired and successfully completes the probationary period with a minimum of a "meets standards" evaluation.

A hiring incentive program, phased in over the initial years of employment, would not only help to recruit qualified and trained lateral employees to join the City of Riverside, but it would also encourage them to remain with the City. It has been the experience of the Police Department that employees are less likely to leave for a better opportunity after five years of employment. A five-year employee has vested in the pension system, has acquired significant seniority (which affects scheduling and assignment opportunities), and has accumulated paid leave banks. Additionally, an initial grant of paid leave is important to lateral employees who may have planned vacations, family commitments, or the responsibility of caring for a loved one. The

retention bonus for Public Safety dispatchers has been in place for existing dispatchers and the Police Department wants to continue to offer this for newly hired dispatchers as the attrition rate is far greater than that of police officer. Over half of the dispatch trainees will not successfully complete the rigorous training program, and the success rates are far higher for qualified, trained lateral dispatchers.

The funding of the hiring incentive program has been formally approved and allocated under Measure Z, which is currently \$200,000 annually for police and dispatcher recruitment and retention purposes. Currently, there is approximately \$321,000 in Measure Z recruitment funding available through the end of the current Fiscal Year. Through this program, the City will recruit qualified, trained lateral personnel from other agencies, realize cost-savings, and accelerate the filling of vacancies. This is in addition to boosting retention rates by disincentivizing employees who may be tempted in the first years of employment to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

### Relocation Allowance

The Human Resources Department recommends a revision to Section 24, Relocation Allowance, which allows for an interest-free loan of up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for the moving, relocation, and temporary housing expenses incurred by candidates; to include candidates hired in the Management and Senior Management groups, in addition to the Executive groups. Including these two managerial groups would assist the City in its efforts to attract and retain highly qualified candidates in Management and Senior Management positions that may be residing out-of-state and would be incentivized to join the City of Riverside if this allowance was offered. As outlined in the existing policy, should the management employee opt to terminate their employment agreement with the City within two years of commencement of their employment, the employee shall repay the loan in full within sixty (60) days of termination of their employment.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This action contributes to **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government**, and **Goal 5.1: Attract, develop, engage and retain a diverse and highly skilled workforce across the entire City organization.**

This project aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – Offering a hiring incentive program allows the city to be competitive and align with comparable offerings from neighboring cities to attract the appropriate workforce skillset to efficiently maintain City services.
2. **Equity** – The program promotes equity by establishing specific eligibility guidelines outlined in the Hiring Incentive Program document.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Utilization of approved Measure Z funding for recruitment and retention purposes ensures the appropriate application of funds as intended to provide staffing for public safety purposes.

4. **Innovation** – The hiring incentive program has been designed to include various components, such as a phased approach, granting vacation leave, retention bonus, and finder's fees, as ways to creatively attract and retain employees.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The program is intended to attract and retain a diverse range of highly skilled employees who can provide support in public safety and meet the changing needs of the community while enhancing the City's workforce.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Total estimated fiscal impact through the end of the fiscal year is \$321,000. Funds are budgeted and available in Measure Z recruitment funding. Measure Z allocates \$200,000 annually for police and dispatcher recruitment and retention purposes.

Prepared by: Rene Goldman, Human Resources Director  
Certified as to  
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Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Resolution Amending the Fringe Benefits and Salary Plan
2. Exhibit A – Hiring Incentive Program
3. Fringe Benefits and Salary Plan