



TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: Kari Louie, Interim Director, Human Resources
Dylan Carlson, Labor Relations Division Manager
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Pay and Compensation Ordinance – September 9, 2025
DATE: August 21, 2025

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

An ordinance authorizing the provision of recruitment incentives for lateral police officers to adapt to current challenges with hiring, and declaring an emergency, making this ordinance effective upon passage.

BACKGROUND:

The Tacoma Police Department (TPD) continues to experience a staffing shortfall with 28 vacancies anticipated by the end of September 2025. As a result, the department has been compelled to rely heavily on overtime expenditures simply to meet essential service levels. This approach places a strain on the wellbeing of our officers and on our ability to consistently deliver the level of service our community expects and deserves. Additionally, as TPD attempts to increase our rate of hiring, law enforcement agencies across the state are competing for a shrinking pool of experienced officers.

The Tacoma Police Department, in consultation with the Human Resources Director, is recommending an approach to the short staffing issue – a lateral incentive program designed to quickly hire and deploy experienced officers already serving within the state of Washington. Instead of continuing to spend overtime dollars just to provide basic law enforcement coverage, we have an opportunity to invest in a more stable, long-term staffing solution. Many mid-career professionals are seeking better alignment between workplace culture and personal sustainability—creating a unique opportunity to attract talent already embedded in our local ecosystem. TPD believes this approach represents a smarter, more strategic way to rebuild capacity – without sacrificing readiness, standards, or community trust.

The ordinance would provide authorization for the provision of a recruitment incentive structure for up to 20 lateral police officers that would include a \$50,000 hiring bonus distributed over three years as follows: \$25,000 upon date of hire; \$12,500 upon completion of a 12-month probationary period; and \$12,500 one year after the completion of the probationary period. In addition, lateral officers would be eligible for up to 120 hours of floating holiday leave; 40 hours upon date of hire in 2025, and 80 hours for 2026. Officers must compete TPD's rigorous recruitment process and meet high hiring standards. The City would reserve the right to end the lateral incentive program at any time, and the program would be continually monitored and reevaluated based on the outcomes of the program.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

Negotiations were completed with the Tacoma Police Union, Local 6, IUPA, Commissioned Unit, who represents employees in the classification of Police Officer.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Economy/Workforce: Moderate Opportunity

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

This legislation supports the responsible and sustainable management of City funds.

ALTERNATIVES:



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

The City Council could approve a lower dollar figure for the incentives; however, staff does not believe we would meet the desired goals of recruiting officers from other jurisdictions. Additionally, City Council could not adopt any incentives.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Authorization from the City Council by ordinance is required to provide for the recruitment incentives.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal impact information is provided by the Budget Office. Department Directors are responsible for adhering to their overall levels of appropriation.

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget? Yes

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation? No

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact? YES

Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts? No

ATTACHMENTS:

Fiscal Impact Memorandum