



STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Keira A. Vink, Human Resources and Administrative Services Director

PREPARER: Keira A. Vink, Human Resources and Administrative Services Director

DATE: June 4, 2025

TITLE: **Approve a Revised Hiring and Recruitment Incentive Program Administrative Policy to Include Out of State Lateral Police Officers and the Classifications of Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Police Chief.**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Council approve a revised Hiring and Recruitment Incentive Program Administrative Policy, allowing out of state lateral police officers and the classifications of Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Police Chief to be eligible for the lateral Police Officer hiring incentive.

INTRODUCTION:

Arcata Police Department needs a continuous infusion of sworn personnel to maintain patrol and specialty positions, which include police officers assigned to Valley West, Downtown, Parks, Forests, and the Marsh; and to provide the necessary backfill for retirements, promotions, and resignations. Like many Public Safety Departments throughout the state and nationwide, the Arcata Police Department (APD) has a shortage of sworn police officers.

Hiring bonus programs have become part of the current market conditions for Police Departments. The current cost of supporting a Police Cadet Candidate through the Academy and field training is estimated at \$65,000. The City currently offers a \$50,000 hiring bonus for lateral police officers. The overall cost of paying a \$50,000 hiring bonus versus sponsoring a Police Cadet is a savings of at least \$15,000 to the City and provides independently working officers much sooner for the community. The City would like to expand the opportunity to out of state qualifying laterals and include the classifications of Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Chief of Police.

BACKGROUND:

Since 2023, the Hiring and Recruitment Incentive Program has assisted the Arcata Police Department in recruiting six (6) lateral Police Officers which have been vital to maintaining the core service of public safety to the community on a 24/7 basis.

DISCUSSION:

Each State has their own set of standards and training for peace officers which all officers must meet to work as a law enforcement officer in that State. Many of the requirements mirror or are

substantially similar to the California Peace Officer's Standards and Training (POST) requirements for sworn peace officers. Although the requirements in each State may vary, an officer who is experienced working in another State as a peace officer has many transferable skills, and when they pass the California POST Requalification Course or possess a California Post Basic Course Waiver, can very quickly work autonomously as a sworn officer.

With the upcoming key retirements at the Arcata Police Department, there will be limited experienced officers to take available positions to lead the department. Due to this experience shortage, the City would like to expand the lateral police hiring incentive to the classifications of Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Police Chief in order to garner a wider candidate pool. The City will continue to support, train, and grow internal candidates to make them ready for current and future promotional opportunities.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:

Salary savings for vacant positions in the Police Department will continue to be used to fund the bonuses.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

Motion to approve a revised Hiring and Recruitment Incentive Program Administrative Policy, allowing out of state lateral police officers and the classifications of Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Police Chief to be eligible for the lateral Police Officer hiring incentive. Consent Calendar vote.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Hiring and Recruitment Incentive Administrative Policy.