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City Council Approves SDPD Lateral and Recruitment Incentives

PROGRAM OFFERS BONUSES FOR TRANSFERS FROM OTHER AGENCIES AND SDPD OFFICERS WHO MAKE REFERRALS

SAN DIEGO – Looking to recruit new officers to join the San Diego Police Department (SDPD), today the City Council approved the Lateral and Recruitment Incentive Programs, which offers bonuses for lateral transfers from other agencies, as well as current SDPD officers who refer individuals to join the department.

“My administration and this City Council recognize the importance of a fully staffed Police Department to prevent and address crime, and this incentive program will help us to recruit and retain experienced officers,” Mayor Todd Gloria said. “It’s part of a larger package of programs to ensure San Diego has the best-trained, most committed officers who will help us remain one of the nation’s safest big cities.”

The incentive programs were initially established in 2019 to address staffing issues but put on hold in 2020 due to the fiscal uncertainty brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Working with Police Chief David Nisleit, Mayor Gloria’s administration reestablished the programs.

“Bringing back these incentives is just another step we are taking to boost the number of officers we have to meet the needs of our communities,” Chief Nisleit said. “Whether it’s offering competitive pay, a sign-on bonus or unique opportunities, SDPD is continually striving to make joining the San Diego Police Department the first choice for potential candidates.”

The new agreement would allocate up to \$400,000 split between Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. The funding was included in the FY2023 budget approved by City Council in June.

Recruitment Incentive Program

The Recruitment Incentive Program is available to active, sworn SDPD Officers, Sergeants, Lieutenants and Captains who refer candidates for Police Recruit, Police Officer I and Police Officer II positions in the following amounts:

- Police Recruit and Police Officer I referrals – up to \$3,000
- Police Officer II referrals – up to \$4,000

The recruitment incentive will be paid out incrementally.

Lateral Incentive Program

The Lateral Police Officer II Incentive Program will provide \$15,000 to applicants looking to transfer from another California agency who qualify as a Police Officer II classification and are applying to SDPD after the start of the program. The payments will be dispersed in \$5,000 increments upon hire date, upon successful completion of Phase training, and one year of continuous employment following successful completion of Phase training.

The average cost of putting a police recruit through a six-month academy is approximately \$100,000. Hiring lateral officers who are already certified and trained is more cost-effective for departments. Many agencies across the nation offer these incentives, including some agencies that offer upwards of \$22,000.

Other Recruitment Efforts

As law enforcement agencies across the nation face hiring challenges, the San Diego Police Department has taken a number of steps to bring new officers on board including:

- Hosting two hiring expos in the past year, one specifically for women, for potential candidates to learn about the available positions, the hiring process, the academy or other important aspects of becoming a police officer.
- Establishing the Blue Arrow Program, which provides mentorship to assist individuals in preparation of becoming police officers through monthly seminars about topics that often can pose hurdles for applicants during the hiring process.
- Attending more recruiting events, continuing digital marketing campaign and developing more marketing materials through investments made in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget by Mayor Gloria.
- Working with the Police Officers Association to create the first, extended-hour childcare center to meet the needs of law enforcement on City property.

Anyone interested in joining the San Diego Police Department can visit [joinSDPDnow.com](https://www.sandiegopolice.com/joinSDPDnow.com) to apply.

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