



Police Department | Office of the Chief

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Sean Washington, Chief of Police



September 7, 2023 - Staffing and Recruitment Update from Police Chief Sean Washington

Dear Fremont Community,

As I continue Fremont Police Department's ongoing commitment to providing the highest professional service to our great community, I would like to give an update on our staffing and recruitment efforts as a follow-up to my community letter from August 5, 2022 (<https://www.fremontpolice.gov/ChiefLetterAug2022>). FPD has continued researching and implementing strategies to stabilize and improve our staffing levels. We seek our community's assistance with identifying qualified and competent candidates to join our agency.

Although FPD's vacancy rate is better than many of our surrounding jurisdictions, the challenge of recruiting, hiring, and retaining police officers persists. An updated survey and study (<https://www.policeforum.org/staffing2023>) by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) indicates that hiring nationwide appears to be improving: "However, agencies are losing officers faster than they can hire new ones, so total sworn staffing has continued to decline." In FY 2022/2023, we hired 17 police officers, a decrease from 21 the previous fiscal year. We received approximately three hundred fewer officer applications last fiscal year than the year before. We also had difficulty hiring police dispatchers, animal service personnel, and various other positions throughout the Department.

As of this message, FPD has 29 of the authorized 204 police officer positions vacant, 10 of 31 authorized full-time dispatcher positions unfilled, and multiple vacancies in Animal Services. We are also looking to fill several other positions throughout the organization. We are progressing toward filling positions within our professional ranks and believe we will gain momentum soon.

Retention: Recruitment and hiring are linked to retention. Police departments nationwide articulate difficulties retaining staff, affirming the need to remain proactive in our approach. We found that an employee's decision to leave an organization is based on various personal and professional factors. As an organization, we continue to create a work environment that supports our staff's needs. Several recent initiatives supportive of retention objectives include seeking input through committees, enhancing employee wellness programs, improving our facilities, intentional actions supporting women in law enforcement, ensuring respect and professionalism throughout the organization, developing a robust succession plan, ongoing investment in professional development opportunities, and when possible and without compromising public safety, supporting work/life balance with adjustments to duty requirements such as our mandatory overtime policy.

Recruitment and Hiring: Several months ago, we began holding frequent meetings with City of Fremont Human Resources to discuss strategies and ideas supporting our ongoing desire to stay competitive in this unprecedented, complex job market. With the support of the City Manager

and Human Resources, our plans will enhance our ability to attract and retain staff.

Our Department's Personnel Unit and the City's Human Resources staff have continued to do exceptional work bringing forward ideas and proposals. In addition to competitive wages for sworn officers negotiated last year, a unique family-friendly patrol schedule (4-days on and 4-days off), an ongoing commitment to professional development and training, a paid on-duty exercise program, paid 50-minute lunch break, great equipment, the latest technology, and several other benefits, during the past year the City of Fremont and Police Department initiated the below recruiting strategies:

- **Hiring Bonuses:** Consistent with most regional agencies, we initiated a new hiring bonus program. Lateral police officers receive \$20,000, and entry-level police officers receive \$10,000. Lateral dispatchers receive \$7,500, and entry-level dispatchers receive \$5,000.
- **Continuance of the Employee Referral Program:** Continued the \$1,500 employee referral program recognizing current staff's success in recruitment objectives.
- **New Recruitment Vehicle:** Utilizing grant funding, purchased a recruitment vehicle that will enhance efforts to engage with prospective candidates from throughout our state and region.
- **Marketing Campaign Funding:** Received funding to continue and enhance digital marketing, advertising, and public communication.
- **Comprehensive Assessment and Review of Recruitment and Hiring Practices:** Studied the national issue of police recruitment, researched best practices, and reviewed professional articles. Without compromising essential standards (integrity, honesty, commitment, compassion, etc.), aligning with best practices (increased efficiency and removal of unnecessary barriers), and ensuring FPD recruits a diverse qualified pool of candidates, our Personnel Unit, Human Resource partners, and Command Team conducted a comprehensive assessment of our recruitment, hiring and retentions policies, procedures and practices.
- **Fremont Police Department 2023 Career Fair:** The upcoming FPD Career Fair intends to allow members of our community and region to learn about all available positions throughout our organization, including sworn, professional, and volunteer roles. The event will occur on Saturday, September 16, 2023, at the Downtown Event Center at 3500 Capitol Ave. We encourage our community to visit with us on September 16th! Learn more at <https://fremontpolice.gov/CareerFair>

As I communicated last year, I remain optimistic that staffing will improve over time; however, Fremont Community, I request your assistance! Our commitment to providing the highest service to our community is contingent upon our ability to hire well-qualified and responsible staff. Please help us by encouraging responsible persons you know who want to serve this great community to apply! Learn more about our job opportunities at <https://jobs.fremontpolice.gov>.

Respectfully,



Sean Washington
Chief of Police