

INCENTIVES FOR LATERAL POLICE OFFICERS

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necessary in the competition with Anaheim, Irvine, Costa Mesa, and others for laterals.

Because of the unique challenge in recruiting laterals, both departments believe that a package of special incentives can be offered without creating the same expectation for the rest of the City's workforce. Both the number of vacancies and the small number of applicants relative to statewide demand can be cited as justification for carving out this group for different treatment.

DISCUSSION

Human Resources and Police have been working for over a year on a package of incentives narrowly tailored to lateral recruiting. Even the most optimistic of projections would assume perhaps five or six laterals coming to Garden Grove by the end of 2008, meaning the total fiscal impact of such incentives is likely to be small.

The most typical incentive offered by other departments – a cash "signing bonus" – is not being recommended. The notable local example of this practice is Anaheim, with a \$7,500 bonus. Human Resources and Police agree that an appeal to base greed, while possibly producing more recruits, tends to find officers who are only motivated by money. While staying competitive with other agencies' salaries is important to prevent attrition, the City seeks to find those candidates who are more motivated by a desire to do the work in a challenging and professional environment.

The following incentives are being recommended:

Vacation Accrual Rate

This would offer a lateral the ability to apply their full-time years at their present agency towards Garden Grove's vacation thresholds, e.g., a five-year officer from another city would be credited with five years towards Garden Grove's requirement of nine years for the next vacation threshold (12 hours/month). Laterals would still have to complete one full year with Garden Grove before receiving any vacation.

Sick Leave Bank

Employees receive 8 hours sick leave each month. This incentive would advance a lateral the same amount of sick leave they will be abandoning at their current agency, hour-for-hour, to maximum of one month (160 hours). The new lateral will not accrue additional sick leave until they have been with Garden Grove for 20 months and have thus "made up" the advance. This is in part to address the

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larger-than-usual risk of injury in the position, a 1-month sick leave bank will bridge half of the waiting period before long-term disability kicks in (for a serious injury).

Bring a Friend

It has been the experience of the Police Department that current City employees – both Police and otherwise – are by far the best recruiters. About half of new recruits and pre-recruits (i.e., cadets, police office aides) first applied with Garden Grove because they know someone who works here. In particular, this strategy has been effective for laterals, who are understandably reluctant to change agencies without having a trusted friend on the “inside” who can present them with a realistic and comprehensive view of life in the Garden Grove PD.

Thus, this incentive is designed to make 700 Garden Grove employees all potential recruiters. A current employee who brings in a lateral would receive \$5,000, while a new recruit would bring \$2,500. To insure high-quality candidates, no bonus would be paid until the new lateral or recruit passes all examination steps, background, medical exam, and starts work. There would be an overall limit of five such bonuses of each type, to prevent (the relatively unlikely) scenario of too many recruits.

While the potential cost of \$37,500 is considerable, it pales in comparison to both overtime costs and training costs for new recruits. A lateral saves the City about eight months of training (six months of the academy and half to two-thirds of normal field training) – even at the low salaries of recruits, this still amounts to some \$40,819 saved per lateral. Additional laterals and recruits both contribute to reducing the Police Department’s overtime budget. Over the past several years, the department has been averaging about 13 vacancies. Most of these vacancies require substitution through overtime, about \$102,024 per position annually.

School Loan Forgiveness

It is the stated policy of the City to encourage employees to complete their college degrees, if not held at time of appointment. One of the main incentives for this is tuition reimbursement, presently up to \$1,600 a year for police officers (the reimbursement is up to \$2,400 for other unions; it was kept at \$1,600 for police in recognition that they also qualify for education incentive pay).

Because promotion to the higher ranks (lieutenant and above) requires a bachelor’s degree, the department would ideally like as many new officers as possible to possess the baccalaureate. Since we pay an incentive for current employees to finish their bachelor’s, this incentive would conversely help new lateral officers who already have their degree to pay off their student loans. Up to \$1,600 would be

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provided annually to new laterals who have their degree and have outstanding student loans, paid at the conclusion of each year of service.

Home Loan Assistance

Staff continues to work on the details of this incentive, and will bring a recommendation to the City Council at a subsequent meeting.

Fiscal Impact

Vacation accrual rate credit	Negligible	
Sick leave advance	Negligible	(offset by advance)
"Bring a Friend"	\$37,500	(maximum)
School Loan Forgiveness	<u>\$ 8,000</u>	(annual maximum)
Total annual impact=	\$45,500	

In sum, the program is not expected to have a significant fiscal impact. However, the competition for laterals is intense, and sometimes the presence of an incentive makes the difference in a recruitment. Neither department sees this package as a complete solution to the police vacancy problem, but rather another tool to facilitate the work of our recruiters.

COMMUNITY VISION IMPLEMENTATION

Maintaining a competitive incentive package for lateral police officer applicants helps the City organization reach the Strategic Plan goal of: *MAINTAIN ADEQUATE STAFFING LEVELS TO INSURE THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC.*

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council:

- Adopt the attached Resolution amending the memorandum of understanding on salaries, wages and fringe benefits 2006 – 2009 by and between the Garden Grove Police Association and the City of Garden Grove, to provide for an incentive program for lateral police officers.

JOHN D.R. CLARK
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Attachment: Proposed resolution