

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
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April 10, 2018

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department - Recruitment & Retention

Nationwide, law enforcement agencies are struggling with recruiting and hiring qualified sworn personnel. Thus, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) is not alone in their search for effective strategies to increase and maintain sworn staffing levels.

Background:

Over a decade ago, on **February 21, 2006**, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Department and the then Chief Administrative Officer to "... *establish a working group to address the Sheriff's retention and recruitment issues.*" The response to the Board, issued on **September 22, 2006**, contained numerous recommendations, including additional funding for recruitment personnel, advertising, salary increases, additional pay steps to attract new applicants, streamlining the hiring process, improved working conditions (e.g., less time spent in the jails), and organizational support for recruits.

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Almost a decade later, on **April 14, 2015**, the Board, again, directed the Chief Executive Officer to work with the Sheriff and report back on a hiring and recruitment plan to include strategies to hire qualified and diverse applicants, along with an analysis of the Department's existing and future needs for fulfilling these goals. In response, the Chief Executive Officer issued a report on **June 22, 2015** which discussed hiring capacity, vacancy rates, and attrition, along with a recruitment plan. Although the report indicated, *"... it will take six-years for the hiring rate to match attrition based on a class size of 80 deputy sheriff trainees"* it also indicated, *"However, the Sheriff, DHR, and CEO have established an ambitious goal to stabilize hiring to the pre-existing vacancy level by the end of FY 2016-17"* and, *"as part of the Department's structural reforms, to achieve a normal level of deputy vacancies by FY 2018-19."*

On **April 13, 2016**, a memo was issued from the Department's Contract Law Enforcement Bureau to Assistant Sheriff Todd Rogers (now retired) discussing the critical shortages within the Department and the challenges associated with meeting contract obligations. The report stated, *"All of these divisions are operating with staffing vacancies while requests for more growth continue."* The same memo showed that overtime paid to deputy sheriffs in FY 2014-15 was nearly \$190 million dollars, and in FY 2015-16 those costs were estimated to be \$270 million dollars. Currently overtime for FY 2017-18 is expected to be approximately \$260 million dollars.

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND HILDA L. SOLIS

April 10, 2018

Page 3

Due to these vacancies, the Department is meeting many of its *existing* responsibilities by relying heavily on mandatory overtime which effectively prevents the Department from *expanding* to meet additional needs and may negatively impact community and officer safety. Calls for the expansion of the successful Mental Evaluation Teams (MET) by 60 positions and the creation of the “Access to Care” bureau by 97 positions to enhance the delivery of health services to jail inmates cannot be answered at this time.

Promotions are similarly impacted as the shortages in the deputy sheriff positions impact vacancies in other ranks, most notably sergeants who serve an important supervisory role and reduce risk and liability.

The hiring has minimally kept pace with attrition making very small gains. The Department hosts eight academy classes per year with an average class size of 80 recruits. Given this, coupled with a 25% attrition rate in the academy, the Department can hire a maximum of approximately 480 sworn personnel per year; however, these classes have not been enough to alleviate the staffing crisis.

Next Steps:

There has been extensive research over the years produced by the Department, the Labor Unions, the CEO and others examining the inherent challenges to recruitment and retention. The Department is making every effort to work through these challenges with the help of their Recruitment and Retention Task Force (Task Force).

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND HILDA L. SOLIS

April 10, 2018

Page 4

Although the Task Force is comprised of members of the Sheriff’s executive team,

numerous sworn and civilian personnel, members of the CEO's office, and union representatives, independent and external subject matter experts may be a crucial missing ingredient to assist us in realizing creative strategies and lasting solutions.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Chief Executive Officer, working with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and our labor partners to:

1. Take necessary steps to hire an outside consultant(s) with subject matter expertise in recruitment and retention practices to assist with creative strategies and lasting solutions to the recruitment and retention of sworn personnel;
2. The consultant(s)' scope of work should include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Develop and assist with the roll out of a robust outreach, advertising, and marketing campaign;
 - b. Examine and recommend best practices used by other law enforcement agencies for recruitment, including the use of stipends and/or bonuses to recruit qualified active duty law enforcement and military veterans as well as others;

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND HILDA L. SOLIS

April 10, 2018

Page 5

- c. Examine and identify aspects of the recruitment and background process which can be performed more expeditiously through contracting,

if any;

- d. Identify barriers and solutions to the recruitment, hiring and training process, including but not limited to: the time it takes to complete the background process, necessary steps to increase the size and/or space, and locations for additional academy classes, address any obstacles in expanding and completing the emergency vehicle operations and firearms training, as well as other critical training classes necessary to streamline recruitment and improve training of new deputies;
- e. Quantify the level of staffing required to phase out mandatory overtime and conduct a comparison of the County's population to deputy ratio relative to other jurisdictions;
- f. Examine best practices used by other law enforcement agencies and develop a retention plan to solve short-term and long-term staffing needs which aligns with existing laws and regulations; and
- g. Provide a status report to the Board in 90 days and quarterly thereafter.

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