

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****August 8, 2023**

Page 1 of 6

**SUBJECT: POLICE STAFFING PLAN**

The Fort Worth Police Department is continually looking for ways to make Fort Worth a safe place for our residents to live, play, and work. Having a fully staffed police department is key to maintaining and fulfilling that objective. The ability to fill vacancies due to retirements or attrition and having a plan to increase the staffing each budget year is one of our greatest challenges. Each budget cycle the question about our staffing plan is raised and this year is no different.

The questions asked of us are the same we ask ourselves each year as we evaluate the need to hold more academy classes in order to keep up with the need of adding more personnel. Having a plan is extremely important for many reasons, but mainly to keep us focused and moving in the right direction and provide accountability measures to make sure we are meeting our overall objectives. The answer to this question can be simplified by two primary objectives, reduce the length of time in the police academy and increase the class sizes. The way we accomplish this, however, is much more complex.

**What are the Department's challenges in filling sworn vacant positions?**

1. Recruiting the necessary quantity and quality of candidates that can complete the academy.
2. Capacity of the Training Division personnel and facilities to keep up with rising turnover.
3. Ensuring the time needed to train an officer is appropriate to both produce quality officers and effectively address turnover.

At the beginning of 2023, the Fort Worth Police Department took a close look at our police academy procedures and decided to audit how our police recruit training is conducted. Although we have one of the best academies in the country, there are always ways to create efficiencies and improve the process. Currently, the State of Texas requires 720 hours of instruction to become a basic police officer. The Fort Worth Police Department almost doubles that time for our recruits. One of the biggest challenges was to create efficiencies while keeping in mind that we wanted to produce the same or improved quality of recruit graduating from the academy. Our goal was simple: do not sacrifice quality for expediency.

**What is the Department's solution for filling sworn vacant positions?**

1. Increase eligible applicants by 50% by adding a dedicated Recruiting Team (starting FY24)
2. Increase class sizes by 50% - 100% (starting August 2023)
3. Reduce the time it takes to train by 6-10 weeks (starting November 2023)
4. Reduce class attrition to <20% following changes to practical and academic training methods (starting FY25)

As mentioned above, the Department conducted an audit of procedures that were feasible in order to address the challenges above. Through the audit we learned the following:

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****August 8, 2023**

Page 2 of 6

**SUBJECT: POLICE STAFFING PLAN****A. Duplication and use of out-of-date training materials**

The audit identified duplication in six courses that resulted from the inclusion of both Department-mandated training and State-mandated training that could be combined (ex. health/wellness, written communications, control tactics). The audit also identified training materials that could be updated to include legislation, internal policy changes, and procedural updates.

**B. Efficiencies existed within the daily schedule**

Moving the academy from four 10-hour days to five 8-hour days a week was more conducive to the training requirements of the state. All of the state required classes are based on an 8-hour work week schedule. We moved physical fitness and control tactics training to the end of the day. Once that course of training is complete, they can go home instead of allowing 30-40 minutes each day for showering.

Ultimately, efficiencies to training materials and schedule would allow us to reduce the police academy from 40 weeks to 30-32 weeks - depending on the academy class size. A larger academy size needs 2 more weeks for firearms and driver training. This change was vetted by city legal to make sure the quality of training remained the same. Reducing the time in the academy was a great first step, but to reduce the vacancy rate we needed to increase the class size.

Starting in June 2023, with class 156, we incorporated our academy changes with the new 30-32-week schedule and started the class with 77 new recruits. With the new academy training schedule and the larger class size, we plan on graduating more recruits in a shorter time frame. Our hope is that with all the above listed changes and new standards, we will be able to create efficiencies to close the gap on our attrition rate as well as adding new positions to the department.

**C. Alternative teaching and study methods can reduce class attrition.**

Historically, we have started the majority of our police academies with 45 or fewer new recruits. We have learned from our past records, that we have an average attrition rate of around 20% for a regular recruit training class. The attrition rate for LEO classes is close to 0%. The attrition is based upon academic failures, not being physically ready for the academy, conduct violations or determining this is not the career field for them.

We have learned through our research, that there are things we can do to help with those attrition numbers in the academy to graduate more recruits. We encourage recruits to join in study groups and we hold frequent after hour tutoring sessions for all recruits. We continually look for alternative

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****August 8, 2023**

Page 3 of 6

**SUBJECT: POLICE STAFFING PLAN**

teaching methods and provide study tips and guides as a way to provide alternative ways to learn. Even though the academics are extremely important, recruits need to be physically fit to be able to perform their job as a police officer.

D. Recruiting physical assessments were not consistent with academy class requirements.

Our research indicated that some applicants that only completed the physical assessment test (PAT obstacle course) struggled to keep up with the physical demands of the academy. This caused a large number of recruits to withdraw and leave the academy. The academy staff worked with Morris and McDaniel along with our Fort Worth HR staff and created a physical assessment that was defensible and created a minimum standard for our recruits to meet.

The new standard was set at:

- 1.5 mile run in 17:51
- 11 pushups
- 22 set ups
- 500-meter row in 2:27.

The new standard will begin for class 157 that starts in November. Even though the new standard is starting with class 157, recruits from class 156 were given a resource guide to help them get in shape prior to the academy and we had them report their workout activities weekly to our physical fitness coordinator.

**What are the expected results?**

1. Fully staff current positions by August 2025, New Positions by August 2026

From our new projections, we expect to fill all of our current vacant positions by August 2025. New officer positions approved in fiscal year 2024 will be filled in August 2026. New promoted positions (i.e. sergeants, corporals, etc.) must be filled due to Meet and Confer requirements, thereby creating additional officer vacancies.

Currently, we have 140 vacancies in our department and we have the following classes in progress, scheduled, or planned. These classes, attrition, and projections are incorporated into a chart that is attached to this report.

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**

**August 8, 2023**

Page 4 of 6



**SUBJECT: POLICE STAFFING PLAN**

| Class  | Planned Class Size | Est. Graduates (*actuals may vary) | Planned Graduation MM/YY | Projected Vacancies Remaining |                          |
|--------|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
|        |                    |                                    |                          | 1,816 positions (FY2023)      | 1,875 positions (FY2024) |
| 154    | 40                 | 26                                 | 5/23                     | 133                           | N/A                      |
| 155    | 41                 | 21                                 | 10/23                    | 138                           | 197                      |
| LEO 8  | 17                 | 17                                 | 12/23                    | 115                           | 174                      |
| 156    | 77                 | 59                                 | 1/24                     | 82                            | 141                      |
| 157    | 60                 | 48                                 | 6/24                     | 57                            | 116                      |
| LEO 9  | 45                 | 45                                 | 6/24                     | 23                            | 82                       |
| 158    | 75                 | 60                                 | 2/25                     | 5                             | 64                       |
| LEO 10 | 45                 | 45                                 | 7/25                     | 5                             | 64                       |
| 159    | 60                 | 48                                 | 9/25                     | -                             | 24                       |
| 160    | 60                 | 48                                 | 1/26                     | -                             | 11                       |
| 161    | 60                 | 48                                 | 4/26                     | -                             | 8                        |
| 162    | TBD                | TBD                                | 9/26                     | -                             | 0                        |

2. Seat and graduate enough officers to address both officer attrition and Department growth

The difficulty with plans that address attrition modeling and growth is that we have not been able to graduate enough officers to fill all vacancies. For this reason, the Department is addressing both recruiting and class sizes. Sworn separations continue to be high and data suggests this may continue (+9% YTD). We are tracking the number of sworn that meet the requirements. We currently have 148 sworn employees eligible for retirement. For this reason, we are aggressively addressing vacancies with this plan and anticipate utilizing staffing study data to proactively recruit for turnover.

3. Reduce recruit attrition following restructure

The attrition of recruits is currently higher than we expect, average 38% in previous three classes. We expect this may continue until the new class structure is fully implemented. Thereafter, we anticipate <20% attrition as an initial benchmark goal.

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****August 8, 2023**

Page 5 of 6

**SUBJECT: POLICE STAFFING PLAN****Summary**

Within a short amount of time, there has been a multitude of changes to the police academy to accomplish the basic objective of graduating more recruits and minimizing the time spent for the initial training at the academy. Even with the changes, we continually look for ways to streamline our current process. This will be a constant evolution as each class progresses through our academy.

The numbers provided are only approximations and can change depending on the attrition of the department, the recruit classes, or the number of recruits that apply. However, we are committed to meeting our staffing needs to ensure our department fully staffed with the most qualified candidates.

**David Cooke  
City Manager**

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

August 8, 2023

Page 6 of 6



**SUBJECT: POLICE STAFFING PLAN**

