



To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

August 3, 2021

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SUBJECT: POLICE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATORS (PSCs)

Executive Summary

This IR is to discuss vacancies in the Police Communications Division, immediate action taken to temporarily fill vacancies, an update on recruiting/hiring, reasons for high turnover, low applicant interest, and a pay comparison to the market.

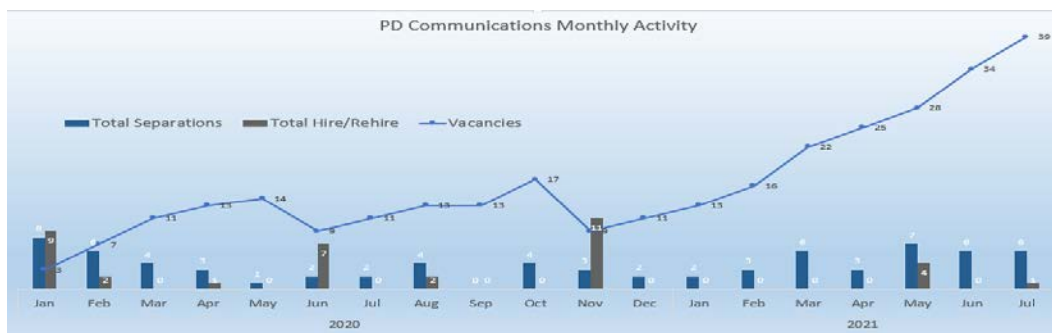
Vacancies

We currently have 39 vacancies in our Police Communication Division, with 36 vacancies in PSCI (Call Takers) and 3 in PSCII (Dispatcher).

These vacancies have gradually occurred over the last 12 months, with a steady climb in the previous 6-7 months (COVID Pandemic led to a downturn in the number of applicants we received during that timeframe). The chart below illustrates the vacancy occurrences and reason for vacancies.

		Total # of Positions	Total Filled	Vacancies
2020	Jan	147	144	3
	Feb	147	140	7
	Mar	147	136	11
	Apr	147	134	13
	May	147	133	14
	Jun	147	138	9
	Jul	147	136	11
	Aug	147	134	13
	Sep	147	134	13
	Oct	147	130	17
	Nov	147	138	9
	Dec	147	136	11
2021	Jan	147	134	13
	Feb	147	131	16
	Mar	147	125	22
	Apr	147	122	25
	May	147	119	28
	Jun	147	113	34
	Jul	147	108	39

SEPARATIONS					
Retire	Resign	Transfer to Police Academy	Transfer out to PD/CFW	Terminated	Total Separations
1		4	3		8
	6				6
	1	1	1	1	4
	2			1	3
	1				1
			2		2
	2				2
	1		3		4
					0
	1		2	1	4
			2	1	3
	1		1		2
			2		2
	2			1	3
	3			3	6
1	1		1		3
1	4			2	7
2	3			1	6
			1	5	6
5	28	5	18	16	72



*As you can see from the chart above, as we hired new employees, we have lost employees faster, leaving us in the negative.

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To improve the 911 service during this period of high vacancies, we have explored all means to temporarily fill positions to cover non-emergency phone calls allowing our call takers to handle emergency calls with as little delay as possible.

- Utilizing limited and light-duty officers (sworn) to answer non-emergency calls and return calls when there is a request to speak to an officer.
- In coordination with City HR, the Police Department has issued a purchase order with BridgeWork staffing agency to temporarily fill vacancies until permanent positions are filled. These are trained call takers and dispatchers. We have a 6-month contract for fifteen qualified employees.
- Reached out to recently retired communication employees about the availability of part-time employment through BridgeWork staffing. This allows for immediate coverage since the employees have retired from our division and are fully trained.
- Collaborated with FD to assist in handling Medical and Fire emergency calls. We utilized social media to push out a joint message and created a video with the message.
- Added voice messages to the 911 answering cue to prompt residents to call the Fire/Medical number for immediate Fire /Medical assistance.

Reason for high turnover or low applicant interest

Communications staff conducted exit interviews with employees who presented the following reasons for leaving employment; stress of the job, mandatory over-time, implementation of 12-hour shifts due to the critical staffing shortages, culture and personality conflict, and last but not least, inadequate/low pay.

To alleviate or eliminate some of the presented issues, Communications Command Staff discontinued the mandatory overtime and instead asked employees to help and asked for volunteers to fill the gaps. The 12-hour shifts have been modified to allow employees to choose to work the longer hours. They are currently working on a hybrid-staffing model, which will consist of 8, 10, and 12-hour shifts. In mid June, new leadership was brought into the division who made the immediate changes listed above. As they continue to work on the issues, Command Staff keeps the employees informed and works with them to improve the workplace environment.

Because of the concerns around inadequate pay, the Human Resources Department (HR) recently completed a salary study for The PSC Is and PSC IIs and found that PSCIs and PSC IIs are almost 10 % below the market midpoint. The survey results also show that average actual salaries are 14% below market. The PSC position has seen significant turnover in the last three years at an average of approximately 25%, which is over twice the City's overall average of 11.7% during the same period. Newer employees are voluntarily leaving their jobs at a higher rate than tenured ones.

Therefore, HR recommends placing the PSC I in one pay grade higher and placing all PSCs in the same location relative to their new pay range midpoint to maintain internal equity for employees in this pay grade. All employees in the PSC I position will see an approximate 7.7 percent increase. Additionally, based on the city wide salary survey, pay structures for PSC Is will be adjusted by a minimum of three (3) percent for FY 2022. These two changes will align the salary of our employees with the market. These employees will also be eligible for any pay-for-performance increases in the FY 2022 Budget (if available), which will help improve the average actual salary difference compared to the market.

Update on recruiting

Between January 2020 through June 2021, the application process was opened six times. The Police Department's social media outlets were used to advertise and push out hiring notifications. City partners were contacted with the hiring information so that

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they could share with those networks and a digital flyer was sent to TCU targeting their Criminal Justice Students. A \$1000.00 Hiring Incentive program to attract applicants (paid in increments) was created and advertised, and Tarrant County 911 has been tapped to assist in reaching applicants. On July 27, 2021, Tarrant County 911 placed ads on 10 billboards throughout Tarrant County advertising telecommuter positions through the County. The forthcoming changes in the pay structure will also assist in bringing additional applicants

Update on hiring

In the last application posting, we received over 400 application that are currently being processed.

- 40 are in the background process (personal, criminal, and work history/reference)
- 40 suitable applicants moving through to the oral boards
- 8 have completed the oral board and will proceed through the process (medical, psychological, fingerprinting, and Polygraph) with a tentative start date of 8/30/21

We will continue to evaluate the vacancy/hiring numbers as we work through the background and hiring process. Additionally, we will ensure that continual posting of the position is available for potential applicants until the vacancies are addressed and at a more normal rate.

Note: It takes approximately three months for a call taker to be trained and placed on solo status.

The Fort Worth Police Department is committed to rectify the situation and ensure that the call center gets fully staffed so that our citizens can receive the customer service they deserve. With the help of our partners in the city and the support to address the structural issues that have placed us behind the market in pay, we believe we can achieve this goal in short order. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Assistant Chief Julie Swearingin at 817-392-4247 or julie.swearingin@fortworthtexas.gov.

David Cooke
City Manager