

# Special Committee on Retention and Recruitment of Municipal Workers

April 2023



# Recommendations for Retaining & Recruiting Municipal Workers

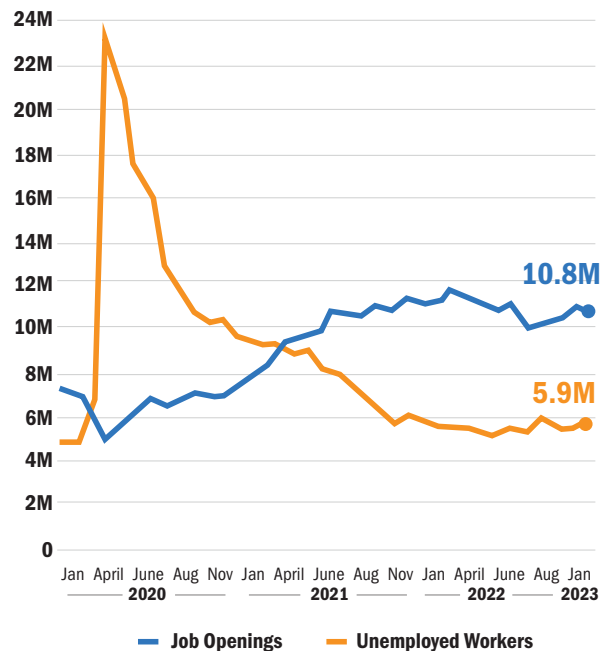
In March of 2023, the Special Committee on Retention and Recruitment of Municipal Workers was established by City Council Resolution 221035 with a charge of identifying specific and immediate initiatives the City could pursue to improve the recruitment and retention of a diverse, high-quality municipal workforce. In the current labor market, various governmental jurisdictions experience difficulty attracting an adequate pool of candidates for critical positions and the City of Philadelphia is not immune. Changing values and perceptions of careers such as law enforcement, a shrinking labor market, and the option for many employees to work remotely have created a perfect storm, especially within the public sector. Though there are indications that we may be leaving the worst behind us, cities still face many challenges in attracting candidates and retaining employees. Even though we have seen a 32% reduction in attrition between 2021 and 2022, the City of Philadelphia is still facing high vacancy rates in several critical roles.

LinkedIn research suggests that a vacancy rate below 10% is considered good; according to the City of Philadelphia Budget Office, the city's current vacancy rate is approximately 18%. The city is not alone in the challenge to fill vacant positions, many jurisdictions are experiencing vacancy rates close to 20%. Though job vacancies fell in February, the US Chamber of Commerce shows the availability of workers is not keeping pace with job openings.

## National Job Openings vs Number of Unemployed Workers

February 2023

<https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding-americas-labor-shortage>



Source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce Analysis, BLS Data



## Current City Strategies

Over the past several years, the City has embarked on strategies designed to reduce barriers to employment. They include:

- Modified 100 job descriptions to provide for alternate career paths that do not require a 4-year college degree.
- Hosted recruitment fairs focused on specific industries in neighborhood libraries and recreation centers throughout Philadelphia.
- Traveled to over 40 local colleges and beyond, including HBCUs in Virginia and Maryland, as well as Hispanic Serving Institutions in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
- Hosted quarterly Career Link workshops and held monthly office hours at select Free Library branches to connect with candidates throughout Philadelphia.
- Expanded partnerships with key stakeholders including the Philadelphia School District and Community College of Philadelphia, developing relationships with current students from Philadelphia's various educational systems to create a path to municipal employment.
- Reduced the number of standardized Civil Service tests with approximately 50% of assessments based upon training and experience.
- Moved to an online assessment platform for all objective assessments except performance.

## Committee Proposals

The Committee recommends several proposed initiatives to immediately impact recruitment and retention. A key focus of these recommendations is to increase the funding dedicated to hiring bonuses for several critical positions as well as providing additional supports to attract and retain City employees.

The cost projections included in this report are broad estimates and will still need further analysis by the City's Budget Office to help determine feasibility of implementing the recommendations.

Initiative	Description	Estimated Cost	Funding
<b>Hiring Referral Bonuses *</b>	Expand to all classes until hiring stabilizes.	<b>\$500 per referral = \$3M</b>	New funding request
<b>Hiring Bonuses *</b>	<p><b>Expand to all classes</b>; paid after the first 3-6 months &amp; then after year 1.</p> <p>Candidates must work at least 3 years before leaving; tiered costs are based on % of starting salary.</p>	<p><b>Police/Paramedics:</b> 20% (\$6.6m)</p> <p><b>Corrections:</b> 20% (\$3m)</p> <p><b>Skilled Trades:</b> 15% (\$3m)</p> <p><b>STEM/Financial:</b> 10% (\$1m)</p> <p><b>Service Reps:</b> 10% (\$500k)</p>	<p>New funding request with some funding currently budgeted</p> <p>(Several positions, i.e. Police &amp; Correctional Officers currently have a hiring bonus)</p>
<b>Housing Support Bonuses *</b>	Provide \$5,000 bonus for housing and rental support to employees earning less than \$50,000/year in households at or below 100% AMI.	<b>Estimated 6,000 eligible employees = \$30M</b>	New funding request
<b>SEPTA Key Advantage *</b>	Provide subsidized transportation for employees on SEPTA trains and buses.	\$9M	Existing funding request in the FY24 and FY25 budget

\*Denotes 2-year pilot program.

Initiative	Description	Estimated Cost	Funding
<b>City as an Employer of Choice</b>	Engage firm to develop a marketing campaign to promote the City as an Employer of Choice.	<b>\$60K monthly</b> = \$720K	New funding request of \$360k to increase the current amount proposed in the FY24 budget
<b>Expanded Parental Leave</b>	Increase parental leave for all employees from 4 to 6 weeks.	\$2.1M	New funding request
<b>Review Current Pay Plan</b>	Engage firm to conduct a comprehensive review of key benchmark positions to assess the competitiveness of current City pay plan.	\$200K	Existing funding in FY23. Review will be completed by September 2023
<b>Workforce Development Scholarship Program</b>	Target critical, hard-to-fill positions for potential up-skilling of current workforce (e.g. Paramedics, Mammographers, Auto Tech, Construction Tech)	\$6M	New funding request

**The committee is grateful for those who have provided input to this important work.**

## Acknowledgements

### Committee Members:

Council President Darrell Clarke, Councilman Brian O'Neill, Council Lady Katherine Gilmore Richardson, Councilman Mark Squilla, Chief Administrative Officer, Stephanie Tipton, former head of the Civil Service Commission, Linda Orfanelli, President of District Council 33, Ernest Garrett, and Police Captain Tyrell McCoy